



the
ct

Rams crack AP Top 25 for first time since '84-'85 · 7

News

Q&A with VCU police chief · 3

Sports

Shaka Smart's Twitter ban · 8

Spectrum

Four score and seven
years ago, students worked
in "Lincoln" · 10

Opinion

Don't put guns in schools · 14

BRIEFS

On the cover:

VCU student section cheers on now-rated Rams.

Photo by Chris Conway

Local & VCU

Assembly approves Va's first openly gay judge

The Virginia House and Senate on Tuesday elected interim Judge Tracy Thorne-Begland to a full term on Richmond's Manchester General District Court, giving legislative approval to the state's first openly gay judge after rejecting him last year.

The Republican-controlled House voted first, approving him 66-28 with one abstention. That was followed by a Senate vote of 28-0. Twelve social conservatives in the Senate did not vote.

"I want to thank the members of the General Assembly for their thoughtful deliberation concerning my nomination," Thorne-Begland said. "I also want to thank my family for their support throughout this process, and I look forward to continuing my service on behalf of this great commonwealth."

The respected former Richmond prosecutor also is a decorated former Navy aviator who in 1992 challenged the military's now-defunct "don't ask, don't tell" policy prohibiting gays from serving in the armed forces.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Canadian sentenced to 1 year for soliciting Richmond officer's daughter, 14

A Canadian who flew here from Toronto to have sex with the 14-year-old daughter of a Richmond police officer has been sentenced to serve a year in jail for using a smartphone to propose sex and arrange an encounter that was thwarted by police.

Chesterfield County Circuit Judge Harold W. Burgess Jr. sentenced Keith Veacock, 20, to 10 years in prison with nine years suspended on two felony counts of taking indecent liberties with a minor and using an electronic device to solicit sex from a child.

Veacock will be required to register as a sex offender, and his photo, address and offense information will be posted on the Virginia Sex Offender Registry website. The judge also indicated that he would like Veacock to participate in sex offender therapy with a certified therapist.

According to evidence, the victim's stepmother discovered sexually explicit text messages and other communication from Veacock last spring on the girl's cellphone after her parents had taken it away as punishment.

They called Chesterfield police April 29 and provided an officer with several of the text messages.

From that point on, the girl's stepmother posed as the girl and communicated with Veacock using the girl's iPod Touch.

The girl initially told Veacock she was 18, but at some point during their communication, she confessed to being 14.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

More than 50, including many disabled, displaced by leak

More than 50 people — including many with mental and physical disabilities — were forced out of their apartments Tuesday morning after a fire sprinkler flooded most of their downtown Richmond building.

Firefighters were called to the Grace Place apartments, at East Grace and Fourth streets, shortly after 7:30 a.m. after a fire alarm was triggered by a sprinkler in an apartment on the eighth floor of the 11-story building, which dates to the 1920s.

Lt. Robbie Hagaman of the Richmond Fire Department said it took firefighters about 20 minutes to find the source of the leak and shut it off. By then, with the sprinkler gushing at what firefighters estimated was 30 to 40 gallons a minute, water had seeped through the lower floors, pooling on carpets and caving in pieces of ceiling, residents said.

As of Tuesday night, 27 people were still staying in the shelter, said Jonathan McNamara, a Red Cross spokesman. A city building inspector has condemned the building as a result of the water damage, said city spokesman Mike Wallace, and it remained unclear when the residents might be able to return.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National & International

Walmart to hire vets, buy American

Walmart, the world's largest retailer and the biggest private employer in the U.S. with 1.4 million workers here, said Tuesday that it is rolling out a three-part plan to help jump-start the sluggish U.S. economy.

The plan includes hiring more than 100,000 veterans in the next five years, spending \$50 billion to buy more American-made merchandise in the next 10 years, and helping its part-time workers move into full-time positions.

The move comes as Walmart tries to bolster its image amid widespread criticism. The company often is criticized for its low-paying jobs and buying habits in the U.S.

Walmart said its initiatives are meant to highlight that companies don't have to wait for lawmakers in Washington to fix the economy.

"We've developed a national paralysis that's driven by all of us waiting for someone else to do something," Bill Simon, president and CEO of Walmart's U.S. business, said Tuesday at an annual retail industry convention in New York. "The beauty of the private sector is that we don't have to win an election, convince Congress or pass a bill to do what we think is right. We can simply move forward, doing what we know is right."

Brief by the Associated Press

2012 military suicides hit a record high of 349

Suicides in the U.S. military surged to a record 349 last year, far exceeding American combat deaths in Afghanistan, and some private experts are predicting the dark trend will grow worse this year.

The Pentagon has struggled to deal with the suicides, which Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and others have called an epidemic. The problem reflects severe strains on military personnel burdened with more than a decade of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, complicated by anxiety over the prospect of being forced out of a shrinking force.

Pentagon figures obtained Monday by The Associated Press show that the 349 suicides among active-duty troops last year were up from 301 the year before and exceeded the Pentagon's own internal projection of 325.

Last year's total is the highest since the Pentagon began closely tracking suicides in 2001. It exceeds the 295 Americans who died in Afghanistan last year, by the AP's count.

Brief by the Associated Press

Former Ohio teacher files bias suit over her phobia of young children

A former high school teacher is accusing school district administrators of discriminating against her because of a rare phobia she says she has: a fear of young children.

Maria Waltherr-Willard, 61, had been teaching Spanish and French at Mariemont High School in Cincinnati since 1976.

Waltherr-Willard, who does not have children of her own, said that when she was transferred to the district's middle school in 2009, the seventh- and eighth-graders triggered her phobia, causing her blood pressure to soar and forcing her to retire in the middle of the 2010-11 year.

In her lawsuit against the district, filed in federal court in Cincinnati, Waltherr-Willard said her fear of young children falls under the federal American with Disabilities Act and that the district violated it by transferring her in the first place and then refusing to allow her to return to the high school.

The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages and said Waltherr-Willard has been treated for her phobia since 1991.

Brief by the Associated Press

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NEWS

In this section:

VCU administrator on school safety task force • 4

Student group sends medical supplies around the world • 5

In his own words

A Q&A with John Venuti, Chief of VCU Police

Tommy Lopez
Multimedia Editor

Ryan Murphy
News Editor

Last semester, The CT reported on a number of crimes and VCU Police's responses. Notably, last semester saw a dramatic spike in robberies on or near campus — 32 in total during the fall semester; more than five times the number of robberies during the spring 2012 semester. The CT sat down with VCU Police Chief John Venuti to discuss last semester's crime, how the VCU Police Department responded and their plans for this coming semester.

On Last Semester's Robberies:

"Here's the important thing that I look at and that people need to understand: if you want to see what's going to happen in VCU, you look at the Richmond metropolitan area in general. And I think over the past semester, when you look at the Richmond metropolitan area in general, there was an increase in robberies clear across the city, in Henrico, Chesterfield County, so what we see here in VCU is very, very reflective of what's going on in the areas that are around us ... but with all of those robberies, looking back at the numbers, the number of arrests pertaining to those robberies has dramatically increased over last year. The way to stop people from robbing people is you arrest the people who are robbing people."

On what VCU PD is doing to bolster the perception of safety:

"Visibility in an environment like this is really, really important, so we alter our deployment strategy so that people here see a lot more police officers, vehicles and things like that ... (After administering the Perception of Safety survey) 93.9 percent of the students, faculty and staff that were surveyed said they felt either safe or very safe on both campuses ... But we did more than administer that survey. We looked at places where people said they wanted to see more police officers and we deployed our strategy so we had our officers in those places ... We're in the process of improving lighting in places that people told us needed more

lighting. We're adding more emergency phones in areas people told us needed more emergency phones."

