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# Decision day

## Virginians pick statewide candidates

**FADEL ALLASSAN**  
Managing Editor at Large

If Virginians needed a respite from combative politics after an impassioned race for the presidency in 2016, they'll likely feel Democrat Ralph Northam and Republican Ed Gillespie did not deliver it in their bid for the Governor's Mansion.

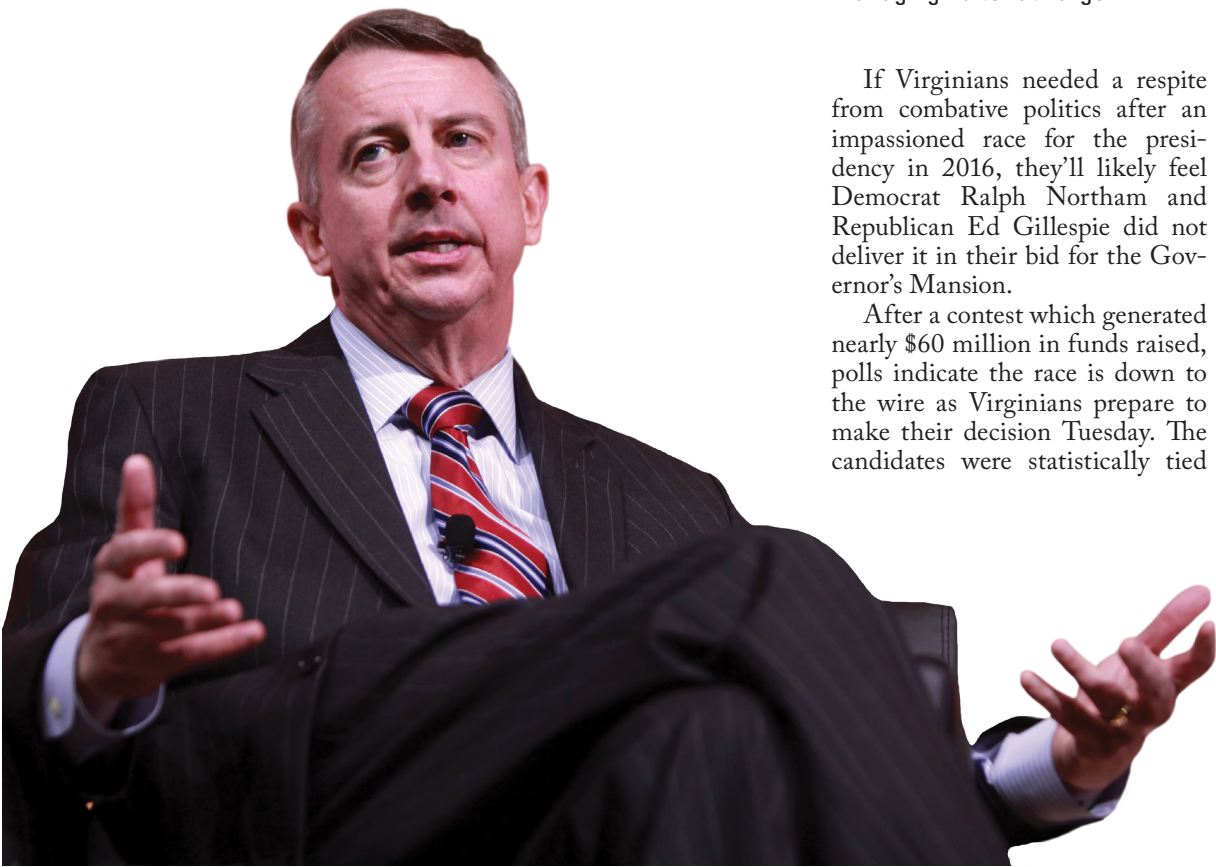
After a contest which generated nearly \$60 million in funds raised, polls indicate the race is down to the wire as Virginians prepare to make their decision Tuesday. The candidates were statistically tied

in polls by New York Times/Siena College and Rasmussen Reports released this past weekend.

Northam, who led in most polls earlier in the year, has seen his campaign hit stumbling blocks in recent weeks.

Northam told the Norfolk-based WAVY-TV last Wednesday he would sign a bill banning the creation of sanctuary cities in Virginia, contrasting with his tie-breaking vote as Lieutenant Governor against a bill that came before the General Assembly earlier this year.

—continued on page 2



# VCU students look to leave a mark in statewide elections

**HIBA AHMAD**  
News Editor

As Virginia's millennials come of age — the demographic, which comprises of a third of eligible voters — they're in position to play a key role in Tuesday's statewide elections. Millennials, which the Pew Re-

search Center described as being between 18 and 35 in 2016, surpassed the now second-largest demographic, Baby Boomers, who are in the 52-70 age group.

