



BOV considers possible \$1,004 fall tuition hike

MATT LEONARD
Online Content Editor

VCU’s senior leadership proposed two options for tuition increases that will affect students differently at last week’s Board of Visitors meeting.

The proposals include either a 2.77 percent (\$344) or 3.02 percent (\$374) tuition increase. Students living on-campus will be hit harder due to the rising cost of housing and mandatory fees; they will see possible increases of 2.82 percent (\$612) or 3.09 percent (\$670). Out-of-state students will see hikes of either \$918 or \$1,004, depending on the option chosen.

Of the more than \$530 million in revenue VCU brought in during the 2013-2014 school year, almost 66 percent was from tuition.

“These budget recommendations reflect sensitivity to the cost of higher education at a major public research institution and our responsibility to provide a high quality education — a strong return on students’ significant investment,” VCU President Michael Rao said in the press release.

When the Virginia state government cut education spending in September of last year, VCU predicted a 2 percent increase in tuition.

In 2004, Virginia’s Joint Subcommittee on Higher Education Funding Policy decided the state should pay 67 percent of the cost for funding institution base operations, leaving students to shoulder the remainder.

VCU hasn’t experienced a similar split in funding since 2001, when state funding was more than \$10,000 per full-time student and tuition was just over \$5,000.

As the cost of college has risen for students, borrowing loans has also skyrocketed. Between 2008 and 2013 the average debt Virginia students are left with at graduation has risen to more than \$6,000.

State funding will increase VCU’s available funds for need-based support to \$11.49 million.

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SHOCKED



Shaka Smart leaves VCU for the University of Texas

ALONZO SMALL
Sports Editor

On Friday, April 3, the Shaka Smart era at VCU officially ended when the former head coach was formally introduced as the new the University of Texas Longhorns head coach.

“To me, it was a no-brainer,” said Smart, 37, who led the Rams to 26 or more victories in each of his six season at VCU, a NCAA Final Four appearance in 2011 and to VCU’s first Atlantic 10 conference championship. “I don’t want to take away from any other program, but there is only one University of Texas. There is unbelievable potential here.”

Smart had previously turned down the likes of University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Wake Forest University, University of Maryland, Marquette University and North Carolina State University.

The hire makes Smart the first African-American coach in the history of Texas programs.

Smart agreed in principle to become the Longhorns new men’s basketball head coach on Thursday night, April 2. Texas athletic director Steve Patterson said in the introductory press conference he did not interview any other candidates, confirming reports that Texas “zeroed in” on Smart after firing former head coach Rick Barnes. Thursday afternoon, Patterson flew to Richmond to meet with Smart. Sometime Thursday a deal was

reached that will reportedly see Smart make \$3 million a year over seven years, according to ESPN.

According to SportsIllustrated.com, VCU offered Smart a 55 percent pay raise, increasing his annual salary to \$2.8 million, \$1 million more than he was already making.

The offer was not enough to entice Smart to stay as he informed his players and coaches Thursday evening that he decided to take the job.

“Saying goodbye to those guys, you never are prepared for that,” Smart said on ESPN’s Sportscenter. “It was a hard night. It was a very emotional time.”

While no players have commented on the move, Smart offered departing words to the VCU faithful via press release before being introduced as Texas’ new head coach via press release on April 3.

“It has been an extraordinary honor to be your head coach for the past six years,” Smart said. “I’m extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to build on the tradition of VCU basketball. I want to express my deep gratitude for all VCU players, past and present, our coaching staff and all the people that have worked tirelessly to support our program.”

Smart also thanked VCU President Michael Rao and athletic director Ed McLaughlin for helping build the program into what it has become today, adding his

gratitude to all those who supported him the past six years.

“I also want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all the VCU students, alumni, the Peppas and our phenomenal fans that make the Siegel Center such an unbelievable place to play and coach. The ascendance of the VCU program has been and will continue to be about a special group of people both within and outside the immediate team that make VCU basketball extremely unique. This program’s future is extremely bright. The best is yet to come.”

Smart leaves VCU with a 163-56 (.744) record, appearing in five straight NCAA tournaments. His 163 victories are the second-most by any Division I head coach in the first six years of their career.

McLaughlin will now begin the process of finding the right candidate to replace a man that helped raise the program to prominence. McLaughlin also thanked Smart for his contributions to VCU.

“We will remember Shaka’s success on the court and with our student-athletes forever, but more importantly, he has helped to create a level of sustainable success on an elite level nationally,” McLaughlin said. “I speak for our entire department in thanking him and his staff for everything they have done for our student-athletes and VCU. We wish him well in Austin.”

VCU removes ban on Iranians from certain grad programs

HECTOR MIRANDA-CASTRO
Contributing Writer

A policy banning Iranian citizen’s admission into the graduate fields of mechanical and nuclear engineering or programs containing nuclear content was installed by Virginia Commonwealth University and then briskly retracted upon criticism from the National Iranian American Council last month.

The NIAC contacted VCU in a letter to President Rao persuading him to reverse the policy following the reversal of a similar policy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in February.

The NIAC expressed its concerns late last February that VCU was also misinterpreting and unduly enforcing a U.S. sanctions law that was passed in 2012 against Iranian citizens.

“We fear that this policy is based on a flawed interpretation of the relevant U.S. law (and) in adopting an overbroad policy, VCU risks setting a harmful precedent that undermines productive academic exchanges between the United States and Iran and potentially violates protections against discrimination on the basis of national-origin,” wrote NIAC policy director Jamal Abdi.

The Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Human Rights Act of 2012 states that the Secretary

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Rally held for Coach Smart

KRIS MASON
Staff Writer

What started initially as a rally to convince VCU men’s basketball coach Shaka Smart to stay in Richmond was a farewell gathering in hindsight.

With rumors swirling around that Shaka Smart was potentially accepting a job offer at the University of Texas, fans organized a rally to show appreciation for the coach on Thursday evening outside the Siegel Center. Around 10:30 p.m. that night, news broke that Smart had accepted the offer.

There were more than 100 Ram fans who showed unified thankfulness for all Smart has done for the basketball program and university since being hired as head coach in 2009. The rally consisted of fans encouraging cars driving by to honk if they loved Smart and a variety of songs sung at games. Signs were passed out with the message #Love-ForCoachSmart.

The crowd was a mix of students, older alumni and fans.

The rally was organized by VCURamnation.com. The website stated, “We have a limited amount of time to show Coach Smart how much he means to the city of Richmond, and this is our chance to have an impact on his final decision.”

Smart, 37, had been a hot commodity each offseason for nearly every coaching vacancy ever since he led the Rams to the 2011 Final Four. The annual drama of whether he would leave VCU has been called “ShakaWatch.”

William Slattum, a junior computer science major, emphasized the rally was to thank Smart and not to convince him to stay.

“It’s definitely not to beg him. He can do whatever he wants, he’s a grown man,” Slattum said. “He’ll figure out what he needs to do for his family and himself and whatever he does we’ll support him. We just want him to know how much he’s meant to us, this season and all the previous seasons. He’s awesome. We love him.”

OPINION

An empire state of mind

AUGUST WADE
Staff Columnist

Silver wire fences, heavy machinery and concrete adorn the city blocks. Odd bits of modern and contemporary architecture take root where brick-face real estate once stood. What was once flat terrain becomes tall, both in structure and in power.

The growth of VCU has been evident on Richmond’s landscape, from the visible to the invisible, from real estate to demographics. In the last four years, I’ve seen surface parking lots evolve into multiple-story buildings and a fairly mixed demographic grow more diverse.

Without a doubt, the relationship between the university and the city has been symbiotic to a larger degree, helping to provide Richmond with the kind of resurgence that Mayor Dwight Jones discussed in his brief State of the City address earlier this year. The university has breathed life into dead areas and seized opportunities to work with the community.

It is the fear of some, however, that the university, with its 2020 Master Plan, is becoming too big too fast, especially for the area’s spatial limitations.

The university’s expansion has also been an act of encroachment

into neighborhoods, harming residential diversity, creating hostility and resentment between university and residents, threatening community involvement and possibly negatively affecting the willingness of community groups to work with students and the university.

Recently, an open letter to the university’s administration from the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association stated concerns regarding VCU’s acquisition of a property (9 W. Cary St.) outside of the stated boundaries of VCU’s own 2020 Master Plan. The letter, spurred by a OHNA vote last month to formally request that VCU adhere to its plan, is available online at OHNA’s blog, but this instance isn’t the first spot of friction between VCU and neighboring communities.

For local residents, whether they are former VCU students or not, VCU’s reach isn’t simply a matter of the administration renegeing on its word — it’s a sign of untrustworthiness and incongruity.

To be sure, an institution instructing over 30,000 students, from non-degree seeking students to Ph.D. programs, cannot be contained on just two campuses and two handfuls of buildings. In order to provide



students with quality facilities and resources, as well as keep up with student growth, the acquisition of certain properties has been necessary and beneficial.

The rate of VCU’s growth,

however, is cause for concern because the administration presumes much in the way of what is necessary for the student body and too heavily allows what a fairly fickle populace — potential and current

students — want to dictate what they do. What students want isn’t always compatible with what’s best for the community and while

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In this section: Cherry blossom festival. Iran sanctions. E-cigs. Tuition hike. “Don’t ask, don’t tell.”

briefs

LOCAL
Duke, Virginia agree to \$2.5 million coal ash settlement

Duke Energy has agreed to a \$2.5 million settlement with Virginia over a massive coal ash spill that coated 70 miles of the Dan River in gray sludge, state environmental officials announced Friday.

The settlement drew immediate criticism from a water protection group, while the hardest-hit locality — the city of Danville — continues to negotiate with Duke.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality said the settlement would include \$2.25 million in environmental projects that Duke would perform in communities affected by the spill in February 2014. The remaining \$250,000 would be placed in a fund for the department to respond to environmental emergencies.