On VCU Police presence:

"Traditionally, if you look at campus law enforcement staffing levels across the United States, what you generally see is approximately between 1.8 and three officers per thousand students. When you look at our addition of (ten officers to) 82 to 92, that puts the VCU Police Department at approximately 3.4 officers per 1000 students, so obviously we're a little bit more than the max, and I think that's appropriate in this environment because VCU is in a complex environment and the level of policing in an urban environment is complicated. Most campus law enforcement agencies stick to events that occur in their property, and we aren't that police agency. We obviously focus a lot of patrol and law enforcement efforts in the core campus area, (but) we also span out to our extended concurrent jurisdiction with Richmond ... I don't want VCU to be a police state where every block you walk you see police officers."

On the VCU alert system:

"The philosophy is I want students here to be fully aware of everything that's going on ... because in an environment this large, with 50,000 people, we need everyone to take the appropriate steps and measures to safeguard their own safety. ... We want everyone to be making good decisions, and the purpose of those alerts, (is) as simple as if there's something you do each day at a particular point in time and you know that a crime occurred in that particular location, you may say 'Oh, I'm not going to jog down that street today, I'll go down Monument Avenue versus Grove Avenue.' The level of awareness here has dramatically increased."



VCU Police Chief John Venuti came to VCU after more than 26 years with Richmond Police Department.

On G4S:

"That was a pretty bold and aggressive step for VCU to take because a lot of Virginia institutions and, historically, VCU (have) never used outside security to supplement their police staff. But again, I looked at G4S and some of the student feedback was I just wanted (G4S) to find all the parties and just so everyone knows, I don't need any help doing that. I can do that with my eyes closed, but that's not why we did G4S. We did G4S because I would see students in the core parts of this campus late at night walking from point A to point B and it would just concern me that they're walking alone, late at night, and if we could put something into the environment to make them feel a little better, even if they saw it a couple of blocks away ... We have looked and overlaid all the robbery crimes we had with G4S (patrol routes) and the closest robbery was about six blocks away ... We put them in specific areas ... and again, we had no robberies in the areas they were assigned."

On the new RamSafe escort service:

"Obviously the old escort service was a very inefficient, ineffective system and I had been working with students for the past almost two years looking for some type of adequate solution to

make transportation of students with a point-to-point service much more enjoyable, reliable, effective and efficient and we listened to all the feedback from the students and the current system incorporates a lot of things students wanted. For example, students, predominantly females, would tell us, 'When I call the security escort system, I have to wait outside on a dark street.' With the new system you can call from (inside a building) and you are notified when the service is in the vicinity."

On making strides to improve working with Richmond Police:

"We're in the process with our technology upgrades of updating our computer-aided dispatch system to the same system that Richmond uses. So right now, if you sit in a VCU Police car and you sit in a Richmond Police car, you see two sets of different information. Feb. 1 we're merging to Richmond's system ... Obviously from a perspective of interoperability it's going to be a big advantage for us and we're also in the process of moving to Richmond's record management system as well. Right now, VCU has a separate records management system so if you're arrested in the VCU system or you're arrested in the RPD system, it's all going to be one system." **CT**

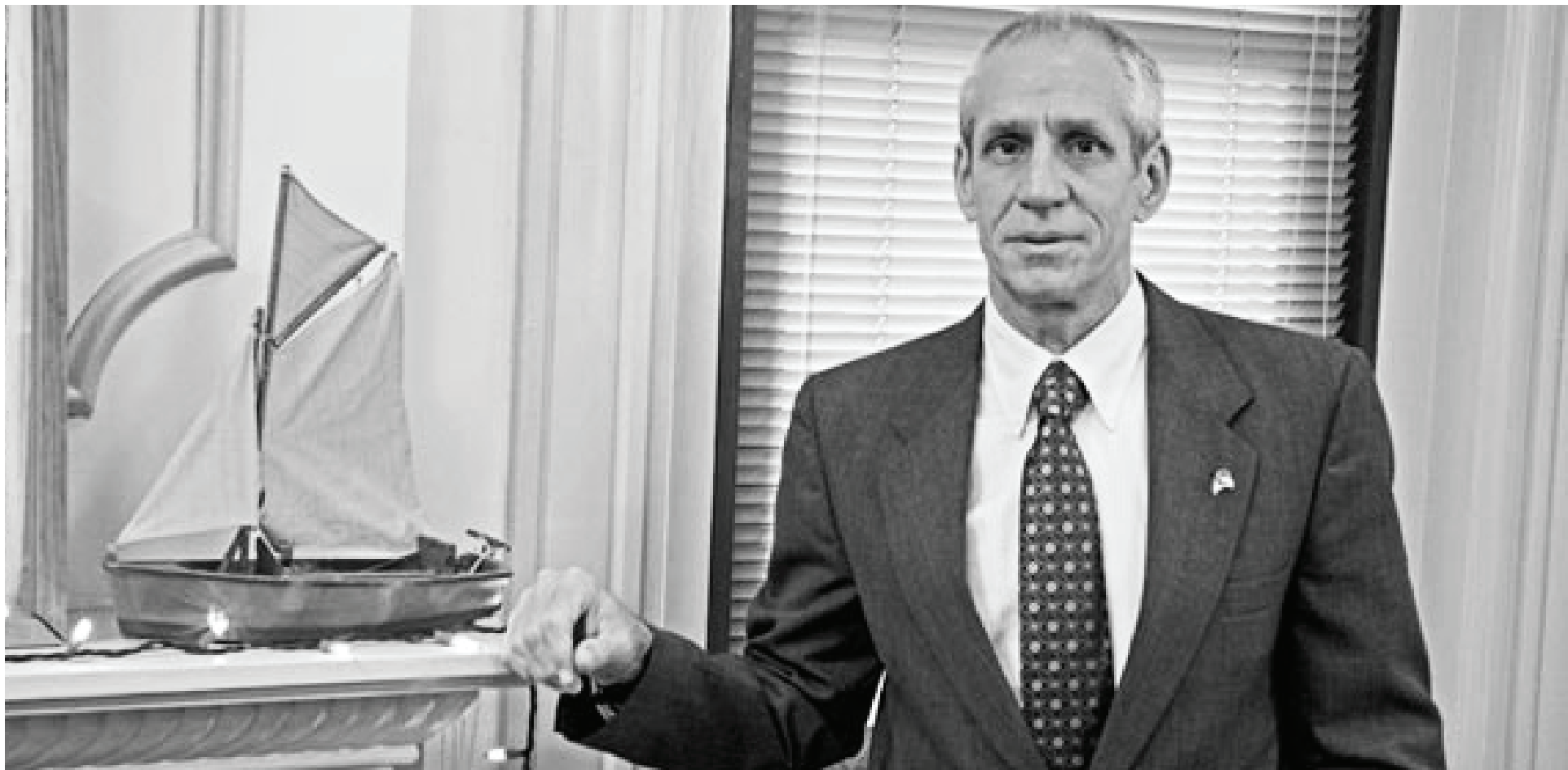


PHOTO COURTESY OF VCU DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

VCU assistant vice provost and vice president for student affairs Charles Klink is one of the members of Gov. Bob McDonnell's School and Campus Safety Task Force.

School safety panel will be 'reasonable'

Whitney Spicer and Blake Belden

Capital News Service

Ryan Murphy

News Editor

Members of Gov. Bob McDonnell's School and Campus Safety Task Force vowed Monday that their recommendations on keeping Virginia's schools safe would be based on fact and not emotion.