Tim Cywinski, director of engagement at Virginia21 — a non-partisan organization working to increase civic engagement amongst

young voters — said millennials are more focused on the issues than commitment to political parties.

This characteristic is important to political candidates, as it can sway a large population of voters in either direction, Cywinski said.

"If we are the largest voting demographic, and if the parties and

candidates don't start paying more attention to our issues and to our concerns then they can't win," Cywinski said.

Virginia has historically had a higher turnout among young voters compared to other states.

"I think a lot of that stems from the fact that there isn't a lot

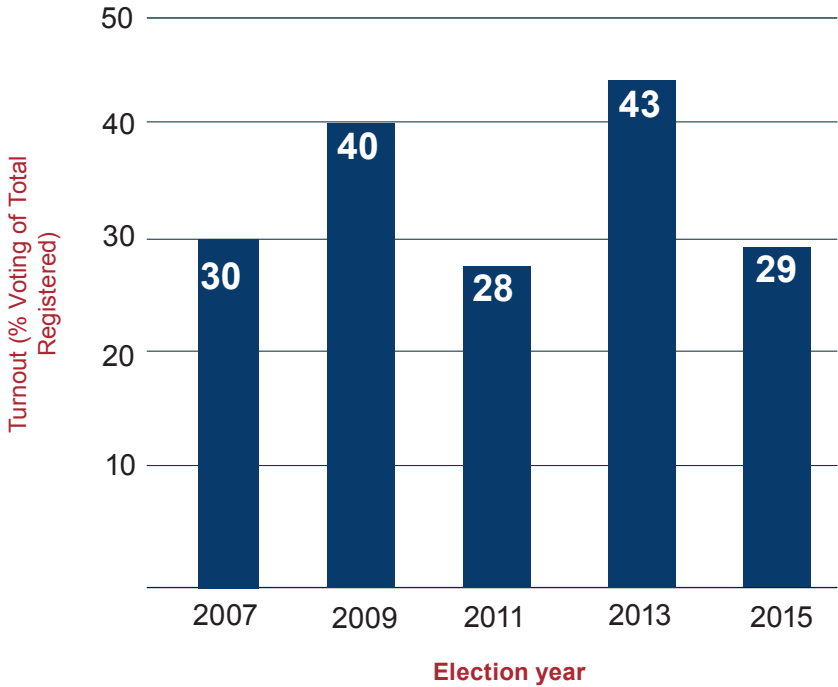
of inclusion from the millennial perspective in the larger political dialogue," Cywinski said. "When we hear about these stereotypes that young people don't care about politics, well we're actually showing them that we do."

Over 60 percent of VCU students voted in the 2016 presiden-

tial election, which is higher than the national average of 50.4 percent, according to The National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement by the Institute of Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University.

—continued on page 2

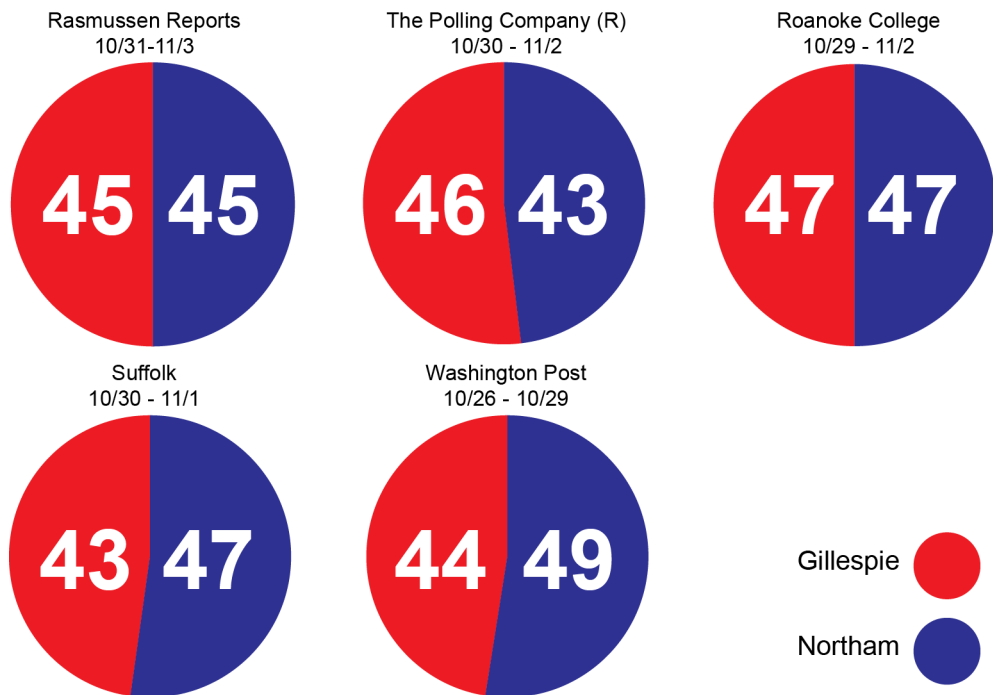
Virginia's turnout in previous years



Source: Virginia Department of Elections

**MILLENIALS:**  
make up **2 million, or 30%** of all eligible voters in Virginia, and **32%** of the total adult population in the U.S.