The spill originated in Eden, North Carolina, but affected areas in Virginia, too, leaving more than 2,500 tons of the toxic ash backed up behind a dam in Danville. The ash is the waste left behind when coal is burned to generate electricity. It contains toxic metals.

Brief by the Associated Press

VA makes little headway in fight to shorten waits for care

A year after Americans recoiled at new revelations that sick veterans were getting sicker while languishing on waiting lists — and months after the Department of Veterans Affairs instituted major reforms — government data shows that the number of patients facing long waits at VA facilities has not dropped at all.

No one expected that the VA mess could be fixed overnight. But The Associated Press has found that since the summer, the number of medical appointments delayed 30 to 90 days has largely stayed flat. The number of appointments that take longer than 90 days to complete has nearly doubled.

Nearly 894,000 appointments completed at VA medical facilities from Aug. 1 to Feb. 28 failed to meet the health system's timeliness goal, which calls for patients to be seen within 30 days.

Brief by the Associated Press

Federal board rejects request to name peak William & Mary

There are peaks in Colorado named after Yale, Harvard and Princeton, but there won't be a peak in Colorado named Mount William & Mary.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names has turned down a second attempt at naming a peak after the college in Williamsburg, Va., saying it doesn't meet federal guidelines.

Edwin Camp, who helped lead the charge against the proposal, said there is no direct connection between the college and Colorado. He said residents of Leadville and other nearby communities have fought for more than a decade efforts to name the nameless 14,130-foot-high peak next to Mount Elbert, which at 14,400 feet is the highest mountain in Colorado.

Brief by the Associated Press

NATIONAL
Hash oil explosions prompt proposed changes in pot states

Alarmed by a rash of explosions and injuries caused when amateurs make hash oil, lawmakers in Colorado and Washington are considering spelling out what's allowed when it comes to making the concentrated marijuana at home.

The proposals came after an increase in home fires and blasts linked to homemade hash oil.

In Colorado, at least 30 people were injured last year in 32 butane explosions involving hash oil — nearly three times the number reported throughout 2013, according to officials with the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, a state-federal enforcement program.

Washington's legal marijuana law in 2012 did not permit the production of hash or even edibles at home; it technically remains a felony even to use weed purchased at a state-licensed store to make brownies. Nevertheless, many people have done it.

Brief courtesy of the Associated Press

Appeals court: Yoga doesn't bend rules on religious freedom

Yoga taught in a San Diego County school system is not a gateway to Hinduism and doesn't violate the religious rights of students or their parents, a California appeals court ruled Friday.

The 4th District Court of Appeal in San Diego upheld a lower court ruling that tossed out a family's lawsuit that tried to block Encinitas Union School District from teaching yoga as an alternative to traditional gym classes.

"While the practice of yoga may be religious in some contexts, yoga classes as taught in the district are, as the trial court determined, 'devoid of any religious, mystical, or spiritual trappings,'" the court wrote in a 3-0 opinion.

Brief courtesy of the Associated Press

VCU removes ban on Iranians from certain grad programs

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of State shall deny a visa to any alien who is a citizen of Iran that the Secretary of State determines seeks to enter the United States to participate in course work at an institution of higher education to prepare the alien for a career in the energy sector of Iran or in nuclear science or nuclear engineering or a related field.

Saman Raftari, Iranian-American senior biology student at VCU, feels that it is imperative that people realize the U.S. sanctions are not hurting the Iranian government as much as they are hurting average Iranians.

In addition Raftari mentioned that many people do not know the history of relations between Iran and the U.S. and therefore cannot see past this hostile view towards Iranians that the U.S. government has created when thinking about Iranian nuclear capability.

"It's kind of contradictory to

the position and perspective that a University should have in being forward thinking as well as being a catalyst for learning and dispelling myths about people," Raftari said. "Like those that are placed on Iranian Americans. Personally I feel it is severely racist and I am very disappointed."

“It makes me feel very distrustful toward Rao and those who are making these huge decisions to ban an entire of nationality of people from a program should have announced it to the public.

— SAMAN RAFTARI

Raftari was following the events at UMass Amherst when he learned that VCU was implementing the same exclusionary policies toward Iranians.

He said this especially infuriated him because nowhere in the sanctions law did it require the universities to install a discriminatory blanket of exclusion towards Iranians.

Critics say that the language of this law is broad and does not require universities to implement the sanctions on their own; it is up to U.S. State Department and Department of Homeland Security.

An article published in February by The Boston Globe cites unnamed official, who was quoted as saying, "All visa applications are reviewed individually in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act and other relevant laws that establish detailed standards for determining eligibility for visas and admission to the United States."

The official goes on to state, "U.S. law does not prohibit qualified Iranian nationals coming to the United States for education in science and engineering."

VCU and the engineering department gave no further comments on its decision to implement the policy and or then reverse.

At the end of the first letter sent from the NIAC to Rao the organization states that it is "prepared to engage with the university and offer our support in seeking a quiet resolution to this issue."

Raftari was interviewed by VCU InSight last week about this same incident and his interviews were to be broadcast that week. According to him, he was later contacted by his connection to VCU InSight and was told the broadcast would not air.

"Just the fact that they're being very hush-hush about it throws me off," Raftari said. "It makes me feel very distrustful toward Rao and those who are making

these huge decisions to ban an entire of nationality of people from a program should have announced it to the public. The reason I think they didn't is because it doesn't reflect what the VCU community would want."

Prior to its recent revision, the VCU Graduate Admissions page stated that "VCU regrets to inform you that we are not able to admit Iranian citizens in the graduate fields of mechanical and nuclear engineering or in programs that have nuclear content."

Excerpts of Rao's response to the NIAC concerns are featured in the NIAC's March 24 press release.

Rao stated that VCU would work to resolve this issue and remove the policy language that suggested it would exclude Iranian citizens from entering into certain graduate programs and would now link directly to the State Department's visa information homepage.



PHOTOS BY MIRANDA LEUNG

On Saturday April 4 the Japanese Student Association held events in the Student Commons courtyard to celebrate the cherry blossoms and Japanese culture. The event was sponsored by Shoryuken Ramen and the Traditional Asian Health Center.

Japanese Student Association hosts Richmond's very first Cherry Blossom Festival

SARAH KING
News Editor

The Japanese Student Association at VCU hosted Richmond's first Cherry Blossom Festival on Saturday, April 4 in the Student Commons courtyard.

The free event featured Taiko drum and koto performances, martial arts and traditional and modern dances. Students and local Richmond attendees could also use the photo booth or explore the origami, kimono display or ikebana flower arrangement stations.

"Curry Fury," a new Japanese-style curry food truck, was also serving lunch on Main Street.

"I think we've done really well with this event," said Monica Hseih, a political science major and president of the Japanese Student Association.

"This is one of our first big events so it's kind of surprising that we did this well."

Hseih said the JSA was only approved by the university in January, but the student organization already has around 200 members.

"We were really interested in a club to expand Japanese culture and tradition since our school didn't have a Japanese organization but they had Korean and Chinese organizations," Hseih said.

Christian Empeno, a health and exercise science student and social chair for the JSA, said Saturday's event took about a month of planning to put together.

"It's Richmond's version of the Cherry Blossom Festival that they have in D.C., and we're planning to expand it even more next year," Empeno said. "We talked to several people who came here from other companies and organizations who are thinking about collaborating with us."

Hseih said the JSA received no funding from VCU to host the event, but the Traditional Asian Health Center and Shoryuken Ramen restaurant sponsored the festival.

The JSA at VCU is open to all members who also want to expand their social, academic, and cultural interests.



Monica Hseih, the president of the Japanese Student Association, said the JSA did not receive any funding from VCU but was sponsored by the Traditional Asian Health Center and Shoryuken Ramen.

BOV considers possible \$1,004 fall tuition hike

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There will also be an increase in merit-based aid for student recruiting purposes.

A study from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia last month said current levels of financial aid simply aren't high enough to meet need and students from underprivileged backgrounds are disproportionately affected.

"Regardless of the reasons, higher prices mean fewer families can gain the education and training they need to grow and prosper in their

communities," the report read.

The study found that an "enrollment gap" between students who have different financial stability has not budged, even though enrollment overall has risen. Less than one in four "lowest-income Virginia students" go to four-year universities, but 90 percent of the richest students go to four-year universities, according to the report.

Low-income students who do attend college are almost 11 percent more likely to not re-enroll after their first year when compared to students with more finan-

cial stability.

At VCU alone the number of students in the first quartile of family income — the least well-off — have dropped by almost 2,000 between 2009 and 2013.

The study did not offer much hope for the future and said it's an issue the state government will have to tackle — as this last legislative session showed us.

"Public higher education today is at a crossroads," the study said.

VCU's finalized budget will be announced on May 8, which will include next semester's tuition costs.

FAST FACTS

The BOV proposed two options for tuition increases next year:
2.77 percent (\$344) or
3.02 percent (\$374) tuition increase

Students living on-campus will be hit harder due to cost of housing and mandatory fees. Possible increases of:
2.82 percent (\$612) or
3.09 percent (\$670)

Depending on the option chosen, out-of-state students will see hikes of either
\$918 or \$1,004

66 percent of more than \$530 million in revenue VCU brought in during the 2013-2014 school year was from tuition

When the Virginia state government cut education spending in September of last year, VCU predicted a **2 percent increase in tuition.**

\$6,000
The average debt Virginia students are left with at graduation has risen between 2008 and 2013.

\$11.49 million
Amount of VCU's available funds for need-based support will be increased by state funding.
There will also be an increase in merit based aid for student recruiting purposes.

Lobbyist presents on work to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" following honorable discharge

KRIS MASON
Staff Writer

When Alexander Nicholson's sexuality led to his honorable discharge from the Army, he began a lobbying effort to repeal "don't ask, don't tell."

Last Monday night, Nicholson spoke on his experiences with VCU students.

