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Police rule freshman's death a suicide

LIZ BUTTERFIELD
Online News Editor

VCU freshman Hobie Dunston Kopczynski, 18, died on Sunday, March 30, and police have ruled his death a suicide.

At 11:18 p.m., Richmond Police received notification of a person “down” in the 100 block of Tredegar Street. Upon arrival, officers found a deceased man.

The person appeared to have jumped from the Leigh Street bridge and died, according to RPD spokesperson Gene Lepley. Between Monday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon, police identified the 18-year-old pre-med freshman from York County, Va. The Richmond office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia reported the death was a suicide.

Kopczynski, who aspired to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, graduated from York High School in 2013 with a scholarship from the school’s alumni association. He played football, wrestled and volunteered for the York County Youth Commission.

Kopczynski’s roommate in Gladding Residence Center, Derek Pierce, tweeted Kopczynski had been missing since 9 p.m. on Sunday. A photo of Kopczynski was retweeted more than 100 times in the hours that followed.

Hundreds of VCU students and friends tweeted using the hashtag #RIPHobie with prayers and condolences the following day.

“We are sad to report the death of a student off campus,” said VCU spokesperson Mike Porter in an email. “The university has been in touch with those who are close to the student to make them aware of available university resources that provide support.”

Kopczynski’s father, Barry, said his son was a friendly, good hearted person who always wanted to help others

out and was close with his family.

Kopczynski visited his family in Yorktown often on the weekends, but Barry said his son usually cut his visits short so he could return to VCU and prepare for the week ahead.

Stephan Martin, who said he was Kopczynski’s boyfriend at the time of his death, said Kopczynski was a caring person who put the needs of others ahead of his own.

“He didn’t talk about the battles he fought inside ... (he) didn’t want to burden me with his problems,” Martin said.

On the night Kopczynski died, Martin said he began to receive cryptic and sentimental messages from Kopczynski’s phone number, including one that said, “I love you baby, forever and always remember that,” and another that said everything is going to be fine.

Martin received four messages before about 10:30 p.m., when he received a direct message on Twitter from a friend who reported Kopczynski had gone missing.

“He made a huge impact on my life and I’m just glad he got to be a part of it,” Martin said.

Kopczynski enjoyed working on computers, cleaning cars and jetskiing. In addition to his father and grandmother, Kopczynski leaves behind his mother Kathy and his 12-year-old sister Landyn.

The family held a funeral on Friday, April 4 at the Crooks Memorial United Methodist Church in Yorktown, Va. About 1,500 people attended the service. Kopczynski was buried in the Peninsula Memorial Park later that afternoon.

Suicide is the leading cause of death among college students, ahead of alcohol related deaths each year, according to an American Public Health Association study from 2011. VCU students may use University Counseling Services or call 1-800-784-2433 for immediate help.



Freshman pre-med student Hobie Kopczynski’s death on March 30 was ruled a suicide by the Richmond Police. Kopczynski leaves behind his mother, father, grandmother, and sister.

Wiz Khalifa, Chevy Woods to perform at Siegel Center

MAYA EARLS
Spectrum Editor

Rapper Wiz Khalifa, known for his hits “Young, Wild and Free” and “Black and Yellow,” will perform a concert at the Siegel Center on April 10.

Khalifa is scheduled to perform at the Siegel Center with Chevy Woods, who is currently signed to Khalifa’s label Taylor Gang Records. Woods met Wiz Khalifa in 2003 at ID Labs studio in Pennsylvania, according to MTV.com, and was featured on Khalifa’s ninth mixtape “Cabin Fever” in 2011. Woods’ fourth mixtape, “Red Cup Music” featured Juicy J, French Montana and Mac Miller. In an interview with MTV, Woods said “Red Cup Music” was the moment when he found his own style as an artist.

“I think I found myself when I put that tape out,” Woods said. “Some laid-back, cool music.”

His most recent mixtape, “Gangland II” was released in October 2013. Woods said he is currently working on his debut studio album with Taylor Gang Records, in an interview with hotnewhiphop.com.

Born Cameron Jibril Thomaz, Khalifa released his first mixtape in 2005 at the age of 18 titled, “Prince of the City: Welcome to Pistolvania.” The following year, he released his first studio album titled, “Show and Prove.” By 2009, Khalifa signed his second record deal with Rostrum Records, and toured with Wu-Tang Clan member U-God. Khalifa was featured on the cover of XXL magazine in 2010 as the “Rookie of the Year.” During that time, he released a free mixtape online titled, “Kush and Orange Juice” which became a trending topic on Twitter. Khalifa said his use of the internet helped him gain a steady following, in an interview with Interview Magazine.

“Anybody who cannot embrace the power of the Internet is just limiting themselves,” Khalifa told Interview Magazine. “The Internet let me bring people into my world- and for free, so that when it came time to support what I’m doing and pay for it, they wanted to.”

Khalifa’s first single with Rostrum and Atlantic Records, “Black and Yellow,” was released in 2010, eventually placing number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Even though the song refers to Khalifa’s hometown of Pittsburgh, Penn., it was adopted as VCU’s unofficial theme song during the men’s basketball Final Four run in 2011. Khalifa won “Best New Artist” at the Black Entertainment Television Awards, and was nominated for five Grammy Awards between 2012 and 2014. Even though making it big as an artist can be overwhelming, Khalifa said he managed to stay in control, in an interview with Interview Magazine.

“I’m really learning every day and just taking control of the situation,” Khalifa said. “Where I had it all locked down on the underground level, now I’m doing the same at the industry level, which is pretty exciting.”

Khalifa announced on Twitter in June 2013 his fifth studio album will be named “Blacc Hollywood.” Khalifa released album’s first single “We Dem Boyz” in February 2014. He said he recorded material with Adele and Mickey Cyrus, but they have not been cleared for the album, says Fuse’s website. The album has no set release date.

Wiz Khalifa and Chevy Woods will perform at the Siegel Center on April 10 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for VCU students and \$25 for non students. Sales are restricted to people 17 and older. Tickets can be purchased at Breakpoint in the Commons, at the Siegel Center Box Office, or through vcuathletics.com

Former Ram Makes Major League Debut

ALEX GREER
Contributing Writer

Ian Thomas, a former VCU pitcher who finished his Rams career in 2009, made his major league debut on March 31 with the Atlanta Braves. He recorded one out and allowed one single in one-third of an inning against the Milwaukee Brewers on Opening Day.

Thomas, who pitched two seasons at Louisburg Junior College before transferring to VCU, started ten games for the Rams in 2008, going 3-3 with 45 strike outs over 60 2/3 innings while posting a 4.45 ERA.

Thomas went undrafted, and found himself signing with Winnipeg Goldeyes of the Canadian Northern League. He played three seasons for Winnipeg, where he accumulated an 11-5 record and won the Northern League Rookie Pitcher of the Year award in 2010.

In 2012, the Braves signed him to a minor-league contract and designated him to Single A Rome. There, Thomas went 5-0 with six saves and 58 strikeouts over 45 and two-thirds innings.

The next year he was promoted to Double A, where Thomas went 7-8 with a 2.76 ERA and 123 strikeouts in a 104 and one-third innings.

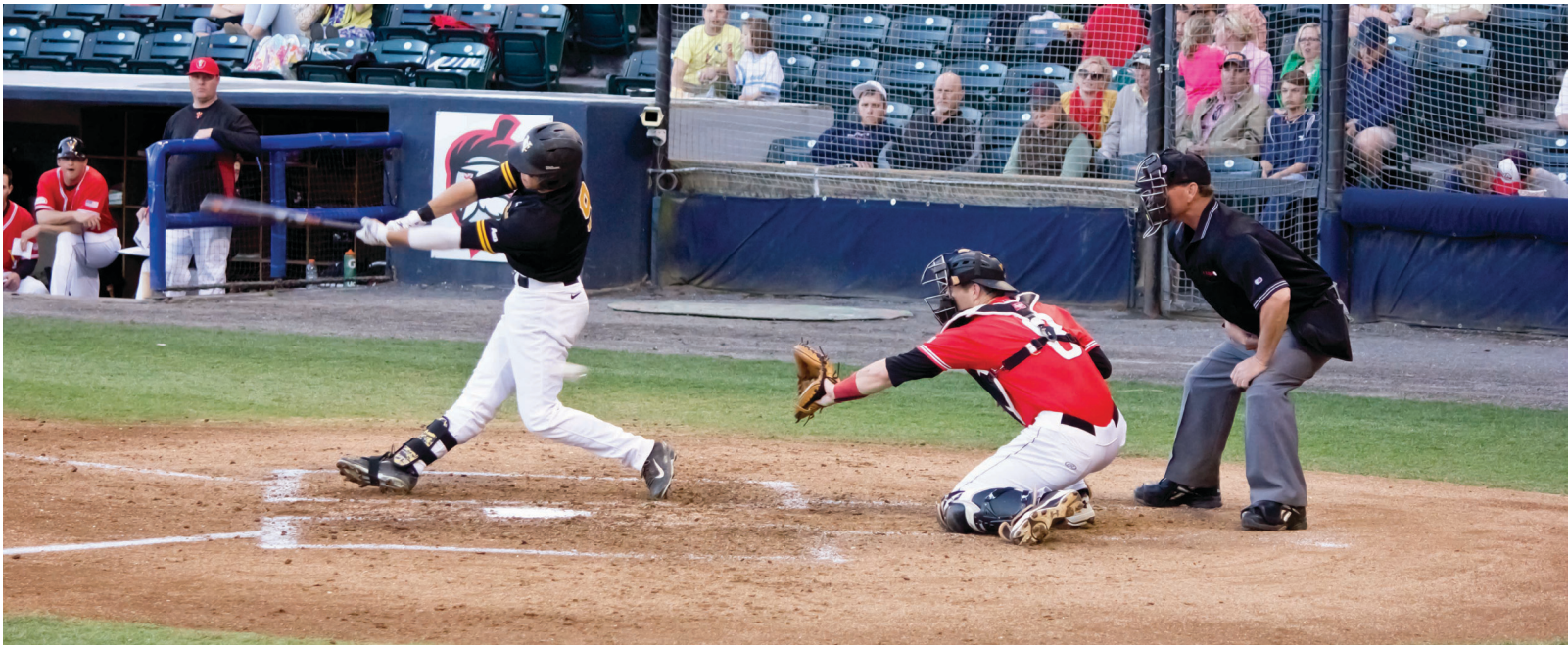
His success with Atlanta’s Double A affiliate helped earn Thomas an invitation to the Braves 2014 Spring Training camp this past offseason, where he impressed Braves Manager Fredi Gonzalez enough to earn a spot on the Opening Day roster.