Among those serving on the task force is Charles Klink, VCU's assistant vice provost and vice president for student affairs. The task force — charged with evaluating the safety of schools and campuses throughout the state — was assembled by McDonnell in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting last month in Newtown, Conn.

"I thought in the wake of that terrible tragedy, it would be prudent to get all of our leading experts from all disciplines together to gather around a table or two, and talk about what can we do better," McDonnell said.

After a gunman shot and killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary, some called for immediate measures, like banning assault weapons or placing armed personnel in schools.

Klink noted that after the shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007, in which 32 students and faculty were killed in an attack by a disturbed student, many practices went into effect or were codified in the Commonwealth, including things like threat assessment teams.

"A lot of the legislation that came out around (the Virginia Tech shootings) kind of reinforced best practices that were already occurring, so I think any

time there's an event like Sandy Hook or Tech or Colorado, one of the positives is that I think it refocuses people on taking a look at what they're doing, how they're doing it and why they're doing it and if there's any gaps," Klink said.

This is the first time Klink has been involved in a task force like this. He said that the group would be looking around the world to identify further ways to protect campuses from acts of violence.

"Initially, there might be some attention paid to things that aren't mandated through code or other kinds of regulations that should be," he said. "And then more globally, are there best practices that we may be able to incorporate in K-12 or higher ed that aren't incorporated across the board or across institutions."

He noted that having had a tragedy akin to the Sandy Hook incident in our own state means that many institutions have already instituted preventative and early warning efforts. He points to VCU's on-campus sirens, in-classroom alert systems, text and email alerts as well as the school's threat assessment team.

"I do feel fundamentally that Virginia in some ways is ahead of the curve because there's been a lot of trainings and a lot of educational efforts to help people at universities and colleges about these issues and how to prepare and how to respond," Klink said.

McDonnell issued an executive order

creating the task force on Dec. 20, just six days after the Sandy Hook shootings. He appointed members to the task force last week. It has 45 members, ranging from teachers, law enforcement officials, mental health practitioners to legislators, parents and students.

Marla Decker, Virginia's secretary of public safety and a co-chair of the task force, said the group's recommendations would not be reactionary but rather based on data, analysis and evidence.

"We must take a reasonable, methodical approach to school and campus safety," Decker said. "This doesn't mean that the task force should not think creatively — it should. But we must take a logical approach to sending recommendations to the governor and to the General Assembly."

Another task force member is state Delegate Margaret Ransone, R-Kinsale, a mother of two.

"I think that being a mom and wanting to make sure that our children are safe will absolutely play a part," she said. "I have an 11-year-old and a 7-year-old, both in public schools. But because of the oath I took, my decisions will be fully based on the information that we have."

The task force will have three main subgroups: education, mental health and public safety. These subgroups will work together to produce the most effective results, Decker said.

Klink said working groups focusing on different aspects of school safety, from education and public safety to mental health, will face a quick turnaround for their initial recommendations — the Governor is requesting the first set by Jan. 31 — to take advantage of legislators being together in Richmond for the General Assembly's 2013 session. The education work group that Klink is serving on will have its first meeting on Jan. 17.

The task force is scheduled to issue a final report by June.

McDonnell apologized to the panel for the tight deadlines. But he said time was of the essence.

"I think that we have a very important duty to make sure in our education system, K-12 or university, every person has the ability to work hard and gain access to the American dream and to do it in a safe and secure environment," McDonnell said.

On Jan. 15, VCU's Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration David Hanson advised VCU community members in an email to review materials on how to respond to an active shooter situation. Included in the email were a Department of Homeland Security pamphlet and a video entitled "Run, Hide, Fight." **CT**

One man's trash is another's lifesaver



United 2 Heal recently signed a contract with the Eastern Region Medical Supply Regulation Board to gather all of the surplus medical supplies on the east coast.

Katelyn Boone
Staff Writer

This summer, Katrina Bibb, a recent VCU communication arts graduate, will be traveling to Egypt with important cargo: 75,000 respirators for the Egypt's Children's Cancer Hospital in Cairo.

Without Bibb and her colleagues, however, usable medical supplies like those respirators could end up in the trash. Every year, American hospitals discard thousands of tons of usable materials -- as much as \$20 billion, according to one New York Times article.

Bibb is a member of United 2 Heal, a humanitarian aid organization at VCU that collects, sorts and ships surplus medical supplies to countries in need. United 2 Heal has partnered with 3M medical supply company and local hospitals to donate the 75,000 respirators.

The VCU chapter of the organization, which originated at the University of Michigan, was founded in 2011 by VCU students Mohamed Ibrahim, now a senior in biology, and Irfan Mujeednuddin, currently a senior in the marketing department.

Mujeednuddin recalls that in the beginning, the organization had a hard time getting the supplies it wanted to pass along.

"(We were) hitting dead ends all of the time -- we've heard 'no' way more times (than yes)," he said.

U m a i r Khan, a fresh-

man chemical engineering major, said that United 2 Heal has created lasting partnerships with local contributors since its inception. In the early stages, 10 volunteers from United 2 Heal would

VOLUNTEERS OF UNITED 2 HEAL AT VCU HAVE PACKAGED, SHIPPED AND DISTRIBUTED THESE MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT TO CHILDREN'S ORPHANAGES IN EGYPT, SUDAN, GHANA AND SYRIA



Members of United 2 Heal pose with donated medical supplies.

go to Uncle Bob's Self Storage -- which allows the group to store their medical supplies free of charge -- for 10 hours every week to package and prepare future shipments of medical supplies.

Over the past two years, MCV hospital has donated over \$2 million worth of surplus medical supplies to United 2 Heal. Volunteers of United 2 Heal at VCU have packaged, shipped and distributed these medical supplies and equipment to children's orphanages in Egypt, Sudan, Ghana and Syria, Khan said.

But United 2 Heal's isn't just a local group sending supplies out into the world. They are cultivating relationships with organizations around the globe, like the Pan-American Trauma Society and the World Pediatric Project.

Recently, the group signed a contract

with the Eastern Region Medical Supply Regulation Board, which regulates medical supplies on the East Coast and agreed to supply the group with all surplus medical supplies on the East Coast.

In addition to sponsoring medical shipping programs, United 2 Heal started the Global Art Initiative to provide a place for artists in developing countries to sell their work. The group says that this empowers the societies to which they send the supplies.

Last semester, United 2 Heal had an art auction in late October -- the same weekend that Hurricane Sandy threatened the eastern seaboard. Items sold at the auction included jewelry, paintings by VCU students and art from Ghana. The auction raised about \$2,000 to help support United 2 Heal's Ghana affiliations. **CT**

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CRIME LOG 1/10 – 1/15

THURSDAY, JAN. 10

Alcohol violation West Broad and Crane streets - A male visitor was arrested for providing alcohol to persons under the age of 21.

Alcohol violation/assault offense Sahara's, 813 W. Grace St. - A male visitor was arrested for underage consumption of alcohol. A second male visitor was arrested for malicious wounding.

Purse snatching West Broad and Monroe streets - A female victim advised that a male snatched her purse. referred to outside agency

FRIDAY, JAN. 11

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

Vandalism 612 N. Lombardy St. - A male employee advised that an unknown person(s) vandalized a door.

Drug violation 1100 block of West Grace Street - A male visitor was arrested for possession of a controlled substance, possession of a schedule II controlled substance and possession of marijuana.

Weapons violation 817 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for possession of a concealed weapon.

Theft from motor vehicle Corner of North Belvidere and West Grace streets - A victim advised that a known person broke into her vehicle.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12

Disorderly conduct Corner of West Main and North Belvidere streets - A male visitor was arrested for unlawful entry into the street.