When a colleague who knew Nicholson was gay told higher-ups in the Army, he was honorably discharged in 2002 as a result. Three years later, Nicholson went public with his story and founded Servicemember United, a nonprofit organization for activism focused on eliminating "don't ask, don't tell."

Nicholson became more involved in Washington, D.C. and found that most of the activists working on the issue were civilians who had very little to do with the military.

"It's almost as if you had all white people working on the civil rights issues back in the 1960s," Nicholson said. "Or if you had all men in a room working on women's issues for policy of women's issues."

He began his lobbying efforts by creating national speaking tours to raise awareness on the issue and in an attempt to put a face to the issue. At one point, he said his organization scheduled 30 events in seven weeks to get the local media to cover the story.

Servicemember United had some success raising their national profile and received a totally unexpected surprise, when Katie Couric of CBS Evening News did a story on the Voices of Honor, which was a combination tour of Human Rights Campaign and Servicemembers United.

When President Obama mentioned "don't ask, don't tell" in his 2010 State of the Union Address it

was a major turning point for the issue, Nicholson said.

The team's excitement was quickly tempered by a conversation with the Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina, however. Messina told Nicholson that despite the promise to pass the legislation that year, the White House had no intention of doing so.

"I was kind of floored," Nicholson said. "It was a kind of a 'holy crap' moment."

It took another year of rallying and protests for Congress to finally vote in favor of repealing "don't ask, don't tell."

Nicholson talked about how celebrities were especially helpful in getting the votes necessary. Specifically, he pointed to Lady Gaga and a video she posted encouraging her fans to call their local lawmakers and ask them to vote for the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell."

Nicholson's appearance at VCU on Monday was coordinated by political science professor Allie Reckendorf, who was a colleague of Nicholson's in graduate school at the University of South Carolina. She thought the talk would be very beneficial for her students.

"From a citizen's standpoint to see what it's like to have someone fighting for you," Reckendorf said. "It's important to learn that the legislative process works in a messier way than our textbooks teach us."

She said from a student standpoint, the talk helped explain what lobbyists do on a day-to-day basis.

"So it kind of gives (students) a better idea of what to expect if that's the route they try to go," Reckendorf said.

Truong Do, a senior English major and political science minor, is enrolled in one of Reckendorf's classes.

"I thought it was pretty great," Do said. "(Nicholson) is a pretty engaging speaker. If you have a chance to speak to him one-on-one he's very personable too."



Tobacco and e-cig products are available to students on campus. For example, Carytown Tobacco is three blocks from freshman dorms at 7601 W. Broad, while other stores accept RamBucks for cigarette purchases.

CSTP at VCU will present on youth tobacco, electronic cigarette consumption

AUSTIN WALKER
Staff Writer

The VCU Center for the Study of Tobacco Products will present on adolescent tobacco product consumption on April 8-9, at the Crowne Plaza Richmond Downtown Hotel.

Thomas Eissenberg, a tenured VCU psychology professor, will give a presentation at the conference which will address electronic cigarettes, their growing market and the FDA's ongoing regulation of such products.

Eissenberg will present "Electronic Cigarettes: What Are They and What Do They Do?" will explain the phenomenon of electronic cigarettes and their spread into popular culture that can be seen almost anywhere in the United States.

"We're actually now seeing this huge rise, percentage wise, in the number of youths who are using electronic cigarettes. It's actually now surpassing use of combustible cigarettes," said Randy Koch, the conference chairperson for the CSTP at VCU.

Koch organized the conference, selected the speakers for presentation and the topics they will address.

In Richmond, there are both new and established e-cig shops near campus. Just across Broad Street and next to Alchemy Coffee, Carytown Tobacco carries a variety of electronic cigarette products.

A grant from the Virginia Foun-

dation for Health of Youth provided to the CSTP requires a presentation on the topic of youth tobacco consumption every three years.

"The prevalence of youth tobacco use, especially in terms of combustible cigarettes, as opposed to e-cigarettes, has been decreasing steadily for quite some time," Koch said.

The modern electronic cigarette was first patented in 2003. Since then, they've seen a steady increase in use and commercialization. In 2014 it was predicted that there was worldwide \$7 billion spent on them.

The product goes by many names, including e-cigs, electronic hookahs, vaporizers or "vapes," vape pens and more. They all serve the same basic function: to deliver nicotine through vapor as opposed to a cigarette.

A viscous chemical which contains nicotine and flavoring is heated in a chamber which is then inhaled, much like the smoke from a cigarette. They are often suggested as an aid to quit smoking, as the heated vapor is reminiscent of regular tobacco cigarettes.

Whether or not they're a truly safer alternative is speculative, however. Currently, the Food & Drug Administration is hesitant to make any definitive claims on the product.

E-cigs have been approved for sale within the U.S., which is apparent by the rising use, but it's not under the same regulation as tobacco products.

Tobacco products, including cigarettes, roll-your-own, and smokeless tobacco are all regulated by the FDA, which is currently pushing for stronger regulation of the product, however.

On their website, the FDA states that such expansion would include powerful regulatory tools such as age restrictions and rigorous scientific review of new tobacco products and claims to reduce tobacco-related disease and death.

Some critics of electronic cigarettes, including Koch, say that they have particular focus on grabbing the attention of adolescents, particularly in their use of flavored oils.

A 2009 ban on flavoring of tobacco cigarettes was enacted in the interest of reducing their appeal to younger children. This regulation has not yet extended to electronic cigarettes.

"Personally, I don't think that electronic cigarettes should be available of any flavors. I think it should be tobacco flavored only, and a lot of people feel the same way," Koch said. "I think that when you have all of these flavors, it makes it much more appealing to adolescents, and I think at the very least, the one thing we do know is that we really don't want adolescents using the electronic cigarettes."

The future of electronic cigarettes remains ambiguous. However, there does not seem to be an immediate end to their use, as the market continues to expand.



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April 7

Tues.
**Monroe Park
Campus**
Students Commons
Richmond Salons

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

April 8

Weds.
MCV Campus
Tompkins-McCaw Library

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

vcutechfair



VCU Technology Services

VCU Libraries



The Season of Mr. Graham

The Press Box

BRYANT DRAYTON
Contributing Writer

There is no doubt Treveon Graham's name will end up in the rafters at VCU, as the senior forward from Temple Hills, Maryland captivated Ram fans during his four-year career. Whether it was the game-winning three pointer to beat the University of Virginia in 2013, or his 34-point performance against LaSalle University in 2014, the "Freight Train" has been nothing but stellar to his teammates, school and the city of Richmond.

Graham finished his career with more than 1,800 points, 800 rebounds and 200 three-pointers. He is the only player in VCU history to accomplish that feat. Graham was awarded for his production on the hardwood through numerous accolades he garnished during the duration of his career.

Being named a 2014-15 John Wooden and James Naismith Award watch list candidate put him in elite company with the top players in the country. Graham was also awarded with back-to-back Atlantic 10 conference first team selections.

Graham became one of three players selected to attend the LeBron James, Chris Paul and Kevin Durant Skills Academy camps this past summer.

His most recent award was an invitation to compete in the 2015 Reese's College All-Star game played on Final Four Friday, April 3, at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. In 18 minutes, Graham scored eight points, five rebounds and two assists.

Graham joined Davidson College guard Tyler Kalinoski as one of only two members from the A-10 to be selected. This is the fourth straight year a VCU senior was selected to participate, as



PHOTO BY AUDRY DUBOIN

Senior guard/forward Treveon Graham

Juvonte Reddic, Troy Daniels and Bradford Burgess all got the nod at end of their senior seasons.

His 16.2 points per game led the team in scoring for the third straight year, as he totaled 15.1 ppg his sophomore season and 15.8 as a junior. He was also the leading rebounder, recording 7.1 per game.

Graham took it upon himself to drive and get to the basket this season, which is clear from his 42.8 percent field goal percentage. He would end up finishing his career with 108 victories, the

third most all-time for a VCU senior class.

Though his college career has come to an end, the future is bright for Graham to play professional basketball. He has the best chance of any VCU graduate to be selected and play in the National Basketball Association (NBA) due to his size and credentials around the rim.

Draft Express placed Graham as the No. 99 prospect for the 2015 NBA draft and the No. 19 ranked player in his class. If this were true, Graham would not be drafted, but would still get a chance to try out for teams and prove his worth.

The biggest adjustment needed in Graham's game would come on the defensive end, as his position places him against the most gifted offensive weapons the NBA has to offer.

Every team that scouts Graham will understand what he brings to the offensive end: an attacker off the dribble that can also pull up from the three. His ability to attack the rim and draw contact from his defenders makes him NBA ready. Graham has an innate ability to find a way to score baskets and for that, NBA scouts rave about his potential.

Former head coach Shaka Smart challenged Graham to become a consistent leader to his teammates for the betterment of the program.

"He's always taken care of his own business and leading by example but that's not good enough for his senior year," Smart said. "He needs to be more vocal and ask himself how can I improve and move the team forward to a place we can all be successful."

Graham accepted this challenge, and would go on to lead VCU to its first A-10 championship in school history and win tournament MVP with his 20-point performance in the conference title game.

Rams baseball tops UMass series

PETER MASON
Contributing Writer

A 16-3 blowout for the men's baseball team started Atlantic 10 conference play right for the Rams in their three-game series against the University of Massachusetts, topping the series 2-1.

On Friday, March 27, the Rams led 13-0 in the first four innings. Sophomore catcher Matt Bare, junior shortstop Vinny Scifo and freshman outfielder Hunter Carey scored the only three runs for UMass in the fifth inning, but it was all the Minutemen could manage against the Rams.

Sophomores infielder/outfielder Logan Farrar, infielder Matt Davis, senior infielder Vimal Machin and junior outfielder Cody Acker, all scored three runs each for VCU.

The second matchup saw the Minutemen come away with a win, 3-2 on Saturday, March 28.

After seven innings the Rams led 1-0 before UMass scored three in the eighth. Scifo scored the first run off a single from redshirt senior outfielder Kyle Adie, who added

another run, as well as sophomore infielder Bryce Maher to give UMass a 3-1 advantage.