Gonzalez said he was impressed with the young left-hander despite limited experience.

“He threw quality innings and he has weapons that we can use,” Gonzalez told the Atlanta Journal Constitution.

Thomas has not yet made a second appearance for the Braves, but he does remain on the team’s active major league roster.

VCU stumbles: winning streak halted by three straight losses



The Rams saw a valiant comeback fall short against Virginia Military Institute falling 8-6 in thirteen innings. The Rams are now 3-1 in conference play and 22-7 on the season.

ALEX GREER
Contributing Writer

After opening the season with the best start in school at history at 20-3, the Rams dropped their last three.

After inclement weather canceled two out of the three games in a series at George Mason University, the Rams fell to the Patriots 6-1 on Friday March 28.

The Rams took an early one run lead in the first inning on a Vimal Machin RBI fielders choice but Daniel Concepcion was tagged with his second loss of the season after giving up six earned runs in the first three innings. Eight of GMU’s nine starters all recorded hits and starting pitcher Anthony Montefusco gave up only one earned

run over eight innings pitched.

Despite the lack of scoring, the Rams still managed to record eleven hits. A sixth-inning triple by Bill Cullen brought into a tie with Erik Sauve for career triples at eighteen.

“George Mason has a veteran team and we let them control the at-bats in the middle part of the game,” head coach Shawn Stiffler told VCU Athletics. “They strung at bats together pretty well in those second and third innings and that was the difference today.”

VCU finished their abbreviated road trip at the University of Maryland with a 5-2 loss on Tuesday April 1. Despite once again taking the early lead on a Machin RBI in the first, the pitching staff lost control of their pitches, walk-

ing in three bases-loaded runs in the sixth innings amidst seven total walks. JoJo Howie was the losing pitcher and charged with four earned runs. Thomas Gill, who lasted only a third of an inning in relief, was also charged with an earned run. Machin later recorded a second RBI in the eighth.

“When you go out and play great competition against some of the best teams in the toughest conferences in the country you just can’t give away free base,” Stiffler told VCU Athletics. “I think we did a little too much of that today and that cost us.”

VCU saw a valiant comeback fall short against Virginia Military Institute falling 8-6 in thirteen innings. After the Keydets tagged Daniel Concepcion for five runs in

PHOTO BY BROOKE MARSH



In this section: Professor nominated. Marrow donations. Post-grad surveys. Summer courses.

briefs

LOCAL

Va. ballpark proposal stirs slave-trade memories

A proposal to build a ballpark in the slave-trading center of the former capital of the Confederacy has stirred opposition from African-Americans and others who contend it is "sacred ground" and no place to play baseball.

Opponents heckled Mayor Dwight C. Jones in November when he outlined plans for the \$200 million, stadium-centered economic development project in Shockoe Bottom, the city's oldest neighborhood and home to its lucrative slave trade in the decades leading to the Civil War.

The stadium proposal has unleashed pent-up frustration among those who believe the city has literally buried that shameful chapter of its history.

Opponents have even recruited for their cause descendants of Solomon Northrop, whose tale of being kidnapped and sold into slavery was the basis of the celebrated movie "12 Years a Slave." He was held in a Richmond slave jail before being taken to New Orleans.

Brief by the Associated Press

Va. man with extensive record gets prison term

A Fredericksburg man who has 72 criminal convictions dating back 30 years has been sentenced to serve four years in prison for his latest offense.

The Free Lance-Star reports that Duane Graves was sentenced this week for using a credit card to make a \$7 purchase. The credit card was in a wallet he found.

The Circuit Court judge sentenced the 46-year-old Graves to a term exceeding the state's recommended guidelines because of his extensive criminal record.

According to the evidence presented by prosecutor, Graves found the wallet after another man had dropped it. He then went to a nearby gas station and used the credit card.

Graves' attorney sought mercy, noting that his client's last felony conviction was in 2006.

Brief by the Associated Press

Va. sees sharp increase in heroin deaths

Some states, including Virginia, are reporting a rise in heroin use as many addicts shift from more costly and harder-to-get prescription opiates to this cheaper alternative. A look at what's happening in Virginia.

Because of a sharp increase in heroin abuse over the last two years, Virginia State Police Superintendent Col. Steve Flaherty said combating the drug has become top priority for law enforcement.

State Police spokeswoman Corinne Geller said Virginia's highest use areas are in Richmond, Hampton Roads and small rural communities in the Shenandoah Valley, along the Virginia and West Virginia border. According to the Office of the Medical Examiner, heroin-related deaths in urban areas have been rising, as did the number of rural counties touched by the drug, since 2011.

Brief by the Associated Press

NATIONAL

Mudslide: Hundreds gather for prayer service

Gov. Jay Inslee was among several hundred people who gathered Friday night for an interdenominational prayer service honoring the victims, families and rescuers affected by the deadly March 22 mudslide in Oso. Hanging at the front of the Haller Middle School gym where the service took place was a large banner that simply said "Together." Clergy involved in planning the Arlington event wanted to reflect the connection among neighbors not only in Oso but in nearby Arlington and Darrington, KING-TV reported. The audience twice gave standing ovations to first responders who continue to search the debris for missing people.

Brief by the Associated Press

Army may never learn motive of Fort Hood rampage

Despite evidence that suggests Spc. Ivan Lopez had an argument before going on a shooting rampage, investigators said they may never determine what compelled the Fort Hood soldier to kill three soldiers and wound 16 others before taking his own life.

Lt. Gen. Mark Milley, Fort Hood's commander, said that an "escalating argument" precipitated the assault. He declined to discuss the cause of the argument but said investigators believe Lopez made no effort to target specific soldiers — even though at least one of the soldiers shot was involved in the dispute.

However, the military has not established a "concrete motive" for Spc. Ivan Lopez's rampage, said Chris Grey, a spokesman for the Army's Criminal Investigation Command based in Quantico, Va.

And because Lopez is dead, he added, "the possibility does exist that we may never know why the alleged shooter did what he did."

Brief by the Associated Press

Professor nominated for highest educational honor

STEFANI ZENTENO
Contributing Writer

VCU's director of counseling psychology Everett Worthington, Ph.D., has been nominated to receive the Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Pepperdine University for his work in psychology and leadership in the field of counseling.

The Doctor of Humane Letters is an honorary degree awarded to individuals who have distinguished themselves in areas other than science, government, literature or religion, and is the highest honor the Board of Regents of Pepperdine University can award a professor.

An official ceremony will be held on May 17. In addition, Worthington is set to deliver the commencement address at the university and attend a luncheon hosted in his honor. Pepperdine University is a private Christian university located in Malibu, Calif.

Worthington was notified about the honorary degree about a month ago when he was also asked to be Pepperdine's commencement speaker.

Worthington has published more than 350 scholarly articles and papers and has written and edited more than 30 books. Worthington studies forgiveness, religion and spirituality in counseling and marriage.

"I frankly thought they had made a mistake and I'd better accept quickly before they find out

that they made a mistake and took it back. I was pretty surprised, I didn't anticipate anything like that," Worthington said.

Worthington said he feels a lot of gratitude, and is honored the Board of Regents of Pepperdine University would choose him for that honor.

The best advice Worthington said he can give to people is to be virtuous, unselfish and positive.