Drug violation Corner of Laurel Street and Cathedral Place - A male visitor was arrested for possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

Petit larceny 1600 W. Grace St. - A male visitor was arrested for possession of stolen property.

Petit larceny Snead Hall, 301 W. Main St. - A female employee attempted to steal property

SUNDAY, JAN. 13

Assault offense 16 N. Laurel St. - A male student advised that an unknown person(s) assaulted him.

B&E 00 W. Broad St. - A complainant advised that there was an attempted burglary.

Robbery/Assault 1100 block of West Grace Street - A complainant advised that a victim was assaulted and possibly robbed.

MONDAY, JAN. 14

Alcohol violation 900 block of West Cary Street - A male student was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol violation 1200 block of West Broad Street - A male visitor was arrested for offering an alcoholic beverage in public. A second male visitor was arrested for drinking alcohol in public. A third male visitor was arrested for possession of an open container of alcohol in public.

Disorderly conduct 400 block of North Harrison Street - A male visitor was arrested for disorderly conduct and attempting to elude a police officer.

Theft from motor vehicle 0 S. Harrison St. - A victim advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a vehicle.

Theft from motor vehicle 1233 W. Cary St. - A victim advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from a vehicle.

TUESDAY, JAN. 15

Grand larceny Cary Street Gym, 101 S. Linden St. - A female student advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a secured location.

Assault offense 900 W. Grace St. - A male student advised that a known person assaulted him.

Theft from motor vehicle 1000 W. Franklin St. - A victim advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from a vehicle.

ADVERTISEMENT

SPORTS

In this section:

Shaka Smart's Twitter ban • 8
Men's basketball vs. St. Joseph's preview • 9

OPINION

National ranking places target on VCU



On Monday, VCU men's basketball cracked the AP Top 25 for the first time in 28 years.

2013 NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL RANKINGS

RK	TEAM	RCD	PTS
1	LOUISVILLE	15-1	1,591
2	INDIANA	15-1	1,527
3	DUKE	15-1	1,501
4	KANSAS	14-1	1,416
5	MICHIGAN	16-1	1,415
6	SYRACUSE	16-1	1,284
7	ARIZONA	15-1	1,205
8	GONZAGA	16-1	1,141
9	MINNESOTA	15-2	1,041
10	FLORIDA	12-2	1,019
11	OHIO STATE	13-3	939
12	CREIGHTON	16-1	896
13	BUTLER	14-2	855
14	NORTH CAROLINA STATE	14-2	836
15	SAN DIEGO STATE	14-2	704
16	KANSAS STATE	13-2	670
17	MISSOURI	12-3	598
18	MICHIGAN STATE	14-3	426
19	NEW MEXICO	15-2	368
20	NOTRE DAME	14-2	295
21	OREGON	14-2	238
22	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH	14-3	212
23	ILLINOIS	14-4	199
24	UCLA	14-3	185
25	MARQUETTE	12-3	177

Jim Swing
Sports Editor

People like to see that number. Boy, do they. Capturing a spot as one of college basketball's top 25 schools seems to earn teams a certain amount of respect and admiration. And for fan bases, it serves as a sense of pride.

Monday, VCU got the honor of entering the Associated Press Top 25 poll for the first time since the 1984-85 season. Back when Duran Duran was popular, gas was \$1 a gallon and current VCU head coach Shaka Smart was just seven years old. It's been that long.

But showing up in the top 25 can cut both ways.

Sure, it can come in handy when it comes to recruiting. Who wouldn't want to play for a school that's considered to be one of the 25 best out of 347 Division I college basketball schools?

"I think it gets people's attention when you're ranked," Smart said Tuesday. "Recruiting is exposure, you need people's attention."

It's been nearly two years since VCU turned the country upside down with its astounding run to the Final Four. A slew of nationally televised games have since followed, and it seems as if a spot in the top 25 is just icing on the cake.

With ranking comes the responsibility to fend off unranked teams looking to pull off an upset. VCU knows that story; VCU's written that script the past few years. The Rams have knocked off six teams with a higher seeding than them over the past two NCAA Tournaments. "We were excited," VCU senior guard

Troy Daniels said. "But at the same time we saw it as a trap."

Keeping hold of a top 25 spot throughout the course of a season has been a challenge for many teams in the conversation.

The spots are so fragile that nine teams originally placed in the preseason top 25 no longer exist in the rankings.

One simple loss to even a respectable opponent can cost a team its spot and Smart reminded his team of that after the rankings were released.

"You can feel good all you want about getting ranked," he told them. "But if you don't win this week then you won't be ranked anymore."

Ask a solid UNLV team that found that out this past week when it lost its spot at No. 24 in the rankings after a loss to now No. 19 New Mexico. Ask Cincinnati, which lost to a middling St. John's team and then a ranked Notre Dame team before falling from its No. 21 perch. Ask Georgetown, which fell to two straight sturdy teams in Marquette and Pittsburgh before it was stripped of its rankings.

It's that simple.

Still, it feels so un-VCU-like. We're talking about the program that's made its living as the underdog, taking down major conference opponents year after year. Now just about anyone that goes up against the Rams are the underdogs.

"We still find a way to be the underdog," Smart said. "That's when we're at our best."

It'll be difficult for VCU to play that card from here on out. **CT**

Shaka Smart's 'Twitter ban' keeps players out of harm's way

Quinn Casteel
Sports Editor

For the last two years, Shaka Smart's 'Twitter ban' has silenced the VCU basketball team on the wildly popular website, but social media remains a big part of the player's lives.

For VCU senior point guard Darius Theus, Twitter and other forms of social media are an important part of his family and social life, because it allows people he is close with to follow what he's doing on the court, even if they are unable to watch or attend his games.

"I have a lot of family that can't get the games, but they're following on (VCU) Ram Nation and other Twitter feeds," Theus said in an interview with The CT Sports on Tuesday. "I think (social media) is a good thing for sports because you can always know what's going on."

"It's cool, Twitter is everybody's opinion," he continued. "Facebook, Instagram, it's just everyone's opinion; you see funny things up there, and some-

times you see things that are like, 'Did they really just say that?'"

For Theus and the rest of the VCU basketball team including the coaching staff, Twitter is a one-sided medium.

For the last two seasons, head coach Shaka Smart has restricted members of the program from posting on Twitter, but allows them to keep their accounts active. Incoming players are allowed to continue to post on Twitter until they arrive on campus for the first time.

No VCU player or coach who has been a member of the program since the 2011-2012 season has posted a single tweet since Oct. 14, 2011.

However, players such as senior swingman Troy Daniels, junior Juvonte Reddic and sophomore Briante Weber among others have adapted to Smart's Twitter ban by sticking to more privately restricted social media forums like Instagram and Facebook.

"The philosophy behind (the Twitter ban) is not saying things that can give the other team motivation," Daniels said. "A lot of guys get stuck under that

umbrella where they're tweeting something they didn't mean, but people can read it the wrong way, so (Smart) just tries to keep us away from things like that."

Theus added that in addition to a competitive advantage for opponents, players who sent out negative or inappropriate tweets can divide one's own locker room or even jeopardize their own future.

"Some guys just don't know what to say about what they're doing," Theus said of the day-to-day updates many people use Twitter for. "You can say what you're doing, but if you're supposed to be doing something else, and someone back-tracks your Twitter, they may find something negative about you."

"It's not just about motivation but it's also about our futures," he continued, speaking on Smart's Twitter ban. "It can put you in a bad situation that you may not have realized it was a bad situation."

Overall, the two senior guards agreed that Smart's Twitter ban was a posi-

tive thing for the team, considering the trouble that social media has caused other college athletes such as Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel.