In the bottom of the eighth, VCU's junior outfielder Jimmy Kerrigan managed one more run for the Rams to cut the deficit to one point at 3-2. The Minutemen were able to hold on for the win, however, handing the Rams their third home loss of the season.

The Rams responded in game three, avenging the previous loss with an 8-0 blowout victory over UMass.

The Rams led 2-0 with runs from Machin and Kerrigan in the fourth before a strong fifth inning allowed the Rams to tack on four more runs. Sophomore infielder Darian Carpenter hit a grand slam that put the Rams up 6-0. Two more runs in the sixth and seventh completed the shutout for VCU.

After the UMass series, the Rams hosted the University of Virginia Cavaliers on Tuesday, March 31. The Cavs came out victorious in this game 5-3.

U.Va. led 5-0 until the bottom of the eighth inning when the Rams



PHOTO BY BROOKE MARSH

Men's baseball won four of six home games last week.

gave put together three runs to give the Cavaliers a scare. Acker and Farrar both scored runs and junior catcher Walker Haymaker added on the third.

The Cavaliers held off the Rams for the final inning and won the matchup 5-3. The Cavs also outhit the Rams 11-8.

Freshman outfielder Adam Haseley led the Cavs with two of

their five runs. The loss put VCU at 15-12, with a 2-1 start in the Atlantic 10 conference portion of their schedule.

The Rams' next match is a three-game road trip to Dayton, Ohio for conference play against the University of Dayton. On April 4, the men's baseball team won the first game of a doubleheader, 5-2 to push their record to 16-12.

Track and Field continue strong showings in RVA

SOPHIA BELLETTI
Contributing Writer

Last weekend, the men's and women's track and field teams remained in RVA for the University of Richmond's Fred Hardy Invitational, where they had another strong showing, especially for the women's team and the throwers for the men.

On the men's end, senior thrower Brandon Ruffin had a big night for the Rams. Ruffin won the shot put event, with a throw of 16.07-meters and the discus with a throw of 50.26-meters. Senior teammate Ryan Coles just missed the podium, finishing fourth in both shot put and the discus with a mark of 15.33-meters.

Throwers continued to dominate, with Ruffin leading the way. He registered a third place finish with a mark of 51.06-meters. Coles earned fifth with a 48.20-meter throw and senior Benjamin Melton threw 44.26-meters for a ninth place finish.

In the triple jump, sophomore Racheed Davis finished third with a jump of 13.83-meters. In the 400-meter hurdles, junior Kyle Martin finished in second place at 54.11 seconds. Martin also finished in the top-5 in the 110-meter hurdle with a time of 15.03.

Senior Matt Earman won the 10,000-meter run, crossing the line at 32:22.02 and beating his opponent by 35 seconds.

In the 800-meter run, senior



PHOTO BY MARY CLARKE

The men's and women's track and field team stayed in Richmond for the Fred Hardy Invite.

Mohamed Adam earned a fourth place finish at 1:55.41.

Sophomore Austin Lushinski crossed the line at 9:12.04 in the 3,000-meter run, finishing sixth.

Lastly for the men's team, the 4x400-meter relay made up of seniors George Moore and Khalid Khamis and freshmen Kahlil Shepard and Nicholas Buckingham, recorded a second place finish at 3:20.81.

The women's end had an equally solid weekend, with several Rams recording top-5 finishes.

Both the 4x100-meter and 4x400-meter relay teams took home the gold for VCU. The 4x100-meter team, made up of se-

nior Alexis Stroman, juniors Verna Hilaire-Lee and Jessica Ewing and sophomore De'Nisha Smith, won by two seconds with a 46.67 time. In the 4x400-meter seniors Kiara Porter, Nicole Grasty and Qualitra Brown and freshman Nichelle Scott crossed the line at 3:48.34.

Junior Carina Peter and freshman Jasmine Lackey took the top-2 spots in the triple jump. Peter recorded a jump of 11.80-meters to take the gold, while Lackey had a mark of 11.23-meters. Peter also finished in the top-5 in the long jump with a leap of 5.29-meters.

In the high jump, sophomore Christina Solomon tied for second with a mark of 1.60-meters.

Sophomore Emily Dyke recorded a top-5 finish among a deep field in the 1500-meter run in a time of 4:36.77. Dyke also recorded the highest finish among VCU runners, crossing the 800-meter finish line at 2:15.07 and placing fourth.

Senior Niema Eaves finished in the top-10 at 2:19.68. Hilaire-Lee took home second in the 100-meter dash at 12.35.

In the 400-meter dash, Scott earned a fourth place finish with a 57.43 time. Brown and senior Amethyst Polk took top-5 finishes in the 200-meter dash at 25.00 and 25.72, respectively.



STAT OF THE WEEK Former head coach Shaka Smart won 26 or more games each season during his six-year tenure at VCU, a feat only matched by Duke University.

Shaka's Timeline

KRIS MASON
Staff Writer

April 2, 2009

Smart introduced as head coach of VCU

Smart is hired from an assistant coach position at the University of Florida. It was at this press conference he famously said, "we will wreak havoc on our opponents' psyche and their plan of attack." The term "Havoc" would come to be synonymous with the program and Smart himself.

November 19, 2009

Smart wins first game

VCU defeats Bethune-Cookman 77-51 in Smart's first of 163 career wins as Rams head coach.

March 13, 2011

VCU put in NCAA tournament field

There was a lot of debate and controversy about the Rams inclusion in the field from experts who felt that they didn't deserve an at-large bid. They would be forced to eat their words three weeks later.

March 27, 2011

VCU defeats Kansas, makes 2011 Final Four

Smart takes team to unprecedented heights, making the Final Four. The Rams played in the play-in games and become the first team ever to win five games and go from the First Four to the Final Four.

April 2, 2011

Smart agrees to eight-year contract extension

Smart becomes a hot commodity for vacant coaching positions in the offseason, a trend that would continue for the rest of his tenure. His contract would be reworked and extended multiple times.

March 5, 2012

VCU wins 2012 CAA tournament

No sweating out Selection Sunday this year, as the Rams win the league's automatic bid to make the Big Dance.

July 1, 2012

VCU joins Atlantic 10 conference

The Rams upgrade to a conference that annually receives multiple bids to NCAA tournament.

January 19, 2013

Smart wins 100th game

VCU defeated Duquesne University 90-63 to reach the milestone victory.

March 27, 2014

VCU suffers heartbreaking loss to Stephen F. Austin

In one of the most heartbreaking losses in the program's history, JeQuan Lewis fouls Stephen F. Austin's Desmond Haymon with VCU up 4 with 10 seconds left to play in regulation. Haymon makes the three-pointer and foul shot, sending the game to overtime, where VCU loses 77-75.

January 31, 2015

Briante Weber suffers career-ending knee injury

The face of Havoc, Briante Weber suffers a season-ending injury. Smart and company rally behind the fallen senior.

March 15, 2015

VCU wins 2015 A-10 tournament

After finishing runner-up their first two years in the A-10, the Rams finally finish on top as they win four games in four days in Brooklyn to win the title.

March 19, 2015

VCU falls to Ohio State in first round

The Rams fall to Ohio State in overtime 75-72. It was the Rams' fifth-straight NCAA appearance, the first time a Virginia team has ever achieved the feat.

April 2, 2015

Smart accepts job at the University of Texas

Smart accepts the deal to become head coach of the University of Texas Longhorns.



Men’s tennis is 14-8 overall this season, winning 12 games at home and 2-0 in conference play.

Men’s tennis dominate opposing Rams

JENNIFER WERLING
Contributing Writer

Men’s tennis had their second Atlantic 10 conference matchup, winning 4-0 against the Fordham University Rams on Thursday, April 2, in a match played at the Thalhimer Tennis Center inside HDL Inc. Athletic Village. The win improved the men’s tennis team’s home record to 12-4 and 14-8 overall.

Singles Competition		
Michal Voscek (VCU) vs. Pol Giraldez (FOR)	6-1	5-2
Catalin Fifea (VCU) def. Pedro Alonzo (FOR)	6-0	6-0
Wilder Pimentel (VCU) vs. Max Peara (FOR)	6-1	2-1
Antonio Battle Rodriguez (VCU) vs. Joseph Kavaloski (FOR)	6-2	5-2
Louis Ishizaka (VCU) def. Joey Brander (FOR)	6-1	6-1
Marcos Rocca (VCU) def. Harris Durkovic (FOR)	6-0	6-1
Doubles Competition		
Joseph Cohen/Daryl Monfils (VCU) def. Pol Giraldez/Max Peara (FOR)		5-2
Wilder Pimentel/Catalin Fifea (VCU) def. Pedro Alonzo/Joseph Kavaloski (FOR)		8-2
Michal Voscek/ Antonio Battle Rodriguez (VCU) def. Joey Brander/Harris Durkovic (FOR)		8-2



Senior Cindy Chala defeated Fordham University’s Ellie Ball 6-3 in singles competition.

Women’s tennis ends Fordham winning streak

JENNIFER WERLING
Contributing Writer

The women’s tennis team got their 10th win of the season by defeating Fordham University, a team who entered the matchup on a four-game winning streak. Played on Thursday, April 2, at the Thalhimer Tennis Center inside HDL Inc. Athletic Village, the victory was the first Atlantic 10 conference portion of their schedule. The women’s tennis team is 10-8 overall.