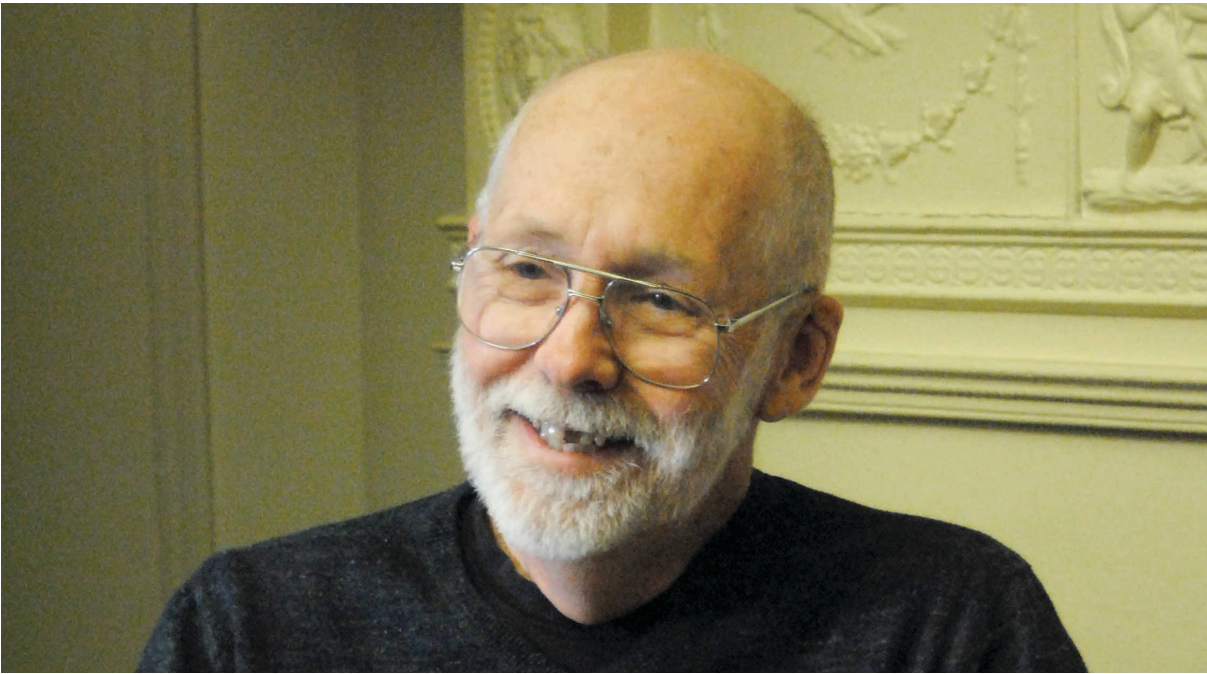
"He has quite a history of meaningful work. He's body of research is one of the most impressive portfolios I've seen," said Jennifer Elswick, the Director for Strategic Initiatives with the Department of Psychology.

Elswick added that the title Worthington will be conferred is fitting because it speaks to the enormous positive influence he and his work have had on others.

"Dr. Everett is the most hard-working individual I have ever met, and also the most humble," said Caroline Lavelock, a third-year graduate student studying Counseling Psychology at VCU. "We have co-authored many papers together, and he has advised my thesis and dissertation."

Worthington is Lavelock's direct academic adviser. She came to VCU specifically to work with him, and said she believes the recognition is well deserved.

"He has spent his entire career here at VCU, almost 40 years, and



VCU psychology professor Everett Worthington, Ph.D., has been nominated for the Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Pepperdine University.

he has done so much for our psychology program and for the careers of each of his mentees," she said.

According to Lavelock, Worthington has done a lot for the psychology program, and for the careers of each of his mentees. He has spent almost his entire career here at VCU.

"I can't wait to tell him how proud we are to see him achieve this great recognition," Lavelock said.

Another student describes Worthington as being extremely friendly and patient, as well as being a highly pro-

ductive researcher, and teacher.

Yin Lin, a four-year doctoral student in counseling psychology at VCU, said she believes she's received the most support from him through her Ph.D. program.

Chelsea Greer is also pursuing a Ph.D. in counseling psychology, and this is her last year at VCU. Worthington has supervised all of her research projects and has been her advisor during her five years at VCU.

"Much of his time and energy goes into his work," Greer said.

"However, he still finds time for everyone else that needs him, including his graduate and undergraduate students ... he has been a mentor to me personally and professionally."

Greer added that Worthington's life is one of service to others such as, his students, co-workers, family and everyone.

"It's truly not an exaggeration to say that countless lives have been bettered, and continue to be bettered, by Dr. Worthington," she said.

Students register to donate marrow



VCU's chapter of Be the Cure on Campus hosted a bone marrow registry event in the honors college where students could join the national registry by completing a cheek swab.

ALI JONES
Contributing Writer

VCU students can now assume an active role in helping others suffering from various diseases through a new organization, Be the Match on Campus.

The organization came to VCU in January 2014, and there are chapters nationwide, including other Virginia schools such as Virginia Tech, James Madison, University of Virginia, William and Mary and Christopher Newport. Be the Match on Campus is part of a larger organization, Be the Match, which is a subunit of the National Marrow Donor Program.

Laura Garipey, head of teaching and learning at Cabell Library and president of Be the Match on campus, brought a chapter to VCU after learning more about Be the Match and it's need for donors.

"Bringing Be the Match on Campus to VCU is so nice ... the population is so heavy and diversified, which is great for donations," Garipey said.

Virginia's only longest, continuously operating comprehensive bone marrow transplant program is at VCU's Medical Center, which is already partnered with Be the Match, creating a great synergy with the new chapter, Garipey said.

When registered with Be the Match, one is placed on a national list, but with local drives, the organization tends to be able to recruit an ethnically similar mix.

Matches are usually difficult to find, as the numbers are heavily tilted toward the white population; 93 percent of whites are able to find matches, while smaller minorities

like African Americans are only at 63 percent, Garipey said.

More than two-thirds of transplants originate from Be the Match; many who register will never be contacted for a match, but everyone is helpful, and those who are more diverse or an ethnic minority are in higher demand, said John McCarty, M.D., director of the Bone Marrow Transplant program.

"People don't get transplants unless they're at their last stop," Garipey said. "You have to think about what you're giving someone."

The transplant program at VCU performs approximately 160-170 marrow transplants a year, McCarty said. Across the United States, more than 55,000 transplants have occurred through Be the Match since 1987 when the organization was formed, and nearly 6,000 transplants occurred in 2012 alone.

Formed in 1987 as well, the Massey Cancer Center and Bone Marrow Transplant Program at VCU received the 2013 Community Partnership award through the National Marrow Donor Program.

Seventy-five percent of transplants and donations are through the peripheral blood stem cells, which is extracted through an apheresis machine, and 25 percent are through the harvesting of bone marrow, which is a simple outpatient general procedure, Garipey said.

VCU's transplant program utilizes the peripheral blood stem cells the most often, but occasionally uses bone marrow, McCarty said.

The registry targets those between 18 and 44, and many are encouraged to participate in the drives to join the registry.

With three drives under its belt, VCU's Be the Match on Campus has another drive occurring April 28 on the Monroe Park Campus, hoping to further the diversification of the bone marrow transplant list.

Judy Davis, the transplant coordinator for the Bone Marrow Transplant program at VCU, said any participation in the community is extremely helpful, and how college campuses are good for finding participants that are young, healthy and diverse.

"It's so hard to find donors that match up to diverse ethnicities, and VCU has the chance to increase those levels," Davis said.

Kristen Donovan, assistant director for substance abuse prevention at the Wellness Resource Center, participated in Be the Match when she was an undergraduate at her college in North Carolina.

Registering her freshman year of college, she never expected the letter Red Cross that arrived her senior year, stating she was a match.

"I found out it was a 27-year-old male with a wife and kids that needed my bone marrow donation," Donovan said. "After a year I was able to be in contact with him. This past year, I received a letter saying he got to walk his daughter down the aisle, and a thank you for being able to watch his kids grow up."

Donovan had her bone marrow extracted from her pelvis and hip bone after being placed under anesthesia, and was in class the next day.

"Chances are you won't get called after you take a cheek swab, but it's such a cool experience to have a good impact on someone else," Donovan said.

JANEAL DOWNS
Staff Writer

Beginning with the Spring 2014 graduates, VCU will survey alumni on their post-graduation activity in order to collect data which can provide incoming and future students knowledge of what to expect from their majors.

VCU is currently the largest of 15 pilot universities planning to administer the "Outcome Survey" created by the Texas based company, CSO Research Incorporated. Director of the University Career Center Joe Testani said they expect to receive initial results from the survey within the month of June. The university will continue to administer the survey with CSO Research for at least the next three years.

"The benefit is that we get a more complete picture of our graduates' pursuits during their first year after leaving VCU than we ever have before," Testani said.

Along with the University Career Center, the Office of Planning and Decision Support and the Provost's Office are also involved with the survey.

"One of the best measures of VCU's success is its graduates' success," Testani said. "Understanding your post-graduation plans and your satisfaction with your education allows VCU to improve its academic programs and student services."

CSO Research Inc. provides career center automation software to about 800 campuses around the world, said VCU university Career Center's communications coordinator Brian Nicholas.