## Too close to call



FAQ • Sample ballot on page 2

## Opinions

# Let's try and solve our public school crisis

To the Editor:

Depending on where and how you grew up, a statistic can either warrant a 'thank you captain obvious' moment, or leave you in pure disbelief.

Growing up in Loudoun county, where the median income of \$115,574 leads the nation, I was in pure disbelief when I was told school segregation is at its highest level since the 1970s.

Then I moved to Richmond. While driving myself back to my apartment after class, I took a quick detour to visit my friends at their house. I parked in front,

with my friends' living space to my right, and an elementary school to my left. I looked out the driver side window, and experienced my first dose of a reality some kids in this country are forced to live every day.

There were at the very least 80 children waiting to board the bus home in front of George W. Carver Elementary School in Richmond. Every student was Black. There were no Asians, Hispanics, Middle Eastern or White student. None. I was looking school segregation right in its devilish eyes for the first time.

According to a University of

Richmond study, the division among color lines in Richmond public schools is "rapidly intensifying." White students make up 48 percent of school enrollment in Richmond. 64 percent of White students' classmates are of the same race. Black students, however, who account for 35 percent of enrollment, have 57 percent same-race classmates. Latino students have experienced a 40 percent an increase in same race classmates.

I thought we outlawed this practice in the 1960s. How in the world did this happen?

It turns out to be pretty simple.

Schools are designated to their local community and communities themselves are segregated. While not impossible, this segregation is very difficult to break from because schools are funded through property taxes, and property values in Black communities are much lower on average than property values in White communities.

Because of the stark contrast in school quality, poorer communities have found themselves stuck with lower graduation rates, higher unemployment and crime rates and lower incomes. And the root causes that made

these communities segregated are detestable.

Back in the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation to help Americans finance their homes. In order to determine who received loans, the Federal Housing Administration color-coded neighborhoods with good and bad ratings using the colors green, blue, yellow and red. Green was the best color and red was the worst.

Unfortunately, simply being Black was enough to rate a property with the color red, preventing the owner of that property

from receiving a loan. This discriminatory practice was called "redlining."

The University of Richmond has information readily available for free online showing which neighborhoods in Richmond were redlined in the 1930s. You can also click on each neighborhood to find out why it was labeled a certain color. If you click on the red neighborhoods, one of the main reasons why a neighborhood was marked red was because of an "infiltration of negroes."