Singles Competition		
Cindy Chala (VCU) def. Ellies Ball (FOR)	6-3	6-3
Salome Kvitashvili (VCU) vs. Sarah Ali (FOR)	Unfinished	6-2
Ludivine Burguiere (VCU) vs. Estelle Wong (FOR)	Unfinished	7-5
Darya Berezhnaya (VCU) def. Julie Leong (FOR)	6-2	6-3
Ana Batiri (VCU) def. Destiny Grunin (FOR)	6-2	6-0
Alzbeta Veverkova (VCU) vs. Bella Genkina (FOR)	Unfinished	4-6
Doubles Competition		
Salome Kvitashvili/Cindy Chala (VCU) def. Sarah Ali/Ellies Ball (FOR)		8-3
Darya Berezhnaya/Ana Batiri (VCU) def. Bella Genkina/Anika Novacek (FOR)		8-1
Julie Leong/Estelle Wong (FOR) def. Ludivine Burguiere/Alzbeta Veverkova (VCU)		8-3

what’s happening at

program details, rates, and locations at recsports.vcu.edu

- american red cross**
cpr/aed/fa
recertification course
[saturday, 4/11, 9am–12pm]

american red cross
cpr/aed/fa
full certification course
[saturday, 4/18, 9am–3pm]

ARC lifeguard training
certification course
[5/11–5/15, mon–thurs 12–6pm, fri 9am–2pm]
register by 5/8 at either facility

sea kayaking weekend
[saturday, 4/11–4/12]

women’s day mountain bike ride
[saturday, 4/11]
- day SUP**
[sunday, 4/12]

beginner whitewater weekend
[saturday, 4/18–4/19]

day climb
[saturday, 4/18]


day road ride
[sunday, 4/19]


women’s sea kayaking weekend
[saturday, 4/25–4/26]



day SUP
[saturday, 4/25]


day raft
[sunday, 4/26]





-  /VCURecSports

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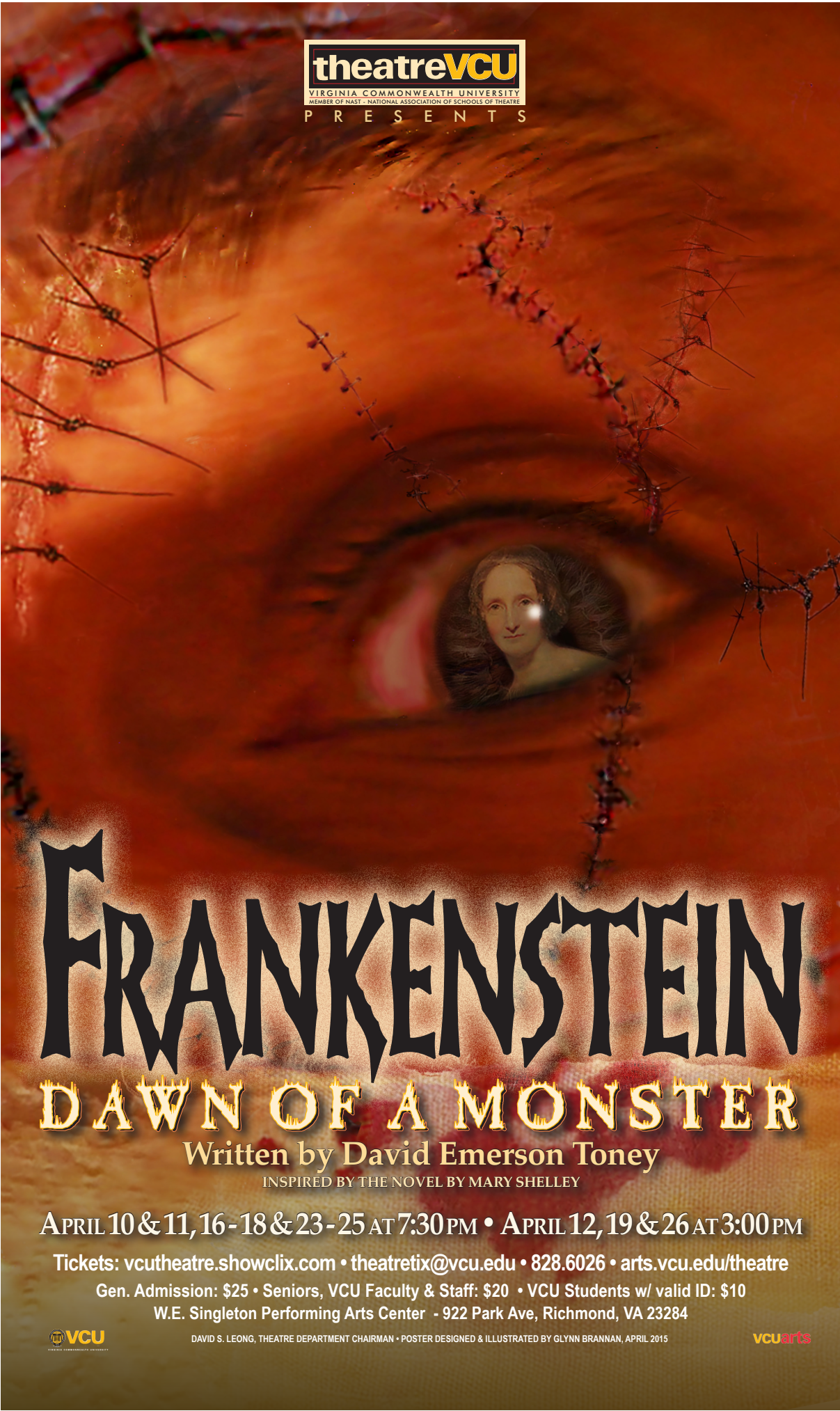
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PRESENTS



FRANKENSTEIN

DAWN OF A MONSTER

Written by David Emerson Toney



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ON THIS DAY in 1965, the Beach Boys recorded music for their hit “California Girls.”

VCU students on the air waves, WVCW finally have their first FM frequency

AUSTIN WALKER
Staff Writer

WVCW, Virginia Commonwealth University’s award-winning student-run radio station, is now broadcasting on FM radio for the first time since the station’s creation in 1968.

After decades of efforts to procure a frequency in the densely populated Richmond metropolitan area, the station announced on March 4 that will no longer be confined to online broadcasting capabilities. WVCW can be listened to at 102.9 FM.

WVCW, which is an independent broadcasting association based out of the Student Media Center, hosts a variety of specials alongside broadcasting music and radio commercials. Access to their broadcast is available for free online at wcvw.org.

WVCW general manager Heather Hudgins had made efforts in her position this year to make it onto radio, following in the footsteps of her predecessors who have done the same.

“We’ve been trying especially hard these past couple of years,” Hudgins said. “We were looking for the right opportunity to present itself, and we got it with the WTJU partnership.”

WTJU is a noncommercial and educational station that has been licensed by the FCC to the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia. WVCW has signed a one-year contract with WTJU, which will allow them to broadcast on their frequency.

WHAN, a station located in Ashburn, Virginia, approached WTJU offering to sell their station. WTJU purchased the station, and extended an offer to the student-operated WVCW so that local programming could be broadcast.

The one-year contract was signed as a preliminary measure. The school was wary of signing a 5-10-year contract before finding out how successful the transition



PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA JONES

WVCW has been trying to get an on air radio frequency since 1968. After decades of efforts, the VCU community can now listen to WVCW at 102.9 FM.

was.

A decade ago in 2005, the SGA voted on a resolution which would grant WVCW the funding to procure their own FM radio station.

Jessica Lee, who was the Student Senate chairwoman during that period, sponsored the bill and proposed some of the potential benefits.

“As of right now you need to be (logged) in to the computer system in order to hear our radio station,” Lee said. “And we want to make it more of a typical radio station that

is actually on-air that you can get from you know, your car, your stereo (or) wherever. This would just broaden the horizons for our mass (communications) majors who are working on the radio station.”

To listen to WVCW, you’ll have to tune in between 6 p.m. and 1 a.m. Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, they’re able to use the 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. time slot.

“That’s drive-time, that’s prime-time, especially because we have so much interesting specialty program that fits really well on night-

time hours, like our electronica show, our EDM show and our R&B show,” Hudgins said. “We’re pretty happy about the time.”

Some of the specialty shows currently hosted at WVCW include The BeaconHill Project, which focuses on independent hip-hop artists, Drake’s Hairline, a comedy/R&B special, and The Sweet Sounds of Cinema, which features notable music from movies.

Back in 1968, when the station was still called WJRB, which

stood for James River Broadcasting, the show was played over AM signals. While AM can function effectively for talk radio, the bandwidth limitations related to broadcasting on AM has made it undesirable for music-based radio. The disruption of AM radio signals is only amplified in a city setting because of large metal structures and sources of electrical noise.

In 1991, they made the switch to Cable FM, which they admit on their website was a persistent

challenge to their listener-base and technical abilities. In 2001 the station made the transition to exclusively online radio, where it has stayed until now.

“WVCW offers very unique programming, we have a wide variety of shows, talk shows, music shows, book review shows (and) science shows,” Hudgins said. “There’s something for everyone on here. All this is doing is allowing us to have a wider audience and to reach more people with our programming.”

TheatreVCU explores Frankenstein and the woman who wrote it

AMELIA HEYMANN
Contributing Writer

In the middle of a laboratory, a white sheet covers a body stitched together from multiple corpses. An estranged scientist stares over them, hoping to gain the power of immortality through these lifeless limbs.

While the story of “Frankenstein” is famous, the life of Mary Shelley, the author of the classic

novel, is less well-known. TheatreVCU attempts to capture the life of Shelley alongside the plot of her book to reveal more insight into its creation in their upcoming production, “Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster.”

“Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster” is an original production by David Toney, an assistant professor of acting and directing in the VCU theater department. The play itself is about Shelley’s life

and how it affected her writing.

Tyler McAnney, a freshman who was cast as the part of Lord Byron in the play, said Toney originally cast the production based off the rough draft of his play, but Toney let it run from there.

While the play has scenes from the book in it, it’s more about Shelley’s story. McAnney said the play itself takes place in two different worlds, the world of fiction in the book “Frankenstein,” and the

world of reality which is Shelley’s life.

“The two worlds intermingle, and go to show just how Mary Shelley actually developed the book of Frankenstein,” McAnney said.