"The goal of this study is to find out what are students' first destination career outcomes, that doesn't necessarily mean their first job but what do they do after graduation within their first year," Nicholas said. "Where do they go, where do they travel to, what kind of positions do they hold what kind of graduate degrees do they pursue, do they volunteer, do they work part-time, do they work full-time, all of those things."

Graduating students will get an email prior to graduation to participate in the survey and then again 3 months, 6 months and 12 months later for follow ups. Academic departments are expected to begin informing students of the survey in the next couple of weeks Nicholas said.

The survey will not only provide information allowing the career

center to better assist students but will also allow VCU to maintain new legislation, Nicholas said.

For example, Senate Bill 915, the "right to know before you go" bill, was introduced recently by Ron Wyden, Marco Rubio and Mark Warner as well a similar proposal, President Obama's "College Scorecard."

"What it does is, college and universities are responsible for reporting the outcomes of their students, so how much their tuition costs, how much students in a particular program make after they graduate on average how long it takes them to find a job so really that students before they enter college are informed," Nicholas said.

Answers provided on the survey will not be sold or given to outside sources, Nicholas said.

The survey will also include questions regarding what students did as undergraduates in relation to internships and volunteer work, their satisfaction with the university, how they searched for jobs and their salaries.

"Our goal is not to upset, embarrass or make anyone feel slighted in anyway, we're really just interested in the big picture," Nicholas said. "We plan to use the data pretty heavily on our new website."

Nicholas said because many jobs are found with the help of alumni and networking the survey will also help narrow down businesses which frequently hire VCU students. Other than alumni checking their emails after graduation, Nicholas said he didn't foresee many challenges.

Senior vocal performance major Colby Mullen is one graduating student who plans on participating in the survey. He is currently applying for jobs in arts management but said he doesn't know how well people in his major do after graduating.

Mullen said the survey can show incoming students what type of jobs and salaries to expect from their majors after graduation. He said he expects the survey to show many graduates doing better six months after graduation in comparison to three months after.

"I think they do well because we are a really big arts school a lot of times you have to think outside of the box for your career when you're any type of performing or visual arts major," Mullen said.

Summer courses offer wide variety of options



Nearly 17,000 students will complete a semester's worth of material in a fraction of the time this summer in more than 2,500 classes offered by VCU.

MICHAEL MELKONIAN
Contributing Writer

Registration for summer classes is under way, but with some of the sessions as short as three weeks, can students really retain a semester's worth of education in a fraction of the time? About 17,000 students will enroll this summer in more than 2,500 courses ranging from general education requirements to internships, work study and summer abroad programs. The courses are about \$25 cheaper per credit than fall and spring courses. The summer session is great for students dedicated to graduating on time, but it takes extra focus due to the rigorous schedule, said Melissa Koch, summer studies personnel administrator from the Office of the Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success. "It's not for everyone, because the sessions are from three weeks to 12 weeks, so it is less time than the normal semester," Koch said. "It's more work because you have less time."

Koch has also spent time taking graduate-level summer courses and said the learning was deeper in the "third semester" because students have time to discuss things in the long classes and without having to wait too long between class sessions. For Patrick Smith, Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of Music who has taught summer session in nearly all of his years at VCU, being able to concentrate on one or two classes at a time rather than trying to juggle classes, studio and coaching is one of his favorite parts of the summer. "I think there are a lot of benefits to having the time crunch because you can get really intense and really focused on the subject matter and you can reinforce the concepts daily," Smith said. "I'm spread pretty thin in the fall and spring semesters, so in the summer I'm able to focus on that one class."

Smith also said he likes the laid-back, "workshop" atmosphere but said some of the long hours in the classroom are tough, especially in the summertime. "Of course the flipside is four hours of class, five days a week," Smith said. "I mean I don't think anyone wants to focus four hours a day on anything, especially four hours straight." Keeley Laures, a creative advertising senior, has enrolled in summer classes at a community college that were certainly effective, but said a VCU summer abroad program in Ireland and England was the best class that she has ever taken. "I guess my situation was a little different since the goal of this trip was to visit agencies from outside of the United States," Laures said. "The entire experience was more than academic, but assisted in self-exploration."

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sports



STAT OF THE WEEK

VCU baseball entered April with the nation's 10th-best team batting average (.311).



Briante Weber, who led the nation in steals per game (3.4) in 2013-14, was nominated for the 2014 Lefty Driesell National Defensive Player of the Year award.

Rams reaching new heights nationally

The Press Box

COLIN KENNEDY
Sports Editor

Last week, two of VCU's most prominent basketball players received honorable distinctions. Junior guard Briante Weber was nominated for the 2014 Lefty Driesell National Defensive Player of the Year award, while Senior forward Juvonte Reddic was named to participate in the Reese's National Association of Basketball Coaches All-Star game.

Weber didn't win the award,

but each player's acknowledgement is another testament to VCU's rapidly growing national brand.

The university has changed a lot in the four short years I've been a student here. All eyes focused on the basketball team when head coach Shaka Smart stunned the country by making a Final Four run in 2011. However, VCU has quickly developed into a multi-sport national brand since.

When the baseball team cracked the top-25 two weeks ago, it marked the second straight year the Rams athletic department could claim three separate ranked teams.

Former Rams pitcher Ian Thomas recently made his Major League debut with the Atlanta Braves, and senior Robyn Parks has a legitimate shot at playing and contributing in the WNBA after averaging nearly 22 points and 10 rebounds a game in her senior season with the Lady Rams.

As for the school's signature sport, VCU men's basketball has three alumni contractually connected to NBA teams right now. And more are on the way.

Reddic was projected as a potential first-round draft pick during the preseason and both

Weber and fellow junior Treveon Graham could compete for roster spots following their graduation next May.

Reddic's stock fell considerably during his senior season, but the big man from Winston-Salem, N.C. will have the chance to work his way up to the highest level if he isn't drafted in June.

Looking forward, VCU's 14th-ranked recruiting class, which features the nation's 42nd-best prospect in Terry Larrier, according to ESPN.com, also helps highlight the success of the athletics department in recent years.

No other team in the Atlantic 10 can claim a single top-100 recruit, yet the Rams boast three alone heading into their third year in the conference.

It's a far cry from the professional talent you'll find in the Southeastern Conference or the Big 10, but the point is that VCU is arguably emerging onto the national stage faster than any university we've seen in recent years.

Perhaps soon we'll see the Rams take another leap across conference lines.

Golf picked to win A-10 Championship

ALONZO SMALL
Contributing Writer

On April 3, the Atlantic 10 unanimously named VCU the favorite to win the conference's golf championships, which will take place April 25-27 in Coral Springs, Fla.

The Rams earned first-place votes from all 10 head coaches on the heels of VCU's second tournament victory of the season, which came at the Whiting-Turner Towson Invitational on April 1.

VCU's first tournament victory of the season came in October at Old Dominion University/Outerbanks Intercollegiate.

2013-14 marks the first time the Rams have won multiple tournaments in a single season since 2008-09, when VCU claimed three tournament victories en route to a Colonial Athletic Association Championship.

Head coach Matt Ball's team topped 21 other schools in their victory last week. The Whiting-Turner Towson Invitational marked the fifth time in nine tournaments VCU has placed among the top-five teams.

Senior standout Matt Ball, Jr.'s plus-five finish led the way for the Rams, who earned five-stroke victory after entering the second and final round down by two strokes.

Two other Rams recorded top-15 finishes as well. Freshman Enej Sarkani (+6) tied for sixth and senior Rocky Khara (+7) tied for 12th. Khara shot 73 in the final round and recorded four birdies to help VCU hang on for the win.

Meanwhile, sophomores Steffan Harn and Adam Ball finished 33rd and 52nd respectively for VCU.

However, Ball's last place finish among VCU players is not indicative of the player he has been for the Rams this season. He and his older brother Ball Jr. both finished among the team's top-two performers at the Mission Inn Spring Spectacular and Auburn Tiger Invationals, which were both held in early March.

“We got seven guys that are in it to play every time. We do have depth. There's not a guy on the roster that's not valuable to us (the team), that can't contribute.

— HEAD COACH MATT BALL

For his efforts, Ball Jr. earned the A-10 Co-Golfer of the Week award for matches played between March 19 and April 1. Sarkani's top-ten finish earned him a Rookie of the Week award following the best performance of his young collegiate career.

After the tournament, head coach Matt Ball said roster depth was a key to victory.

“Definitely a team effort,” Ball told VCU Athletics. “We got seven guys that are in it to play every time. We do have depth. There's not a guy on the roster that's not valuable to us (the team), that can't contribute.”

VCU finished third out of 17 teams at the Mission Inn Spring Spectacular on March 15, and 10th of 15 teams at the Auburn Tiger Invitational on March 11.

Next, the Rams will head to Wallace, N.C for the River Landing Intercollegiate stroke play April 11-12. Then, VCU heads home to participate in the third annual Black and Blue Cup against in-state rival University of Richmond. The Rams evened the score last year at one apiece after losing the inaugural event to the Spiders in 2012.