On Jan. 4, the Heisman winner posted a photo to Instagram of himself posing with handfuls of cash at a casino, which caused many to question how a college student had acquired so much disposable income.

Manziel later tweeted, "Nothing illegal about being 18+ in a casino and winning money...KEEP HATING!" in response to those questioning his behavior, an action which drew even further criticism the national media.

Although it is highly unlikely any VCU athlete would receive negative attention comparable to Manziel's, Smart's Twitter ban is mainly a safety net for a potential lapse in judgment or maturity.

Theus summed it up: "Some people can handle it and some people can't." **CT**



Senior guards Darius Theus (top, left) and Troy Daniels (bottom, center) have kept their Twitter accounts active, but haven't posted tweets since October 2011.

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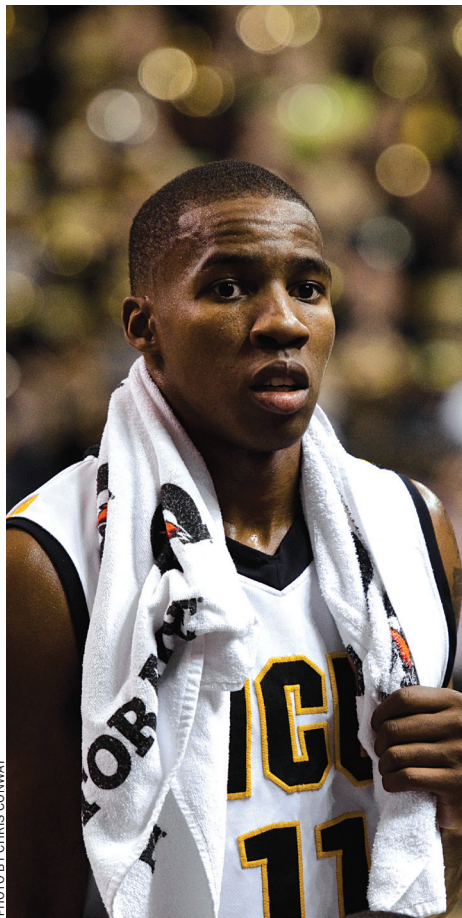


PHOTO BY CHRIS CONWAY

Junior Rob Brandenburg (above) and the Rams host Atlantic 10 preseason favorite St. Joseph's Thursday at 9 p.m.

Zachary Holden
Staff Writer

When the VCU men's basketball team suits up for its third Atlantic 10 conference game, it will be different from the previous two. The Rams will welcome the Saint Joseph's Hawks, picked preseason No. 1 in the A-10, to the Siegel Center for a late game Thursday evening.

"Saint Joe's has a really good team (and) good players," Coach Shaka Smart said. "It's a veteran team that's been around and been through the wars of the Atlantic 10 ... it's going to be an exciting game."

Smart knows that although the game will be an exciting one, it will be one of their toughest tests of the season. The Hawks have a team with four players averaging double-digit points this season and six players averaging over 30 minutes a game.

"They do a lot of things well," Smart said. "First of all, they have some terrific offensive weapons."

One of those weapons to watch for is senior guard Carl Jones, a player who Smart calls a "mini-Allen Iverson." Jones averages 14.8 points per game, which

is tied for the team high. The Rams are going to have to keep his scoring under control if they are looking for a victory.

"Carl Jones is on pace to be one of (Saint Joseph's) top scorers in the program's history, if not the top scorer," said coach Smart.

"There are some great players in the A-10 ... and (Jones) is one of them," said senior point guard Darius Theus. "We've just got to do our job ... whatever Coach Smart needs us to do, we'll do it."

Fellow guard Langston Galloway is the player who Jones is tied with for the Hawks' most points per game. While the Rams have their designated shooter, Troy Daniels, the Hawks have Galloway who scored more threes than Daniels did last season.

Not only does Saint Joseph's have plenty of scoring options, they have solid players on the defensive side. The one to watch is C.J. Akin, the tallest player on the roster.

"Akins (is) an NBA prospect at 6-foot-9, can shoot from outside (and) can handle the ball," Smart said "I was talking to a different coach in the Atlantic 10 and he described C.J. Akin as one of the top 20 shot blockers on the planet, and that includes the NBA."

The Rams know they can't take Saint Joseph's lightly if they want to win on Thursday. Daniels and the rest of the team feel like now that they're ranked, they've got even more to prove.

With that ranking, teams are going to want to beat them even more for a quality win on their resumes come tournament time. Saint Joseph's is no different.

"We expect them to come in and play hard. We definitely have an 'X' on our back, so we just have to go out there and play like we know how to play and wreak havoc," Daniels said. "Saint Joe's is going to give us their best shot."

Smart thinks the biggest challenge playing Saint Joseph's and other A-10 opposition is the unfamiliarity with all of the teams and not knowing their style of play.

"I think it's a double-edged sword because they don't know us either," he said. "It's a challenge for both teams ... it'll be interesting to see how this works out as the season goes on."

With a win Thursday night, the Rams would continue their venture through conference play with an undefeated record before heading out on the road for more A-10 action. **CT**

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SPECTRUM

In this section:

Virginia bill would ban discrimination in student organizations • 11

Sticky Rice forced to face the music • 13



ILLUSTRATION BY SAGAL HASSAN

VCU students involved in Oscar-nominated film “Lincoln”

Michael Todd
Assistant Spectrum Editor

The world may never know for sure if Abraham Lincoln, as history tells, never told a lie. In 2011, however, several VCU students discovered firsthand the making of the film telling Lincoln’s history-changing story.

Released in October 2012, “Lincoln” recounts the last few months of the Civil War and the 16th president’s push to pass the 13th Amendment. The film, directed by Steven Spielberg, recently received 12 Oscar nominations including best director, picture and actor. While the majority of filming took place in Petersburg, several scenes were shot in Fredericksburg and in the heart of Richmond.

Some VCU students participated in the film’s production as set design and construction workers, extras, actor stand-ins and more. Some were involved for as little as a day or two, while others

returned to the set for weeks.

Auditioning as an extra for “Lincoln” consisted of little more than turning in an application listing basic details such as availability, extracurricular activities and the optional, though preferred, presence of a beard. In his enthusiasm to take part in the film, however, creative advertising student Brad Fantuzzi arrived to the mass interview, conducted in summer 2011, in full costume complete with a guitar used to improvise songs about 19th century life.

Aside from working as a townsman, Fantuzzi most enjoyed portraying a Confederate soldier in the film’s reenactment of the Jacob’s Ferry battle.

To prepare for the scene, extras participated in three days of imitation combat training using rubber guns. Participants were taught four choreographed moves, as well as responses to certain moves to prevent chaos. Extras were sorted into groups based on how quickly they learned — and on whether

or not they could keep a straight face.

During filming, the choreographed element of training proved unnecessary as the extras overtook the scene in a free-for-all. In anticipation of this, stunt actors in the front line learned even more specific fighting moves to provide the illusion of legitimate battle, with chaos reigning in the background.

Extras were also instructed that, if they fell during filming, they were to act dead.

“The first time they said rolling, and then let go, everyone fought their hardest ... and every single person (slipped and) fell on the ground,” Fantuzzi said. “The whole battlefield died in two seconds. And Spielberg got on the (megaphone) and was like, ‘Okay, yeah, I know, falling on the ground, you’re supposed to die. But we can’t have everyone die. So try to stay on your feet.’”

Though the scene lasts little more than 20 seconds in the movie, Spielberg shot the reenactment 25 or more times,

by Fantuzzi’s estimation. Shot on a particularly rainy and frigid day, with heavy wetsuits weighing down the majority of extras, many volunteers abandoned the set because of weather conditions.