Grenville Burgess, the scenic set designer for the play and a first-year MFA candidate, said one of the ways the two different worlds are being conveyed on set is through the use of color. He said

while some scenes have a lot of color, others lack color to convey the unromantic and harsh reality we sometimes face.

Burgess said working with a new and changing play has been like a double-edged sword. While he said he has a lot of freedom to do whatever he wants, there’s also the issue of having no contextual background to look at how things are done.

“I’ve had to be open and willing to embrace the changes,” Burgess said. “We’re revising until the opening.”

McAnney also said that Toney gave the actors the reins and let them take the characters in a new direction than what Toney had originally intended. McAnney said rather than turning the actors around, Toney would push them further.

Annabelle Bradstreet, a junior at VCU playing the bride of the monster, said she loved working on the play because everyone is so dedicated at the rehearsals, and both Toney and David Leon, the theater chair for the school of the arts, are “brilliant.”

“I’ve been in school with these people for years now, and I’ve seen them work,” Bradstreet said. “This is definitely some of the best work I’ve seen any of them really do.”

The character McAnney portrays, Lord Byron, exists in the reality world of the play, and was the main antagonist of Shelley’s life. Byron was known for being a famous poet but was always “sickly,” and it was rumored that Byron would drink out of a human skull at parties.

“He’s really not the best of guys,” McAnney said.

A conflict he provides in the play is that he not only sleeps around with prostitutes, but also Mary Shelley’s husband, Perry

Shelley. While Byron slept with both men and women, McAnney said it’s hard to say what Byron’s sexuality was.

“I think more so (sex) was about the power struggle,” McAnney said. “He got his thrill out of it whether it be about man, woman or child. He’s a very dark character and he did very dark things both in real life and in the play.”

McAnney said the conflict that Byron causes in Shelley’s life helped to shape the outcome of the ending of the book “Frankenstein.”

Bradstreet said her character, the bride of the monster, also ties into Shelley’s life. The character was originally going to be played by the actress portraying Mary Shelley, which reflects the idea that Shelley became attached or connected to the personal monster in her life that she created.

One of the main themes of the play is love. McAnney said it’s not just about the happiness that is experienced in love, but also the sadness, anger and every other emotion.

“It’s more about how love can push you to extremes you never imagined you could go to,” McAnney said.

Bradstreet said this is her favorite production she’s worked on so far because it is tied to human desire of wanting love and the obstacles in life that make it difficult to obtain.

“It becomes this really complex thing which sort of always happens,” Bradstreet said. “What I love about the show is that it says all the things you don’t ever actually get to say.”

“Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster” will be running from April 10-26. Tickets can be purchased online at showclix.com for \$10 with a valid VCU ID.



“Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster” is an original production by David Toney, an assistant professor of acting and directing in the VCU theater department.

PHOTO BY MARY LEE CLARK

Twin Peaks Festival invades RVA

REBECCA FRANKEL
Contributing Writer

In early April 1990, viewers tuned in to the pilot episode of David Lynch’s mysterious TV show “Twin Peaks.” Now, 25 years later, on the weekend of April 16-19, Movie Club Richmond, the Video Fan and Makeout Creek Books are bringing “The Great Southern,” a “Twin Peaks”-themed festival, to Richmond.

The festival celebrating the show, which ran for two seasons from 1990-1991, was planned by Andrew Blossom, a self-proclaimed true “Twin Peaks” fanatic who works at Video Fan and Chop Suey Books and is also an editor at Makeout Creek Books.

“Every time I watch ‘Twin Peaks’ it feels like going home,” Blossom said. “It feels like you’re returning to something special. It’s such a wonderful artistic creation. That mixture of humor and horror, really terrific acting and writing, it just really makes for a special experience every time I watch it.”

Blossom said that he wanted the festival to be not only about

the television show, but about Richmond as well, with events spread throughout the city.

“We built this festival as a series of events in different locations, most of which is free, so that people can go to as little or as much of it as they want,” Blossom said.

“The Great Southern” kicks off on Thursday, April 16 with happy hour at Portrait House in Carytown, followed by a reading from Makeout Creek at Ipanema Cafe. Friday there will be a Sacred Bones Records listening party at Steady Sounds, followed by a Q&A at Chop Suey Books with Brad Dukes, author of “Reflections: An Oral History of Twin Peaks,” and “Twin Peaks” and “Eraserhead” actress Charlotte Stewart.

In “Reflections: An Oral History of Twin Peaks,” Dukes interviewed more than 100 cast and crew members of “Twin Peaks.” It is full of first-person accounts of the making of the show.

“Charlotte was the first person I interviewed,” Dukes said. “I get lost in her stories.”

Following the Q&A, there will be a “Hook Rug Soiree” at Portrait House, a dance party named for a famous scene in the series when one of the characters dances on a hook rug in the dark while holding a flashlight. That evening, the Byrd Theatre will have a midnight showing of the cult-classic “Eraserhead,” also directed by David Lynch.

Saturday promises a pizza pic and coffee special at Dinamo, and “Big Ed’s Craft Farm,” which will feature handmade goods from local artists at Hardywood Park Craft Brewery.

Saturday night, Strange Matter will be hosting “Let’s Rock! The Pink Room Show,” featuring bands like Big NO, Lodro, Mutwawa and Service. Heather Jerabeck, a member of Big NO, said the Strange Matter show is based off a scene in the “Twin Peaks” prequel, “Fire Walk with Me” in which two main characters, Laura and Donna, go to a bar called The Pink Room. It’s called “Let’s Rock” because it is the last phrase another character, Jaques Renault, says before the night



On April 16, the Byrd Theatre will hold a midnight showing of David Lynch’s “Eraserhead.”

takes a strange turn.

“It’s gonna be really fun because even though it’s a show at Strange Matter, we’re really trying to make it a party,” Jerabeck said. “It’s not just gonna be a bunch of people facing forward, watching a show and then smoking cigarettes outside. We’re gonna DJ, the DJ’s name is Service, and they’re gonna

play music in-between and before and after so people can dance and have fun. We want it to be more of a dance-party vibe.”

The final day of the festival has “An Afternoon Both Wonderful and Strange” at Hardywood Brewery, which will have a Mr. & Ms. Twin Peaks Costume Contest, a special guest Q&A and a performance by a Julee Cruise cover band, as Julee Cruise was the artist who wrote “Falling,” the theme song for the TV series. There will also be “Twin Peaks” trivia Sunday night at Sticky Rice.

More information about the festival can be found at thegreat-southern-richmond.com. It runs April 16-19.

Richmond musicians say “no fracking way” to Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines

DANIEL PARKER
Contributing Writer

A table of environmental activism pamphlets sits next to the stage of the Camel at 1621 W. Broad St. On stage, the guitarist spews diatribes against fracking between songs, a feedback hum underscoring his voice. This is Frack Off Fest.

On March 13-18, Richmond bands hosted the anti-fracking festival, as a “pre-game” for a larger festival called FRACK-tose Intolerant that took place April 3-4 in West Virginia, at Pinky’s Farm. Frack Off Fest was held at local clubs like Strange Matter, Sound Of Music Recording Studio, the Gene Pool Collective, the Camel and a Richmond house show venue called Our House. Money raised from Frack Off Fest was donated to help organize the larger FRACK-tose Intolerant festival.

A process of unearthing natural gas and oil deep in the earth, fracking involves drilling into the ground, then blasting downwards with a combination of water and chemicals.

The FRACK-tose Intolerant music festival is spreading awareness against two proposed natural gas pipelines, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and Mountain Valley Pipeline, that span across multiple states, including North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. The Sierra Club, an environmentalist group, reports that not only does fracking destroy the natural environment where drilling occurs, it also contaminates the water supply.

For several years, FRACK-tose Intolerant organizer Jesse Abramson has used her connections at her job as a touring performance artist to hold a festival called Pink Moon every year at Pinky’s Farm, her family’s

homestead in West Virginia. Last year, Pink Moon featured four straight nights of live music from more than 80 bands. Abramson decided to use that network from Pink Moon to hold FRACK-tose Intolerant on her farm.

“When we heard that the pipelines were gonna come through Monroe County, we really wanted to put that network behind something and everybody just jumped on board and it worked out,” Abramson said.

Tommy Crisafulli, guitarist and vocalist for local Richmond band Imaginary Sons, was one of the first organizers of Frack Off Fest. Abramson contacted Crisafulli to play at FRACK-tose Intolerant and after agreeing, Crisafulli decided to go one step further and organize a festival in Richmond to raise money for FRACK-tose Intolerant.

“When Tommy brought up

FRACK-tose Intolerant and what they were trying to do, it really opened my eyes to what opportunities are out there, to tell the government, to tell the corporations, to tell the important people that make decisions, to make decisions that are healthy for the environment,” said Jake Lawrence, an organizer that booked bands for Frack Off Fest.

Lawrence already had two shows booked at the Camel and Strange Matter for March 17-18. Once Tommy approached him, he contacted the bands and those unrelated shows became a part of Frack Off Fest. Greg Goode-nov, vocalist and keyboardist for Suneater, helped book the other dates.

As a band, Imaginary Sons’ message is not so much political, but more about not getting anxious about the trivial aspects of life. When Crisafulli heard the

pipeline was going to be near his home county of King George, he decided to do something about it. Crisafulli’s concern was that the fracking could harm his family’s drinking water.

Organizing a week-long festival in Richmond against fracking proved to be simple. Once they announced the idea, bands leapt at the chance. Myles Shifflett, an organizer and member of the one-man band Six Track Amateur, wasn’t even given the chance to book bands because spots were filled so fast.

“Everyone put in their feedback and the people that were part of the Facebook group message agreed to have it as soon as possible, it ended up being put together in a few weeks,” Shifflett said. “I didn’t have a chance to book any bands really.”

Toxic Moxie, another Richmond band, provided assistance

in organizing the festival across Richmond. Unlike Imaginary Sons, Toxic Moxie does play songs revolving around issues like the environment and gender equality. As other bands focus on partying, Mitch Kordella, bassist, vocalist and keyboardist of Toxic Moxie, said they make music that’s more than just “partying and smoking.”