The eight-month season will finally draw to a close with the A-10 Golf Championships on April 25-27 in Coral Springs, Fla.



The men's tennis team opened April with a 7-0 rout of Norfolk State University last Thursday.

Men's tennis rebounds after rough month of March

STERLING GILES
Contributing Writer

The VCU men's tennis team hit a slump in March, losing four of its last six contests. However, the Rams rebounded in April with a blowout win against Norfolk State University, which improved their record to 13-9 on the year.

The drought began after VCU's 7-0 blowout win over Binghamton University on Feb. 28. In the preceding contest on March 2, the Rams suffered a 4-0 loss to No. 17 Duke University at home.

The Blue Devils overwhelmed the Rams with a multitude of elite players. Duke had three singles players ranked in the top-100 nationally, as well as a doubles team ranked 33rd in the nation.

Following the lopsided home loss to Duke, the Rams traveled to Winston-Salem, N.C., to take on Wake Forest University. There, VCU experienced its second consecutive defeat by a score of 4-1, dropping its record to 11-7 on the season.

The Rams trudged back to the homestead to take on two Ivy League schools, Cornell University and Dartmouth University, on March 8 and March 20 respectively. VCU managed to split the contests, losing to Cornell and

defeating Dartmouth.

In the March 8 contest against Cornell, sophomore Michal Voscek and freshman Wilder Pimentel garnered a doubles victory, while senior Alexis Heugas and freshman Jean Baptiste Mateo won in singles. However, Cornell pulled away with Chris Vrabel's 7-3 tiebreaker victory over VCU's Vuk Velickovic. The final score was 4-3.

The 4-2 victory over Dartmouth in the March 20 contest was a testament to VCU's resilience. Despite going into the match on a three-game losing streak, the team rose to the occasion. Argente, Mateo and Pimentel each dominated in their single sets. Also the Heugas-Jones and Voscek-Pimentel duos won their matches as well. The victory elevated the team into top-50 national rankings, earning the 37th spot.

On March 28, the Rams endured a tough 4-3 loss to No. 47 University of North Carolina Wilmington. Senior Alejandro Argente, Voscek and Mateo were able to record singles victories. Also, the Heugas-Jones duo was victorious in their doubles match. However, UNCW responded with three singles and two doubles wins.

Finally, on April 3, the Rams trampled the Norfolk State Spartans, 7-0, in the last home match of the season. VCU hopes to carry the momentum from this victory into their remaining games on the road and into the postseason as well.

Despite experiencing a rough patch in the month of March, the Rams are still 13-10 on the season. Also, the majority of the losses have been against worthy opponents; several of those teams were ranked in the top-50 nationally.

As of right now, it appears as though VCU may slot in as a No. 2 seed in the Atlantic 10 tournament. If that is the case, the Rams would be in prime position to make another postseason run and potentially face top-seeded GWU in the finals.

VCU fell to the University of Memphis 4-0 this past Saturday before taking on the University of Louisville on Sunday afternoon. The results from Sunday's contest were not final as of press time.

The Rams will take on the Hokies of Virginia Tech this Wednesday in the final match of the regular season. On Thursday, April 17, VCU will compete in the first round of the A-10 conference tournament.



Cindy Chala and the women's tennis team have struggled to stay afloat during a difficult stretch in their schedule.

Women's tennis continues inconsistent play

NATHAN HEINTSCHEL
Contributing Writer

The VCU women's tennis team continued its rollercoaster spring season, dropping three of its last four matches since mid-March. The slump came immediately after the Lady Rams experienced both a five-match winning streak from Feb. 23-March 5 and a five-match losing streak between Jan. 25-Feb. 8.

The defending Atlantic 10 champions entered last year's conference tournament on a nine-game winning streak. This level of consistency has eluded the Lady Rams this spring season, and they now sport an 8-8 record with less than three weeks left before the conference tournament.

VCU bested conference rival George Washington University 7-0 on March 22; however, the Lady Rams lost three away matches against top-50 opponents in recent weeks. Their losses came against the University of Memphis 5-0 on March 10, the University of Mississippi 6-1 on March 12 and, most recently, the University of South Florida 5-2 on April 4.

The Lady Rams have fallen

victim to a tough schedule. Memphis entered its match against VCU ranked No. 27 in the nation, and its victory against the Lady Rams stretched the Tigers' home win streak to 37 straight.

Mississippi, who was ranked No. 38 at the time of its match against VCU, competed against the Lady Rams just two days after playing Memphis. USF is the lowest-ranked of the three, but still entered play against VCU at No. 46 in the country. The victory was USF's 11th consecutive win.

Leading the way in singles matches for the Lady Rams was sophomore Yukako Noi and junior Cindy Chala.

Noi is ranked No. 105 in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association as of March 25. Since Feb. 1, Noi has won six matches and accrued one loss. Two other matches were listed as "did not finish," or DNF.

Chala is ranked No. 110 in the nation by the ITA as of March 25. Chala began the season ranked 50 and despite dropping in the rankings, has continued to play well. Since Feb. 1, Chala has won seven matches and accrued three losses.

Against A-10 opponents, Noi

and Chala won their matchups. During VCU's match up with the University of Richmond on March 5, Noi defeated Anna Abadias Morales 6-1 and 6-0 and Chala defeated Melissa Kandinata 6-1 and 6-0. During VCU's match up with George Washington, Chala defeated Leah Pascarella 6-1 and 6-1. Noi did not compete against George Washington.

An added incentive for the Lady Rams is to continue asserting themselves in the conference. The Richmond Lady Spiders had won nine conference championships between 2002 and 2012. However, VCU won the conference championship in their inaugural A-10 season adding to their four conference championships in the Colonial Athletic Association between 2003 and 2012.

The Lady Rams will face two top-75 opponents in their three remaining matches. They play 65th-ranked Georgia State University at the USF courts April 5, at the College of William & Mary April 13 and a home match against 71st ranked Marshall University April 15.

VCU will begin conference tournament play on April 24.



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Date: 4/13
Register by 4/8
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Beginner Whitewater Weekend on the James River
Date: 4/19-4/20
Register by 4/15
Cost: student, \$44; F/S/A/+1: \$50
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ON THIS DAY in 1997, the CT reported “Little Shop of Horrors” closed the theater season at VCU. The play centered around an exotic plant with a thirst for human blood.

Former VCU professor publishes memoir detailing life of social activism



Ed Peeples, Ph.D., has published a memoir of his life spent fighting for equal rights in Richmond.

SARAH KING
Staff Writer

Ed Peeples, Ph.D., a former professor who has stayed involved with almost every aspect of the VCU community, recently published his memoir, “Scalawag,” which details the past five decades of his life.

Peeples’ memoir is a narrative of his time spent as an activist during the civil rights movement and a participant in Richmond’s history.

Since his youth, Peeples has worked toward equal housing and employment opportunities, the integration of public schools in Prince Edward County and the transformation of the Richmond Professional Institute into VCU, as well as the creation of the African American studies department in the ‘60s.

“I never dreamed we could desegregate public accommodations because ... they had so much power over everybody. I thought we would lose, but somebody had to tilt the windmills,” Peeples said. “I really try to expose the importance of the work of the little guys in my book, and their work in communities all across the South even after (Martin Luther King, Jr.) left town. All the reporters left and went back to their desk and the rest of us went to work trying to break the boundaries hidden in the crevices of resistance.”

Peeples became known as a “traitor to his race” for his work in collaboration with African American groups throughout the community to achieve equality, which are detailed in his memoir.

“His papers ... include his thesis on Prince Edward County, but he also went around the state comparing black and white schools and came up with what they were spending per student. It illustrated that ‘separate but equal’ was not in fact equal, which was a big deal at that time,” said Ray Bonis, special collections and archives coordinator at the VCU library.

Peeples said his novel came to be through an unexpected birth. Peeples had written essays and short stories throughout his youth

pertaining to many different aspects of the civil rights movement and transformation of VCU, Richmond and the South. In later years, the VCU archives posted some of his photos and essays on the web, which garnered Peeples attention among the historical and scholarly community.

“Lots of people came to see me starting in 2004 because that was the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, and Prince Edward was one of the Brown cases,” Peeples said. “Among those people was Nancy MacLean. She read some of those stories, and she said ‘this should be a book’ and that’s how the whole thing got started.”

MacLean, a professor of history at Duke University, helped compile and edit the 250-page memoir which was published by the University of Virginia Press last month.

“Ed’s bravery and ingenuity helped make the university and city more inclusive and life-sustaining,” MacLean said. “I don’t believe we can understand how social change works until we appreciate the motivations and life’s stories of individuals like Ed.”

Peeples said the hardest part of writing the memoir was that he could not include all the stories, or would have to shorten stories, to fit the page limit.

“It wasn’t easy to write because I was used to writing scientific reports, and the whole idea of the scientific enterprise ... is to put people to sleep,” Peeples said, laughing. “The whole idea with this (novel) is to wake people up.”

Since contributing to VCU’s founding in 1968, Peeples has been involved on the medical campus, the Massey Cancer Center and the honors college. He also took a part in the creation of the library archives as well as the sociology, anthropology and African American studies departments. Peeples retired from teaching at VCU in 1995 as an associate professor emeritus of preventative medicine and community health.