In accordance with the Screen Actors Guild guidelines, all participants received additional compensation for potentially hazardous conditions like scenes involving smoke, and cold or wet weather. In the case of “Lincoln,” this also included special qualifications, like any actors with beards. Fantuzzi fell into all of these categories.

Though students’ majors were unimportant in casting, senior theater performance majors Nick Skliris and Justin Ahdoon will be able to add the experience to their resumes for their careers after graduation.

Skliris began his experience with “Lincoln” in August 2011, responding to a “call for beards” put out for the film.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

After playing a dead Confederate soldier for one day and a union soldier for two, Skliris was recruited as a stand-in.

"There was this one kid who was going to be the stand-in for Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and they looked at him, and they looked at me, and they were like, 'No, no, no, get out of here, kid.' And they picked me," said Skliris. "It was literally that lucky, just because I was more (Gordon-Levitt's) height and more his hair color."

Technical preparation for films is often tedious and lengthy. Stand-ins hold the place for the actors as the crew perform routine prep work, including lighting, while the actor remains offstage. Unlike stunt or body doubles, they do not actually appear on camera, but still physically resemble the actor as closely as possible so that conditions will remain the same for the actor during filming.

Skliris acted as a stand-in for several of the film's key actors, including Daniel Day-Lewis, who portrayed Lincoln, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who portrayed Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln.

Though he only participated in filming as a Union soldier for two days, Ahdoot says he is visibly recognizable in one of the movie's scenes.

Working on the film's set proved, for Skliris and Ahdoot, to be an enlightening experience in both positive and somewhat unfortunate ways. The pair witnessed a lot off screen, such as how locations for different scenes, though entirely unrelated in the film, were located almost directly on top of one another on set.

"Watching the movie, it was actually a little hard sometimes... A lot of the movie magic was unveiled," said Ahdoot. "It just made it, when you watched it, a lot different because you're like, I know that (isn't real) because I was right there. It's hard to believe what they're telling me."

Some VCU students were as active off camera as those who participated as extras and stand-ins. Cinema and philosophy student Andy Kennedy-Derkay worked as an assistant to the directing department of "Lincoln."

After both an initial interview with production coordinator, Justin Haut, and a follow-up interview, Kennedy-Derkay began work with the directing department a week and a half before the film's production, all the way through the last few days of filming. Working three or four days a week at eight to 10 hours a day, Kennedy-Derkay spent over 350 hours on set while still balancing a 16 credit semester his sophomore year.

Some of Kennedy-Derkay's responsibilities included processing and directing hundreds of background actors, working with the stunt coordinator on practice stunts, keeping order—and quiet—during filming and closing down set at the end of the day.

"We had over 200 actors in almost every shot, and 100 of them were incredible name actors like Michel Stuhlbarg, John Hawkes, Dave Costabile, David Warshovsky and Walton Goggins," Kennedy-Derkay said. "These guys populate so many of the films that helped me fall in love with filmmaking, and it was unbelievable to go to work for two or three weeks and see them every day."

For two weeks, Kennedy-Derkay assisted the stunt coordinators and rehearsal team in the film's opening battle scene. At one point, he was allowed behind the camera to film.

Kennedy-Derkay said he felt that what got him hired was not his cinematic background, but his enthusiasm.

"They owed me nothing in letting me help," said Kennedy-Derkay of the experience. "And getting to observe guys like cinematographer Janusz Kaminski and gaffer David Devlin light a set was more tribute than I ever could have expected as a college sophomore."

Even VCUarts students played a role

in bringing the film to fruition.

Alum Joshua Bennett was one of three mold-maker and plasterers, all of whom have BFAs from VCU's Sculpture and Extended Media program, involved in set creation. Bennett and his team, led by VCU alum and construction coordinator Richard Blakenship, sculpted, carved and cast whatever the production designer instructed them, using reference photos.

"Sometimes it would be, 'We need a hollow architecture feature to cover the sprinkler heads in this modern theatre, can you make something like that?'" Bennett said of his job. "And we'd have to kind of make it up."

A majority of Bennett's time was spent producing approximately 200 4x8 foot brick skins. The team had to create a mold, which would allow for unlimited copies of the same design, of a negative of a brick wall. The team placed burlap between layers of plaster for a realistic textured effect. Though the skins had the appearance of real brick, each was only a quarter to a half an inch thick.

Despite any physical discomforts of filming, VCU student "Lincoln" participants were overall appreciative for the opportunity to appear in the popular film—and, perhaps, to save some money on shaving cream and razor blades. **CT**

Bill targets discrimination in student organizations

Samantha Foster
Spectrum Editor

Michael Todd
Assistant Spectrum Editor

A bill introduced in the 2013 Virginia General Assembly session is aiming to outlaw discrimination by student organizations at higher education institutions in the state.

Senate Bill 1074, proposed by Senator Mark Obenshain, R-Harrisonburg, was referred to the Senate Committee on Education and Health. A similar measure is being sponsored in the House of Delegates by Delegate Mark Cole, R-Spotsylvania.

The Senate bill says political and religious student organizations are au-

thorized to award leadership to members who have an interest to further the mission of these groups. It also states that only those who are committed to furthering the mission of the organization should hold a position of leadership within the organization.

According to the newly proposed bill, no public college or university can discriminate against any student organization which has been officially recognized as a student organization by the institution. This would mean, so long as a student was committed to the mission of any organization, they could not be banned from joining based on their affiliations.

Students with no official religious affiliation could not be forbidden from joining an organization of another affiliation. Similarly, a student who openly

identified as a member of the Democratic party could not be prohibited from joining a Republican-based student organization — so long as they helped to further that organization's goals.

Greg Deekens, a broadcast journalism major, has been involved with the Episcopal Campus Ministry at VCU since fall 2011. He believes SB 1074 would be welcome at VCU.

"Bill 1074 further solidifies and protects a student's right to have an opinion and be a part of a group, even if they do not agree with it. This bill would keep a channel open for different views and maintain a diverse view on politics and culture," Deekens said in an email.

"Should an atheist join our campus ministry, we would welcome them with open arms. Our campus ministry may be religiously affiliated but we strive to

welcome all persons just as we would welcome anyone during Eucharist, Episcopal or not," he said.

If passed, the bill would apply to all public colleges and universities in Virginia, but not private colleges or universities.

Maggie Lynn Stumpf, a fashion design major and member of Young Life with VCU since 2011, agreed that students would be okay with the passage of SB 1074.

"VCU prides itself on diversity, which I believe is a quality that makes VCU a very welcoming community," Stumpf said in an email. "I think that in the end, this bill would make VCU a stronger community and would help push the diversity in groups such as Young Life." **CT**

**VCU STUDENT
ORGANIZATIONS
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Completed applications may be dropped off at the the VCU Student Media Center, located at 817 W. Broad St. next to Velocity Comics.

Sticky Rice hit with noise lawsuit

Samantha Foster
Spectrum Editor

Sticky Rice is well-known to patrons as a hot spot for sushi, karaoke and tater tots, but the Richmond bar is known for something else by one of its neighbors: noise.

The bar will soon be going to court over a lawsuit regarding noise complaints from a resident living 40 yards from the restaurant. William Graeter, a Richmond resident who has lived at his address near the restaurant and bar on Main Street for about eight years, filed a lawsuit against Sticky Rice in December.

The case, William Graeter v. Gumbo's Creole Cafe, L.C., Sticky Rice ("Sticky Rice"), focuses on the noise from Sticky Rice's speakers, which Graeter said disrupts his home life, mostly between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. or later.

Sticky Rice is located in an urban business district, meaning that the zoning ordinance requires that no music or public address system should be heard beyond the business's building or premises. Because the speakers from Sticky Rice can be heard in Graeter's home, the ordinance has been violated.