“I’m not an activist, I’m not a politically charged person, I’m just a musician trying to help people,” Crisafulli said. “If my music can help a single person in any way I’ll do it, and if I can raise awareness to an issue I’ll do it ... Music can be a weapon and if used properly it can bring serious change to the world.”

In the aftermath of FRACK-tose Intolerant, Jesse Abramson is planning to continue organizing future events to educate people about the dangers of fracking.

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Highlights of April’s First Friday



This past First Friday, Gallery 5 celebrated it’s 10-year anniversary. Inside, shows and performances were in full swing.

TAYLOR THORNBERG
Spectrum Editor

On Friday, April 3, a balmy 75 degree evening, scores of Richmonders gathered and traversed the monthly art walk down Broad and Main streets. Although rain and thunderstorms threatened to send everyone home, they held off until almost everyone had the chance to check out the galleries. While a few of the bigger galleries along Broad Street had new exhibit openings, most of the new things to see were slightly off the beaten path.

At the very beginning of the art walk in the new VCU graphic design building at 417 W. Broad St., sophomore graphic design students displayed some of their most recent class projects, which included posters and video clips. At Sediment Gallery at 208 E. Grace St., the “Scatter/Structure” exhibit opened with a reception from 6-9 p.m. People packed in to see works by Sarah Nance and Heather McCalla, both Fountainhead Fellows for VCU’s craft and material studies department. The exhibit featured drawings and architectural installations by

both artists that explored concepts like the complexities of familial relationships and the idea of “fixed states of being.” One block over at 205 E. Broad St., mOb, a design studio run by VCU students and professors, showed their latest designed posters. The art displayed wasn’t just contained within the building, but was also put up in the median strip of Broad Street for passing cars to see. mOb’s goal with the posters and all their projects is to connect the community through design. The biggest event of the evening by far was Gallery 5’s 10-year anniversary celebration. If First Friday seemed a little emptier than usual, it was most likely because most of the crowds gathered in and outside of Gallery 5 at 200 W. Marshall St. Brook Road, directly next to the gallery, was closed off to accommodate the Party Liberation Front’s fire-dancing show, which drew a huge crowd, including a group protesting the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Inside, burlesque shows and musical performances by White Laces, Lobo Marino, Dave Watkins and The Awesome Few went on all night. Upstairs, cake was served to gallery-goers, and photos taken in and of Gallery 5 over the past five years were on display. Although Friday night was the biggest celebration, Gallery 5 will be hosting events for their 10-year anniversary all month, including a series of concerts by local bands and touring bands. Despite the spring temperatures, some of the usual warm-weather outdoor fixtures of First Friday were missing, such as the small market that takes place in the lot next to Quirk Gallery at 311 W. Broad St., which usually features vendors of jewelry, soaps, baked goods and traditional Vietnamese food. Others, like the street DJ outside of the Turnstyle music store at 102 W. Broad St., embraced the warm weather and kept the art walkers entertained. April’s First Friday may not have been the busiest, but by May, the warmer weather should see the art walk activities in full swing.

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– Brandon Day

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Quote of the week

“No one should be allowed to use a state or federal law to defend their racism, sexism or overall bigotry toward another human being.”
— Victoria Zawitowski

Kenyan casualties harm global community

MORGAN WHITE
Opinion Editor

More conflict that'll soon be forgotten: When al-Shabaab gunmen attacked Garissa University in northeast Kenya last Thursday, April 2, they killed at least 149 people according to the official Twitter account of Kenya's National Disaster Operation Centre and Kenyan media reports. Authorities said that they had targeted mainly Christians.

Approximately 815 students are enrolled at Garissa University College according to an April 2 CNN article. Of the 815 students, 500 have been evacuated. Approximately 21 percent of the students at the college were murdered during the al-Shabaab attack. If 21 percent of VCU's student body was murdered, the total would ramp up to more than 6,500 casualties. The analogy is there to make a substantial point: While it is not our community, our state or even our nation, the students were a large part of their Kenyan community, and thus a substantial part of the global community.

While al-Shabaab is a name that may be unfamiliar to the majority of the American public, this is definitely not the first time they were the cause of mass death in Africa. In September 2013, the militant group attacked Westgate, a shopping mall in Nairobi, killing 67 people.

Reports of this attack will pass silently through the night, as quickly as Boko Haram's Jan. 3 attack on the Nigerian town of Baga which resulted in nearly 2,000 casualties. Mainstream media outlets will resume covering the Iranian nuclear deals and the American public will continue to saturate themselves with pop-culture pornography.

As I've said before, lives lost in Africa deserve more than a subtle nod by saying "this needs to stop." Unfortunately as a U.S. student, that's all I can offer. Attacks like this will continue to receive little airplay in mainstream media because it's neither proximate nor unusual. The perception of Africa from an American mindset is that violence is just the nature of that



ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON WRIGHT

continent and there's nothing you or I could do about the barbaric actions of those militant groups.

The average homicide rate per 100,000 people in the U.S. between 2010 and 2012 was five according to The World Bank. Per 100,000 people in Kenya the same rate was six. You can't main-

tain that perception when the rate of violence is relatively similar between the two countries.

We can't continue to take our freedom of religion for granted as al-Shabaab militants, ISIS and any other militant group in foreign countries continue to kill those who don't follow their

misguided version of Islam. This attack should matter more than figuring it's something that happened in a foreign land seemingly as far away from the U.S. as Mars is to Earth. It should be something that affects the global community.

It should be our moral respon-

sibility as a nation to fight for the freedom of religion internationally. No one's willing to put their foot down though and say enough is enough. It's a haunting aspect of the fatigue our country is currently recovering from, having been in multiple wars over the last 14 years.

An empire state of mind

-continued from page. 1

with their decisions, the wealth of the established communities pale in comparison to the potential influx of student revenue.

Housing, for example, is always a concern for students, particularly freshmen. To gauge student demand, VCU sends out surveys polling students and then meets their demands by providing what students asked for. A VCU housing market analysis from 2013 showed a demand for "more than 1,300 beds on the Monroe Park Campus and more than 400 beds on the MCV Campus."

It's encouraging to see an administration being receptive to student input, but the act also seems equally overly responsible; students should be encouraged to become independent of the university, especially in the realm of housing, toward their upperclassmen years. Providing housing as freely as the administration does infantilizes students by removing the experience of seeking housing and transition into the "real world," complete with the option of having bizarre housemates that might not also be students, or are students attending a different school.

That kind of monopoly, which both holds VCU students close by to campus and excludes them from experiencing life with a non-peer group, is antithetical to the buzzword "diversity." In contrast,

local neighborhoods provide low-cost housing options for students that are nearby, but not the product of a well-meaning, but overbearing university.

It should be noted that VCU prices their housing to be competitive with local rates, further demonstrating that they are in-touch with the student body, but the "competitive" aspect of the pricing is prohibitive and therefore makes on-campus housing inaccessible for students.

For the proposed 2015-2016 rates, the lowest cost for academic yearlong housing (a traditional double at MCV) comes out to about \$600 a month, with the lowest amount for a 11.5 month lease coming in at \$650 for a single in a four-person apartment. Anyone remotely familiar with housing in Richmond can explain how exorbitant those prices are compared to the housing equivalent in any of the surrounding neighborhoods. VCU's attempt at competitive pricing also demonstrates the way a public university can put stress on the surrounding community, albeit unintentionally. A further discussion regarding how the university's housing overstretch can affect house prices, taxes and other factors are also warranted.

The university's real estate grab and presence also affects the aesthetics of Richmond. Consider the contemporary homes popping up in mismatched neighborhoods

or the construction of luxury apartments, whether they're near campus, in Jackson Ward, down Floyd or toward Willow Lawn. The buildings, whether VCU-owned or not, are empowered and influenced by the university's stretch, even if only through a curious "Is that part of VCU?" by visitors.

“That kind of monopoly, which both holds VCU students close by to campus and excludes them from experiencing life with a non-peer group, is antithetical to the buzzword “diversity.” In contrast, local neighborhoods provide low-cost housing options for students that are nearby, but not the product of a well-meaning, but overbearing university.

This kind of gentrification is about aesthetics and “cleaning up the neighborhood,” without ever addressing why the neighbor-

hood was “dirty” to begin with. When we use the word “sketchy” to describe an area, we’re pricing the place on its surface aspects. That word, “sketchy,” travels from mouth to mouth, ear to ear, solidifying itself amongst outsiders and ensuring the death of that community and a decrease in diversity.

There's a larger aesthetic-guided and community-orientated point being made: Richmond, like any city, is known for its historicism and character. While beneficial for the purpose of (temporary) job growth and beautification, the deluge of new construction projects have eroded the character of particular areas.

More toward the business end, the expansion has resulted in a duller local pallette, as food trend after food trend cause repetitive restaurant startups to compete with each other for student affection. Corporate food chains, invited by the university, add to this blandness, further eroding and pushing the more unique and character-driven aspects of Richmond away from the university.

The Master Plan takes style into account, stating that “style must compliment appropriate building type” and that the “VCU Administration should collaborate with the university's selected architects in designing buildings which are stylistically complementary and enriching to the campuses.” The concern here

is that, though it is apparent the university is concerned with the historic image of Richmond and appropriately adapting, many of the aspects regarding “adapting” can be sidestepped when an area is gentrified.

When a comparatively wealthy, enterprising force breaks a deal, sees itself as the creator of your municipality and acts in a cavalier manner, it's easy to see why residents are so vehemently opposed to VCU. Declaring our homecoming theme “empire” didn't help to prove VCU's benevolence.

The actions of the administration, in many manners, are not representative of how a university, bent on inclusion, community involvement and being a positive force, conducts themselves. VCU's 2020 Master Plan is an incredible, expensive and thought-out document with clear intentions and limitations. It's not some monstrous attempt to buy out and VCU-ify the city. In many ways, it's the opposite because of the attempt to improve the adjacency of VCU buildings.