Peeples said his work to enhance the community was not

an easy course of action. In 1972, Peeples was fired from VCU for the changes he was adamant about implementing. He said despite his education, he was an example of the residue of the “old world” that the generation needed to be rid of. Bonis said Peeples is the type of person who sticks to his beliefs.

“Ed is one of these people who walks it like he talks it. Since the ‘50s he’s been working for campaigns and causes for the rights of humans in every facet of society,” Bonis said. “He’s dedicated to justice in our world and he’s someone who treats everyone fairly and equally, and its genuine, and everyone who gets to know him as a friend gets to recognize and appreciate that.”

Many of the photographs and essays Peeples has filed throughout the years, and even a correspondence between himself and King, are included in the library archives. Peeples also served as a board member on the Friends of the VCU Libraries from 2007-12.

“Scalawag” will be published in paperback after 2500 copies have sold and may be used as supplemental reading in university courses. Peeples said he receives no royalties until a certain number of books are sold, after that he only receives about 20 cents per book.

The novel’s release took place at the Singleton center on March 18, and many of his friends and family were in attendance. Peeples said that he never anticipated having his own book or an auditorium of people standing up and clapping for his life’s work. Peeples will also present at the Berglund Seminar Series for students at the honors college later this month.

“I want people to know about all the heroes that walk quietly and work among the groups in the community that work to fight discrimination, know the heroes. The other, is that being a justice seeker can be simple,” Peeples said. “It’s not just sitting in and being covered by the press, it’s a multitude of other techniques that you can execute and begin the rippling effect (of) the small act that joins the stream.”

VCU Theater to present ‘Arabian Nights’

MAYA EARLS
Spectrum Editor

The last mainstage play of the spring semester, “Arabian Nights,” tells the story of Queen Shahrazad, who tries to use her gift of storytelling to avoid being executed by King Shahrayar, like many brides before her.

“Arabian Nights” also known as “One Thousand and One Nights” was originally a collection of West and South Asian stories written in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age in the eighth century A.D. According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, the stories can be traced back to ancient Arabic, Persian, Indian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian folklore. Most editions of “Arabian Nights” have a frame story of the ruler and his new bride.

The King, enveloped by bitterness and grief, decides he will marry and then execute his brides in the morning before they have a chance to bring him dishonour. When he runs out of brides, Shahrazad offers herself for marriage. The night before her execution, Shahrazad tells the King a story and never completes it. The King decides to spare her life for the night, but the next day Sharazad begins a new story. This continues for 1,001 nights. Some of the stories include “Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp,” “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” and “The Seven Voyages

of Sinbad the Sailor.”

Gabriel Barre is the guest director for the production of “Arabian Nights” at VCU. Barre has directed plays internationally, including “Carmen” in Prague and “Tears of Heaven” in Seoul, South Korea. He has also acted in several theater productions and made appearances in television shows such as “Law and Order” and “Fame.”

Barre and a company of 100 students and faculty have been working on the play since February. He said he wanted to keep the production as simple as possible, so the message of the play could be clear.

“It’s been a weeding process for me, like ‘We can do this even simpler. We can do this even better by doing less,’” Barre said. “It’s been a really great exercise for me and for all of us involved.”

Even though the play does not traditionally include music, Barre said he wanted to include a musical component. He found a score, and hired local musician Bentley Cobb to be the music director. When they looked at the score, they found that it was all hand-written. Barre said he wanted a more original piece of music, so he worked with Cobb to create a new score to the production.

“He has a fantastic score with over 125 music cues throughout the show,” Barre said. “Cobb will be playing as the percussionist, in addition he has brought in a cellist

and a reed player.”

Barre said not only does he want the audience to leave entertained, but for this particular play, he also wants people to be moved.

“The power of stories can open our hearts, help us see ourselves and each other,” Barre said. “Also it helps us get to know the rest of the world.”

With this play in particular, Barre said audience members get the chance to learn about a new culture. Even though there are many differences between Americans and citizens from the Middle East, essentially people are the same underneath, Barre said. When people have something in common, they can still find ways to communicate without speaking the same language.

“Theater is the one place where we can celebrate what bonds us together in the human experience,” Barre said.

“Arabian Nights” premieres April 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts on 922 Park Ave. The play will run April 12, 17-19 and 24-26 at 7:30 p.m. The performance will also take place April 13 and 27 at 3 p.m. General admission tickets are \$25 and tickets for seniors, VCU faculty and staff are \$20. Tickets for VCU students with a valid ID are \$10 and other student tickets cost \$15.



In the upcoming production of “Arabian Nights,” Queen Shahrazad tries to use the power of storytelling to stall her impending execution by King Shahrayar.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THEATRE VCU

Student exhibition opens at the Depot



VCU arts student exhibitions will be held at the newly renovated art space, the Depot, until April 20.

SARAH KING
Staff Writer

The newly renovated art Depot opened to the public on April 3 to showcase the juried undergraduate student exhibition in fine arts, design and kinetic imaging.

The student exhibition will be on display at the Depot as well as the Anderson Gallery until April 20, and the graduate art student thesis exhibitions will be showcased on both floors of the new building from April 25-May 18.

“The curated show happened last week ... and since then we’ve been installing work in the Anderson gallery and the Depot,” said gallery coordinator Vaughn Garland, Ph.D. “The building was open to us Monday or Tuesday and we came in here and started working, and it wasn’t open to the public until (Thursday night).”

There are more than 100 student works displayed in the new art building, and approximately 200 at the Anderson Gallery.

There was a call for work submissions throughout the art school, and different department faculty members collaborated to curate the show. The juried show on display at the Anderson Gallery was conducted by Denis Markonish, the curator at the

Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

“I think there’s a really great variety of work on display,” said Claire Lazaroff, a junior in art education and gallery assistant for the Anderson Gallery and the Depot. “There’s an eclectic taste that’s represented throughout all the disciplines.”

Both galleries are free to the public and open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on weekdays, and noon-5 p.m. on weekends. While certain aspects of the Depot are open for student exhibitions this spring, the entire facility will be in operation by the fall semester.

“I love the new place, (because) it allows for more art to be put on display, whereas the Anderson gallery was very limited,” said OJ Knight, a freshman majoring in social work who is also a gallery assistant.

Garland said that the Student Commons used to house space to display student work, but the Depot provides an opportunity for students to have their art showcased in a gallery setting.

“As student that’s really important because you can say your work was in a pristine gallery setting,” Garland said. “Its function is to be a place for students.”

VCU Forensic Science Student Club to host Murder Mystery dinner

SARAH KING
Staff Writer

The Forensic Science Student Club at VCU will have their fifth annual participatory murder mystery dinner on April 12 at 5:30 p.m. in the Commonwealth Ballrooms.

The event will feature a show where members of the club will engage the audience in trying to unravel a murder. There will also be a raffle, prize giveaways, food and dessert. In prior years the dinner has almost always sold out.

“Basically the idea is that it’s the 10-year reunion for the fictional Opossum State College class of 2004, but one of the alumni, Simon Clint, has passed away and he was really into aliens,” said Kenner Fortner, a senior forensic science major and president of the club. “The story unfolds from there and when you bring all kinds of enemies together, things start to go down.”

The show is produced and scripted entirely by the members of the club, and there are twelve actors partaking in the event. Fortner said that the group has been rehearsing for about a month, but the process of planning and putting everything together started almost a year in advance.

He said the club doesn’t hold auditions, but instead have interested students participate in various activities to see who suits which part.

“We’re going to call on the audience to interact, and we pick people randomly to participate,” said Matt Goldstein, a second year forensic science graduate student. “The audience is also going to be looking at the evidence to question us, and there’s also breaks in the script to have them participate spontaneously.”

Goldstein is one of two graduate students who is acting in the production.

“It’s kind of like a Jamestown experience,” he said.

The dinner itself will be catered by Apple Spice Junction and includes vegetarian options as well. The club is also selling T-shirts to promote the event, which is put on to bring attention to the department.

“Everybody always has such a good time, it makes it worth it,” said Leigh Incheck, a junior forensic science major who is participating in the show for the second year in a row.

Tickets for the dinner can be purchased at breakpoint in the student commons for \$10 until April 11.



Members of the Forensic Science Student Club, Kenner Fortner, Aryn McClane and Leigh Incheck, rehearse for the upcoming high school reunion-themed Murder Mystery Dinner.