According to a statement from Graeter's lawyer, Bryan Streeter, Graeter

has been able to hear the music coming from Sticky Rice in his house with the doors and windows closed for the past year.

Streeter said Graeter has spoken to Sticky Rice management about the noise before, but he claims that all solutions were "ignored or abandoned." The noise has adversely affected his mental and physical health by keeping him awake at night and forcing him to sleep elsewhere, according to the statement.

For Graeter, the noise coming from Sticky Rice is a pressing concern. But other local residents do not see the noise as much of an issue in their day-to-day lives — or, if they do, they are willing to live with it.

"I knew it was a gamble moving into a house right next to a bar and across from Sticky Rice," said VCU graphic design major Isabel Rich, who also lives nearby. "For example, every Tuesday is karaoke night and I swear it sounds like the singers are in my bedroom with me. But like I said, I knew what I was getting myself into. My friends ... will sometimes complain about the noise level, but I think my roommates and I have learned to block it out to a certain extent."

Rich also sees the noise as a side effect of Sticky Rice being a popular venue for students and Richmonders to



PHOTO BY CHRIS CONWAY

The sushi restaurant Sticky Rice is being sued following noise complaints from a resident who lives about 40 yards from the establishment.

spend their evenings.

"Sticky Rice is a place to listen to loud music and have a raucous time. It's supposed to be loud. That's their thing," Rich said. "It's a noisy street regardless of the Sticky Rice patrons. It's called

'Main Street' for a reason."

Sticky Rice management chose not to comment on the lawsuit. According to Streeter, the restaurant had not taken legal action at press time. **CT**

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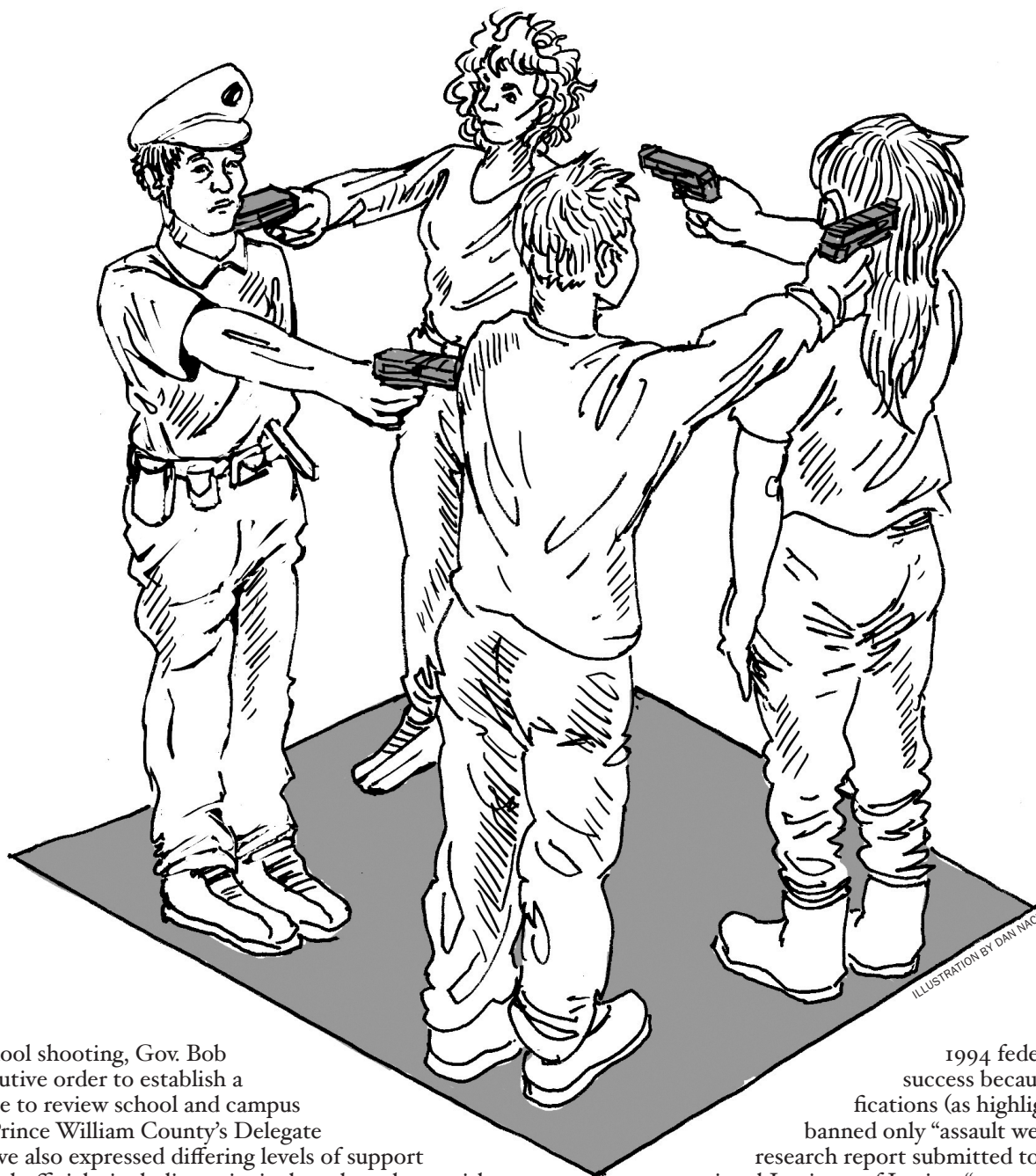


OPINION

In this section:

With gun violence, be preventative,
not reactive • 14
Remove CPC ads from handbook • 15

Guns the problem, not the solution



Shane Wade
Opinion Editor

After the Newtown school shooting, Gov. Bob McDonnell issued an executive order to establish a multidisciplinary task force to review school and campus safety. The governor and Prince William County's Delegate Robert G. Marshall (R) have also expressed differing levels of support for legislation to arm school officials, including principals and teachers, with guns. While it's a smart move to assemble a diverse group of individuals to open a dialogue, the governor must realize that some unpopular, but necessary restrictions and legislative solutions must also be implemented.

We can't fight fire with fire. By definition, reactive measures are not deterrents. On Nov. 11, 2009, at Fort Hood, a single gunman proved that no matter how much security a place has, it's still susceptible to destructive violence. Adding guns to schools won't necessarily prevent shootings from occurring. It will, however, increase the proliferation of guns and reinforce the perception of ours being an either do-nothing or reactive society and solidifying gun-obsessed culture that allows weapons to be easily accessible. Gun ownership rates, despite proliferate media reports, is in decline in America. Instituting a new standard that includes armed security officers patrolling public schools introduces an Orwellian twist to an already edgy nation. The governor's proposal is not a solution to gun violence, albeit it be school-related or crime-related; it's part of the problem.

What we don't need are the unnecessary trigger reactions like assault weapon bans. Fully automatic weapons are already off-limits to civilians; semi-automatics, which have been around for over 100 years, are still available to the public, as they should be. Americans want to own guns, as is their right; it's not the government's job to blankly limit that freedom, but rather curb it in favor of sensible policy decisions that keep guns out of the hands of the untrained and unstable. Congress's

1994 federal assault-weapons ban didn't achieve success because it didn't account for weapon modifications (as highlighted in the Aurora shooting) and it banned only "assault weapons," which, according to a 2004 research report submitted to the Department of Justice and the National Institute of Justice, "are rarely used in gun crimes" outside of mass shootings.