At the same time, with the plethora of construction and renovation left to be done in the next five years, it's hard to reconcile my own excitement at seeing my university evolve into a massive, innovative block in the center of Richmond with sympathy for the plight of those who will suffer for the wants of an empire.

A license to discriminate

VICTORIA ZAWITKOWSKI
Staff Columnist

There has been quite an uproar about the religious liberty bill passed in Indiana this past week, but this is nothing new. Many people don't realize just how many other states have similar legislation already solidified in their codes or how many bills claiming religious liberty as an excuse for discrimination are proposed during each general assembly session.

Religious freedom has frequently been used as a defense for discrimination against the LG-BTQ community.

Virginia sees bills like this crop up in each of its own legislative sessions.

In Virginia's 2015 General Assembly session, Del. Bob Marshall (R-Manassas) introduced House Bill 1414. It stated that a person would not be required to “perform, assist, consent to, or participate in any action” as a condition of “obtaining or renewing a government-issued license, registration, or certificate” if such actions would “violate the religious or moral convictions of such person.”

The language of this bill creates a license to discriminate. Lawyers could put signs in their windows saying they don't handle gay divorces. Bakeries could put up signs saying they won't make wedding cakes for an LGBTQ ceremony. We would be drawing lines through our state, separating the LGBTQ-friendly businesses from those that are not. Thankfully, Marshall's bill did not pass, but it is not the first or last attempt at this kind of discrimination.

Indiana is just the latest state to attempt conscience-clause legislation. Arizona attempted to pass a bill almost identical to Indiana's last year, but with the threat of losing the NFL Super Bowl's presence (and \$480 million worth of business), Gov. Jan Brewer caved. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence recently announced he would ask legislators to submit a clarification to the bill. But he only did this after several TV appearances where he defended the bill, denying it had anything to do with discrimination.

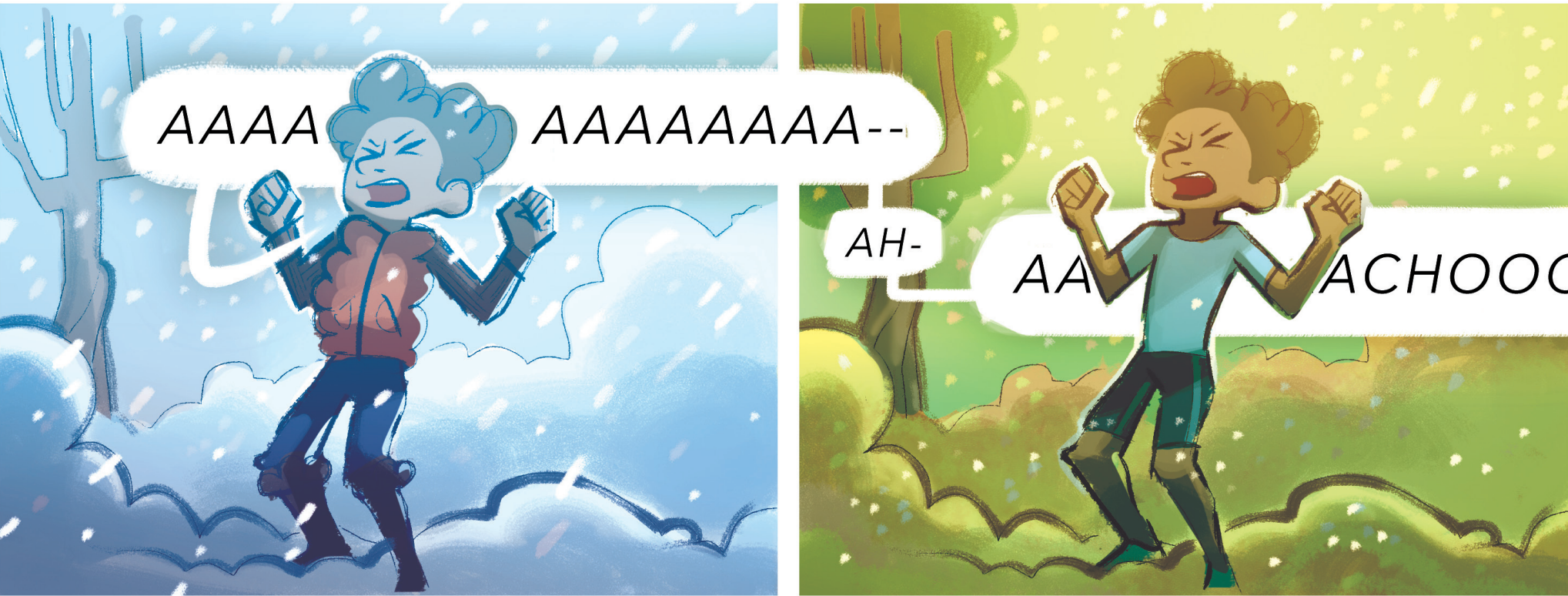
Nevertheless, Arizona and Indiana are two of 33 states in the U.S. that have no protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In 29 states it is technically legal for a storeowner to deny service to a gay person over his or her sexual orientation. In many states, you can also still be fired for being gay. Religious freedom bills are piling on to an already existing problem: the lack of overall protection for the LGBTQ community.

The other very important aspect of legislation like that found in Virginia, Arizona or Indiana, is that the broad language of these bills affects not only the gay and lesbian population, but anyone who could be deemed in violation of someone's religious beliefs. This could extend to anyone of a different religious faith, unwed mothers, divorcees and more.

Lawmakers have a responsibility to their constituents. This conscience-clause, religious-liberty or right to refusal legislation is purposefully putting those of a certain religious faith above others. That is not creating a fair and equal environment for citizens of the U.S. We are allowing the religious right to have a codified excuse for discriminating against others. If we allow these types of bills to get through the legislative process, we are opening up a huge can of worms for our state. No one should be allowed to use a state or federal law to defend their racism, sexism or overall bigotry toward another human being.

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Sick season by Erin Bushnell



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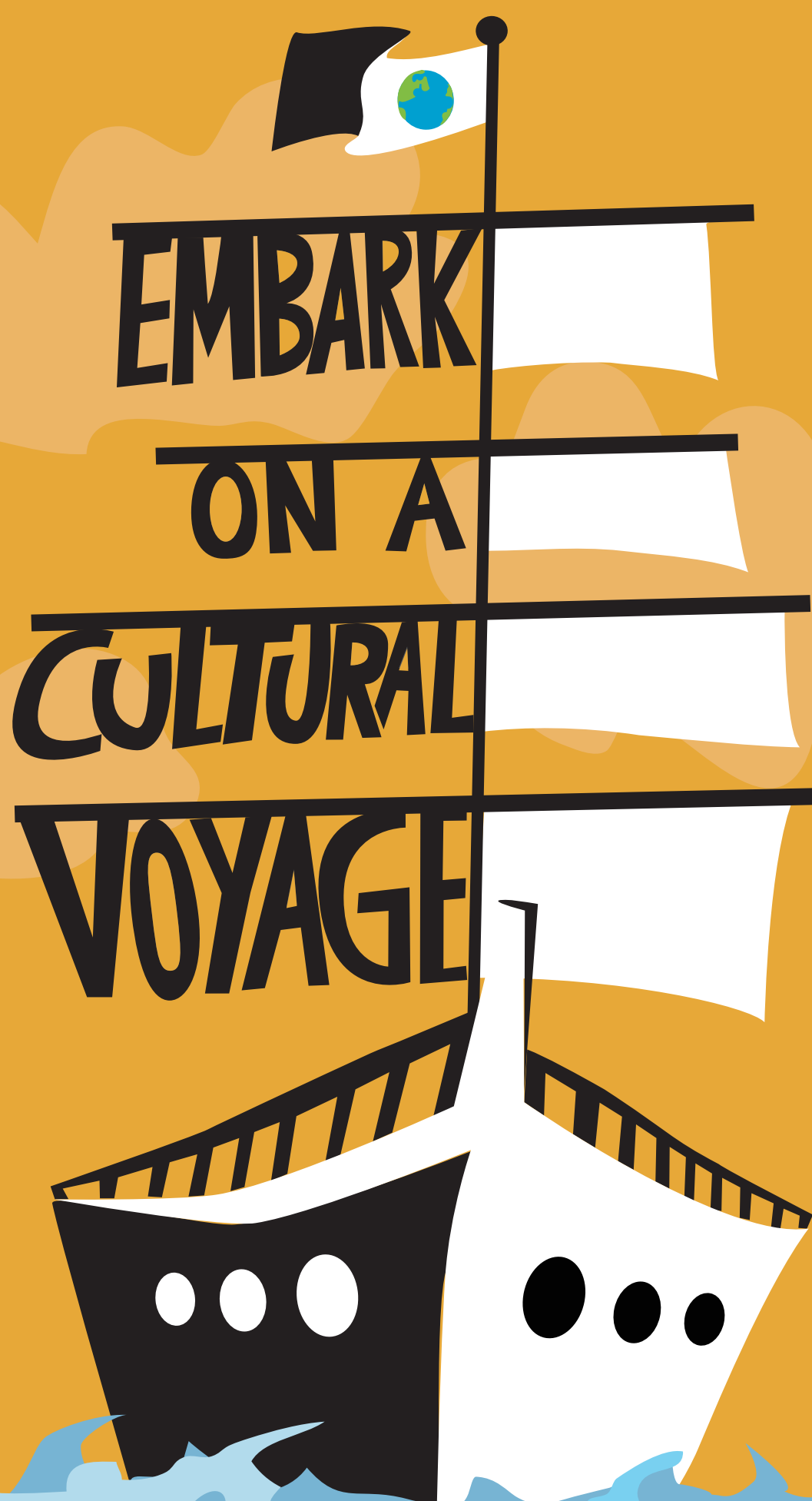
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