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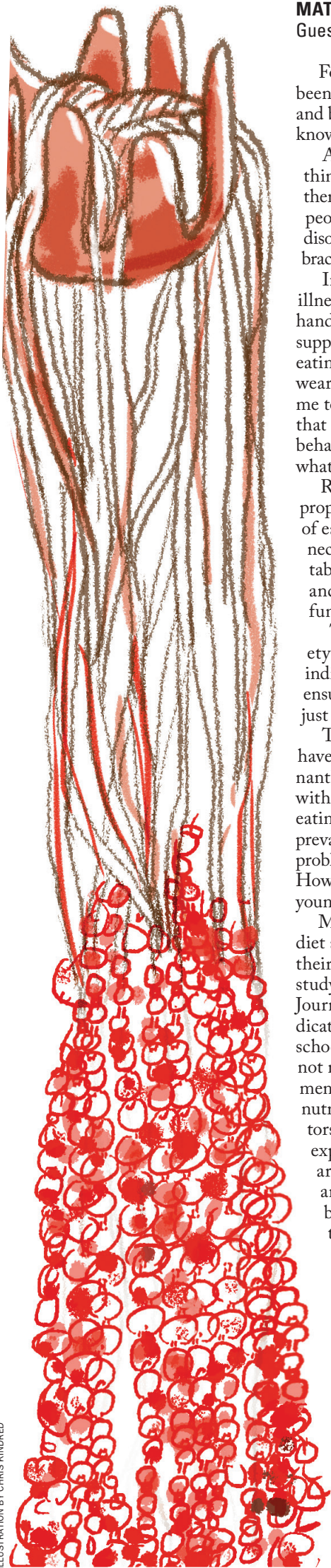


ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS KINDRED

MATT SHENKER
Guest Columnist

For the past five years, there has been a reoccurring trend: anorexia and bulimia support bracelets, known as ANA and MIA bracelets.

As you read that, you may be thinking, “Oh, how great that there are bracelets that support people recovering from eating disorders.” Unfortunately these bracelets do not support such a feat.

Instead, they encourage the illnesses. These bracelets can be handmade or purchased to show support for anorexic or bulimic eating patterns. The motivation for wearing such bracelets are not for me to judge, but I can only assume that people who practice these behaviors don’t fully understand what either disease is.

Research can show them that proper dietary intake that consists of eating substantial calories is necessary for a functional metabolism that will burn body fat and not eat away at other bodily functions.

The real question is how society gets this information to said individuals in a manner that will ensure that they will listen and not just brush the information away.

These ANA and MIA bracelets have gained popularity predominantly in the United States. Along with the bracelets, it seems that eating disorders continue to exist prevalently within America. The problem we are now faced with is: How does society better educate young Americans and their parents?

Most people probably direct diet and nutrition questions to their family doctor, but a recent study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition indicates that 60 percent of medical schools in the United States are not meeting minimum recommendations for their students’ nutritional education. Family doctors are not necessarily nutrition experts. Surely medical doctors are experts in the biology and anatomy of the human body, but they focus on repairing the human body and health, not promoting health through nutrition, so it seems that nutritional and health education and questions need to come from a more specific source.

Whom do we charge with such a specific responsibility?

On average, American children from ages 5 to 18 spend at least a quarter of their day in a public school. It would seem logical that a health and nutrition program should come

from the educators at their schools. The teachers at these schools, without question, already have responsibilities and are not paid top dollar, so adding to the curriculum to incorporate more nutrition and health education may seem a bit of a ridiculous request.

Such an effort, however, would have positive outcomes for the nation’s physical and economic well being. The regularity necessary may only be once or twice a week for less than an hour, which, in the grand scheme of things, doesn’t seem like an unreasonable amount of time.

Furthermore, the need to have physical and nutritional education more than twice a week also doesn’t seem like an reasonable request. Extending the current physical education program and dedicating more time to nutrition may be enough to solve the problem. Another solution would be bringing in nutritional experts.

The key to these education attempts is that such attempts can’t only be focused on the children. Students spend a quarter of their time in the school, but most of the rest of their time is spent with their parents. The curriculum needs to be expressed in a compelling fashion on a regular basis. Expressing it in such a way can lead to the students talking about the information regularly so that it gives other children they are around and their parents an opportunity to benefit from having a conversation about health.

Optimistically, a program that meets at least once a month for parents to educate them on nutrition and health topics would lead to the most effective change. It’s unfortunate, however, that this would probably be even more unrealistic than asking teachers to add more topics to their curriculum because many parents do not have the time available.

We should rely on entertaining and continuous programs to educate students from a young age on the benefits of nutrition and health. The programs that have been attempted as of now aren’t as effective as necessarily. More specific attempts to cater toward regularly entertaining children and regularly feeding them information about how to stay healthy with their diet is paramount.

The only way that America will see substantial positive changes in our diets, and the improvement of quality of life in various individuals, is if society can successfully educate children and parents on nutrition and health topics consistently throughout the development process of the child.

Quote of the week

“In cleaning up, re-development projects have the danger of cleaning out the original population.”
— Shane Wade



ILLUSTRATION BY DAN NACU

Whose city?

SHANE WADE
Opinion Editor

By the nature of the economic system that governs us, nothing is sacrosanct. Nothing lies beyond a coveting hand, whether it’s a slave burial ground or a mom-and-pop shop. Whatever threatens a larger entity’s potential for profits or expansion is consequently threatened.

What’s going on in Richmond is textbook gentrification: Neighborhoods and businesses formerly owned by lower-income people are being bought and re-developed for another group. If you need an example, consider that less than five blocks from the construction of high-rise luxury apartments is a park populated by homeless people, who might be displaced by the park’s coming renovations. The issue with VCU’s expansion isn’t solely that it’s displacing Richmond residents and local businesses, but that it’s doing so faster than the parties can adjust. To add to that problem, the city government seems equally intent on their own affairs and doesn’t provide enough resources for the presently displaced or the future housing needs of Richmonders.

The presence of the student population further agitates this issue. Students, even when being helped by their parents, are not particularly affluent. They are a permanent population that is constantly shifting: Just as one generation of students leaves, another moves in to fill the vacuum.

In a way, they’re also a more economically resilient population than the local residents. If they need to weather an economic downturn that would have left

a non-student resident out of a job and means to pay rent, some students have both parents and student loans acting as safety nets.

Additionally, the number of graduated students decide to stay in Richmond and become permanent residents of the city, displaces the potential population of working class family residents and the existing population of residents. Displaced populations

“Consider that less than five blocks from the construction of high-rise luxury apartments is a park populated by homeless people, who might be displaced by the park’s coming renovations.”
— SHANE WADE

are pushed further away, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood. These departures affect property values, city tax income, traffic congestion and a myriad of other statistical and social issues relevant to the city government and city populace.

In a perverse way, the success of VCU, in both acquiring properties and graduating successful students that, is alienating the rest of the city. In cleaning up, re-development projects have the danger of cleaning out the original

population. By integrating itself into Richmond, the ebb and flow of VCU’s successes and failures, whether they be directed by the administration or are consequences attributable to the student population, become a larger concern for the city.

There’s a caveat to the ongoing gentrification. Although it doesn’t negate the act, note that a number of the purchased properties will be eventually converted into on-campus housing for students. Though it helps to curb residential gentrification, the fact remains that a city community is a mixture of populations from businesses and students to organizations and families; under the current conditions and operations, the latter group is in danger of, if not already, being neglected.

“Whose city is this?” is the question more people are asking, and the answer is simultaneously simple and complex: everyone’s. VCU can lay claim to block after block, but they will only own part of the whole. I long for the day when I can walk throughout the city without seeing abandoned buildings or weeded lots, but the price of expansion should not come at the sacrifice of the community, particularly Richmond’s lower income residents.

There are few local forces as innovative and engaged as VCU, but being a driving force does not require us to drive the essence of Richmond out of the city in order to satiate our needs. Similarly, the city needs to demonstrate a stronger commitment to its current residents, evaluating the needs of the present against the aspirations of expansionism.