Preventative measures, not reactive measures, are needed to address the issue of gun violence in America. Virginia's gun show loopholes need to be closed, as well as tougher restrictions on who can own and carry weapons. Legislation that prevents guns from being placed in the hands of potentially violent and mentally unstable individuals and limits the lax accessibility of weapons is the action we need. Although the governor has advocated for establishing a dialogue about mental health in its relation to gun laws, he's also cut funding for mental health services. Mixed actions send mixed messages.

Having armed guards in school isn't a stupid idea; it's just not the best, most effective or well thought-out idea. It creates a more passively oppressive environment for children, results in higher costs for schools and local governments and doesn't accurately address gun violence. It's not a solution, it's a reaction.

The safety task force, as it now stands, is limited to concentrating on measures to improve safety for students at school. But it's also important to realize the reality we face as Americans: of the 32,163 firearm deaths in this country alone, GunPolicy.org found that 19,766 come from suicide and 11,101 from homicide. For the United States to be the leader in this statistical field is disastrous and shameful. Gun violence in America is a serious issue that needs immediate and efficient congressional action. **GT**

A crisis in advertising

Safiya Bridgewater
Guest Contributor

As we begin spring semester with hopes of upping our GPAs, being more organized, creating new memories and perhaps seeking out more beginning-of-semester activities with free food, don't forget to stop by the Commons to pick up your complimentary copy of the VCU student handbook.

But don't look at listings in the advertisement section or the inside back cover for that matter. Inside, there are a couple of ads purposefully set out to hurt and manipulate you. How can that be if there is a section in the front of the handbook that is adamant about keeping students safe?

Innocuous at first glance, there are two ads if you are pregnant, need help and "just don't know what to do." Next to a photo of a forlorn, college-aged student, a website and a 24-hour hotline are listed in order to "learn more about your options."

It is quite unfortunate that these seemingly helpful advertisements are for a local crisis pregnancy center.

According to NARAI's Virginia website, crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) are "limited-service fake 'clinics' run by anti-choice organizations that advertise free services to women facing unintended pregnancies. Many CPCs are run by or affiliated with national networks, such as CareNet, Bethany Christian Services, Birthright and Heartbeat International." Sure enough, at the bottom left-hand corner of these ads in the student planner, in the finest of fine prints, it reads "Bethany Christian Services."

The issue with these organizations is not that they are faith-based, but

instead use faith as justification to push their agenda in a dangerous way, with people's health at stake. CPCs intentionally prey on young adults and people of color by offering health services like free ultrasounds and STD tests just to get them in the door. They know that this vulnerable population is most likely to be unaware of their tactics and can be easily manipulated. These offered services include child-rearing resources, adoption referrals and abstinence-only programs.

Many of these "clinics" have no real medically licensed staff, but volunteers who are just as medically uninformed as the people coming in for the services they offer, as reported by Time magazine reporter Nancy Gibbs in 2007. But this isn't all they lie about.

According to Planned Parenthood's website, CPCs may also avoid giving patients complete and correct information about all options — abortion, adoption and parenting; try to frighten with misleading films and pictures to keep from choosing abortion; lie about the medical and emotional effects of abortion; discourage the use of certain methods of birth control; and may even lie about pregnancy, fooling patients into continuing their pregnancy without knowing it. If a decision is delayed, it could make abortion more risky. It could also keep patients from getting early prenatal care.

Regardless of how deep you care to tread into the endless anti-abortion, pro-abortion rights debate, what you just read should be alarming at the very least. It should shock you to the core that these not-yet-illegal organizations have free reign to manipulate the minds and bodies of college-aged students

and young people of color. It should be illegal to pose as a licensed medical professional and lie to any pregnant female seeking legitimate health care and consultation, regardless of what they want the outcome of their pregnancy to be.

At the very least, an institution like VCU, a university with 40 percent of its student body from underrepresented populations, a university in the center of a city populated primarily by people of color, a university that has crafted a five-year diversity plan and supposedly has a "commitment to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination," should not have ads in its student handbook that prey specifically on these marginalized populations.

CPCs are heavily funded by both federal and state governments and thus have plenty of money to put toward manipulative advertising campaigns and though the printing of the handbook relies on the paid advertisements in back of it, handbook planners should take more consideration.

By taking money from CPCs in exchange for ads in our handbook, VCU is not only exposing its student body to dangerous forms of fake healthcare, but is helping to fund their endeavors. We should not condone what CPCs do, and knowing what they do, we should not condone any of their advertisements on our campus.

I urge VCU to remove the advertisements from any future issues of the student handbook and to prevent them from existing elsewhere on campus. I also encourage the student body to be aware of this issue and to speak up in regards to this or in any instance when our health and safety is compromised. **CT**

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Shane Wade
Opinion Editor

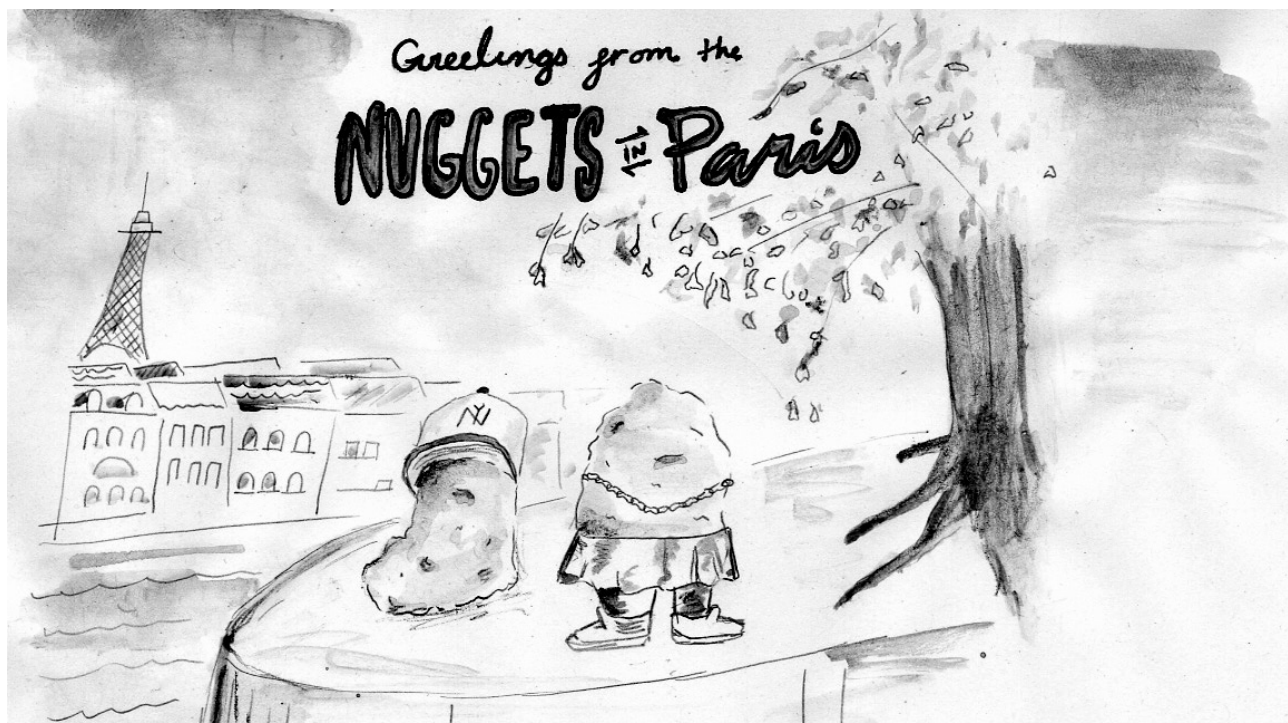
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Nuggets in Paris | By Sam Wittwer



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