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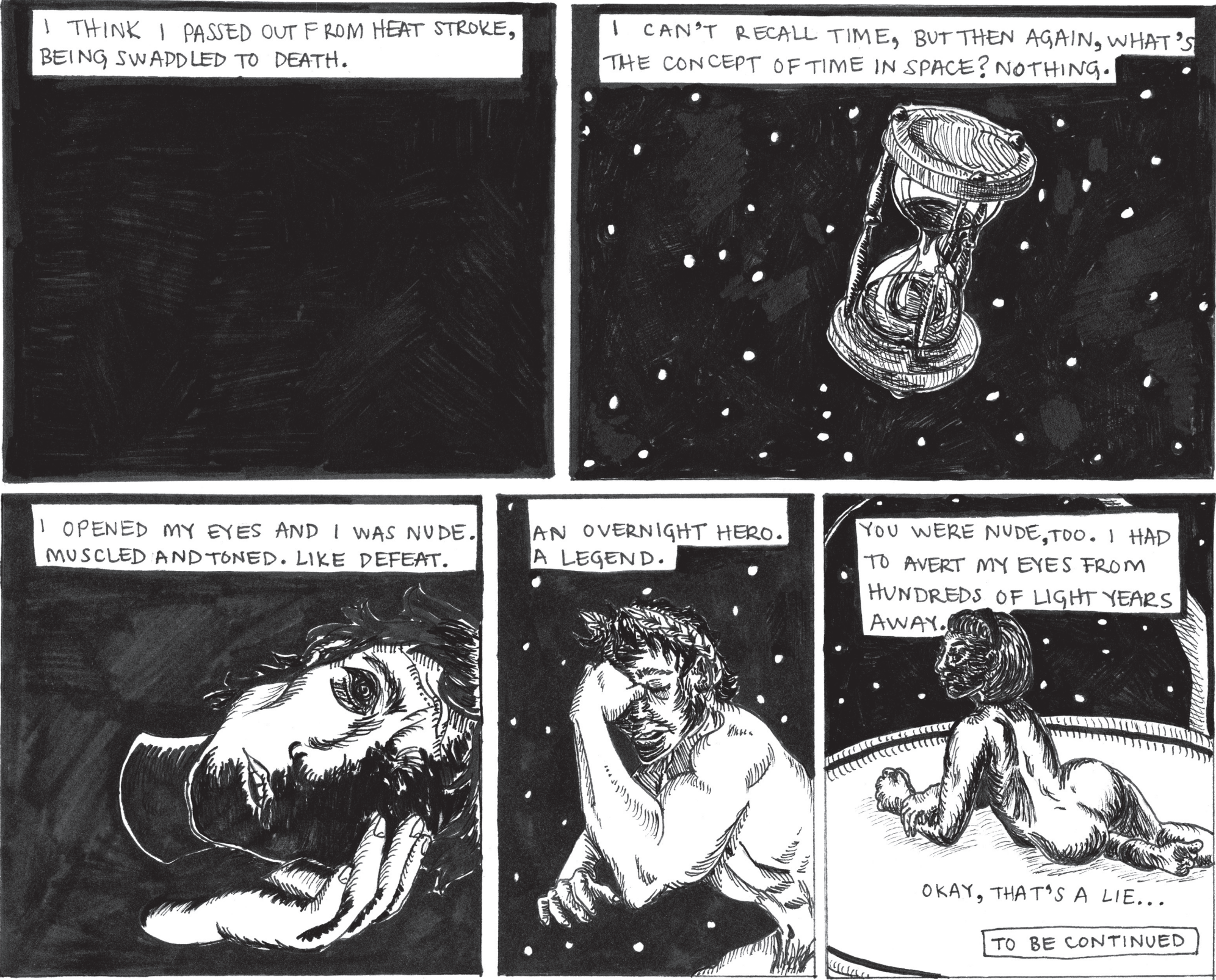
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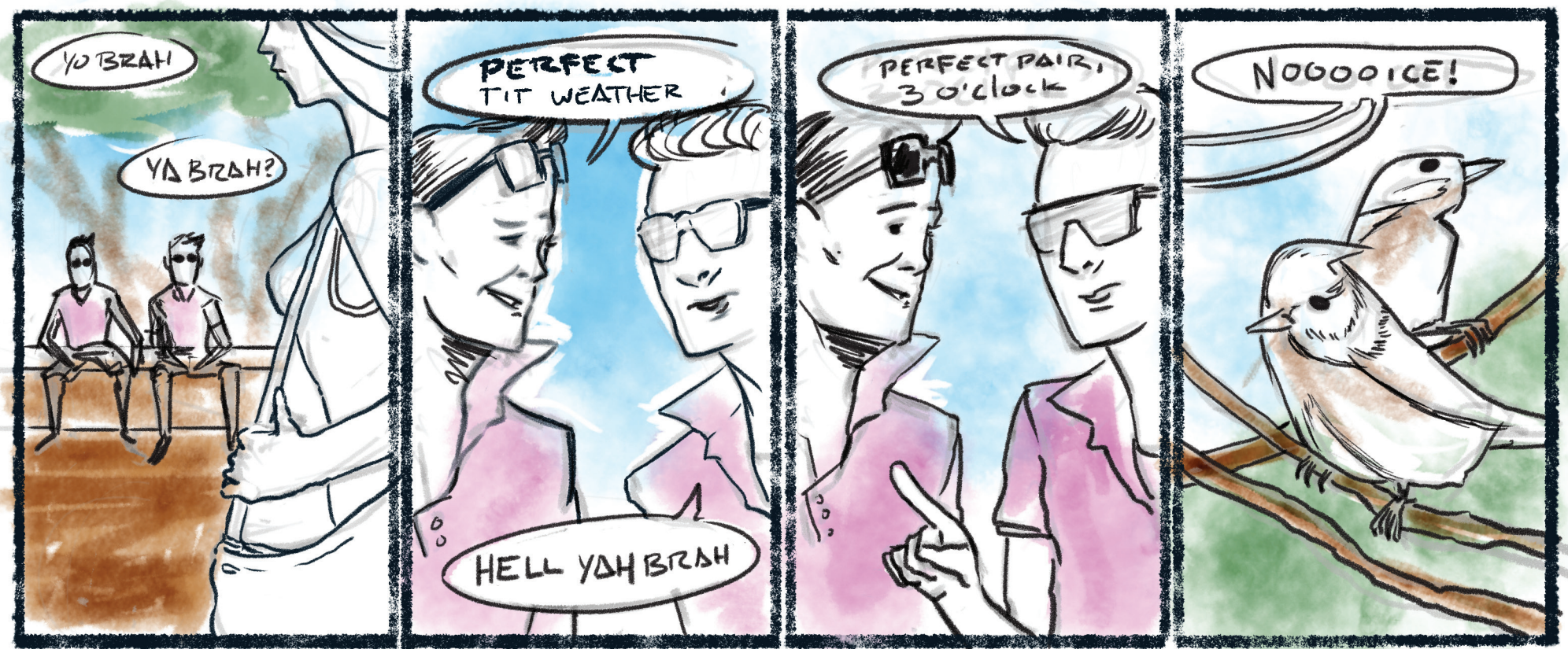
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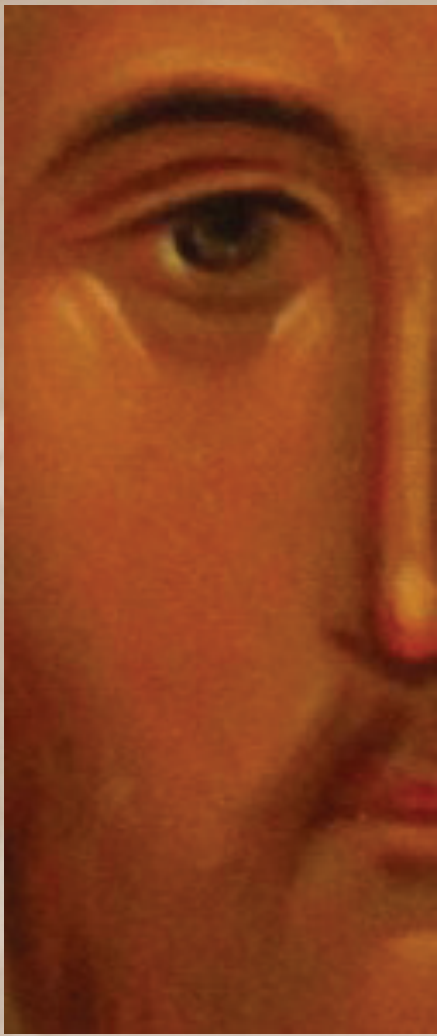


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6th Annual Powell-Edwards Lecture in Religion and The Arts

Presented by the VCU School of World Studies



Revealing the Unseen: Looking Beyond the Surface of Eastern Orthodox Icons

By Vera Kononova Brown

In Western culture, Eastern Orthodox Christian religious images are often labeled as flat, two-dimensional and primitive art forms. Veneration of icons is frequently interpreted as idolatry. In Eastern Christian tradition, however, icons are viewed as an inevitable result of the incarnation of God and are one of the most prominent components of the Orthodox belief system. This lecture clarifies the context and meaning of icon veneration in Eastern Orthodox tradition. It lays out a framework for understanding the differences between acts of worship and acts of veneration. This presentation physically demonstrates certain techniques and processes by which icons are created. The fusion of practical and theoretical approaches to icon study reveals the true meaning and value of Eastern Orthodox images.

April 14, 2014 ♦ 7:00 p.m. ♦ VCU Student Commons, Richmond Salons ♦ Reception to follow in the James River Terrace

Vera Kononova Brown is a PhD candidate in the Media, Art and Text Program at VCU. In her dissertation, *From Tempera to Ink to Code: The Other Media of Orthodox Iconography*, she analyzes veneration of icons in various media throughout the history of Russian Orthodoxy. As a part of her graduate study, she completed an apprenticeship with iconographers at the Voronezh Theological Seminary in Voronezh, Russia. She continues to practice icon painting and scholarship in iconography and iconology.

The Powell-Edwards Lectures honor Marcia Powell, a long-time teacher of French language and culture who was associated with VCU for over forty years. In honor of her friendship with Professor Cliff Edwards, Mrs. Powell asked that the lectureship be titled "The Powell-Edwards Lectures." She attended the inaugural lecture in 2009, where she was recognized and applauded by a standing-room only audience. Mrs. Powell died in the autumn of 2009 at age 93, and this continuing lectureship honors her memory.

VCU Student Commons, 907 Floyd Avenue, Second Floor.

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For additional information, contact: Dr. Cliff Edwards at 804-827-3409 or cedwards@vcu.edu.

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