—continued on page 11



CRIME LOG

Monday, October 30

- Hit and Run

1101 W. Cary St.

Pending
- Destruction of Property

701 W. Grace St.

Pending
- Stalking

Ackell Residence Hall

1100 W. Broad St.

Pending
- Hit and Run

600 W. Main St.

Pending
- Stalking

1103 W. Franklin St.

Outside Agency
- Hit and Run

299 N. Belvidere

Outside Agency
- Pickpocket

901 N. Lombardy St.

Outside Agency

Tuesday, October 31

- Drunkenness

404 N. Harrison St.

Closed
- Dating Violence

311 W. Franklin St.

Pending
- Theft from building

Bookholders

720 W. Grace St.

Outside Agency
- Destruction of Property

5 N. Harvie St.

Outside Agency

Wednesday, November 1

- Theft from Building

Grace and Broad Residence Hall

1000 W. Grace St.

Pending
- Fraud- Credit Card

801 W. Clay St.

Outside Agency
- Alcohol Violation

600 Cumberland St./S. Belvidere St.

Outside Agency
- Threaten Bodily Harm

Nelson Clinic

401 N. 11th St.

Pending

Thursday, November 2

- Indecent Exposure

205 N. Plum St.

Pending
- Larceny

901 Park Ave.

Pending
- Simple Assault - Domestic

1000 Park Ave.

Pending
- Theft

618 W. Broad St.

Closed
- Drunkenness

900 W. Clay St.

Closed
- Hit and Run

100 S. Cherry St.

Outside Agency
- Hit and Run

100 S. Belvidere St.

Outside Agency
- Theft from Motor Vehicle

1 N. Monroe St.

Outside Agency
- Theft of Motor Vehicle Part

100 N. Madison St.

Outside Agency
- Theft from Motor Vehicle

1300 W. Main St.

Outside Agency
- Shoplifting

ABC

1217 W. Broad St.

Outside Agency
- Hit and Run

Visitor's Dsk

550 N. 12th St.

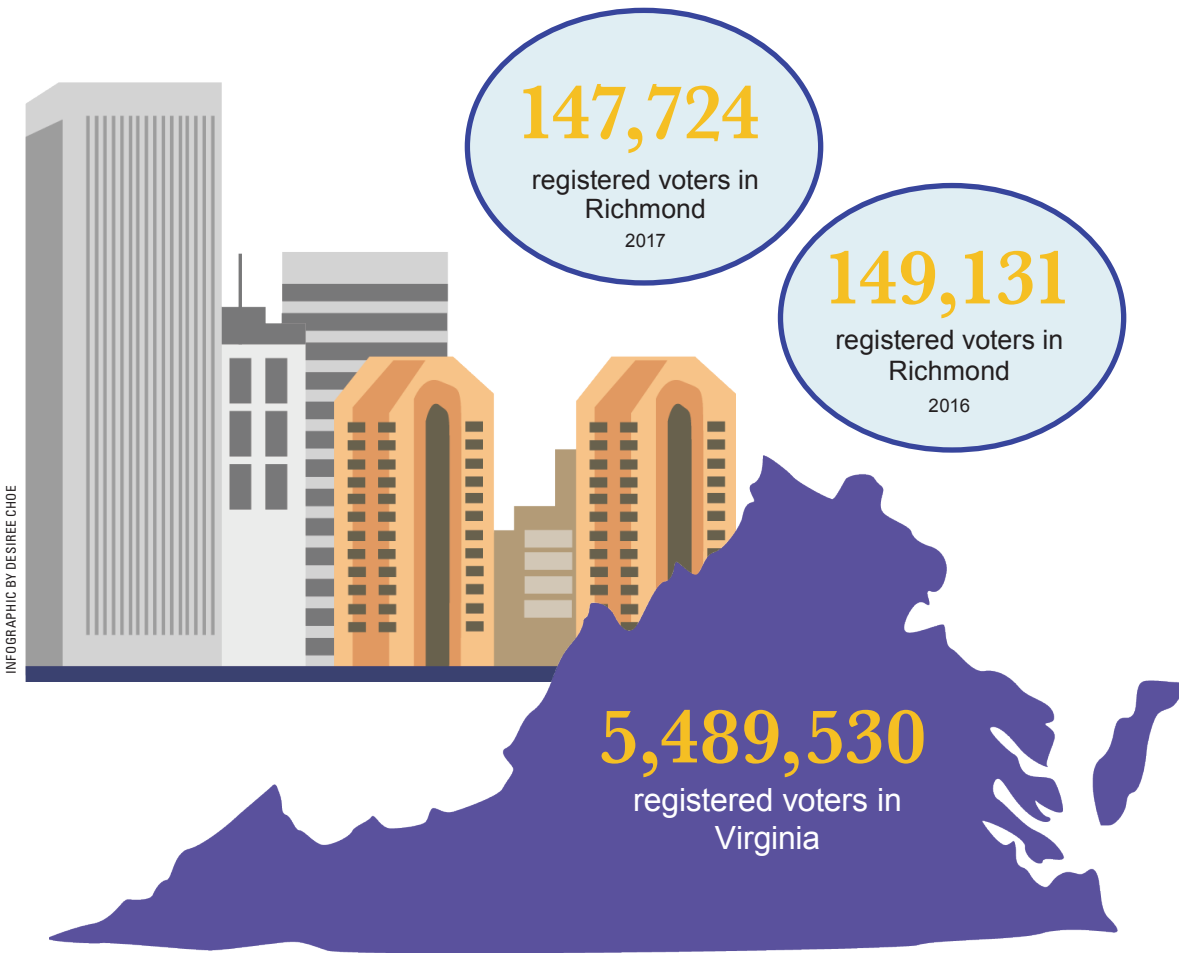
Pending

Download the **VCU LiveSafe** mobile phone app to report crimes anonymously.

To contact the **VCU PD:**  
(804) 828-1196.

For an **on-campus** emergency:  
(804) 828-1234.

For an **off-campus** emergency:  
911.



Here’s what you need to know before you get to the polls on Tuesday

Am I eligible to vote?

The deadline to register to vote or update your address was Oct. 16. If you missed it, then you're out of luck. The deadline to request an absentee ballot by appearing in-person was Nov. 4. The deadline to request an absentee ballot to be mailed to you was Oct. 31.

To vote in Virginia you must be a United States citizen and Virginia resident more than 18 years old. If you're temporarily in Virginia and plan to go back to another state, the Department of Elections says you can't vote. If you've been convicted of a felony, you're rights should have been restored.

Where do I vote?

You can find your polling location at the Virginia Department of Elections website by typing in your registered voting address. You can click on the "ballot information" tab to see who your choices are in the various primaries.

When can I vote?

Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Do I need identification?

You need to present an acceptable form of ID to vote in Virginia. Voters who don't bring an ID to the polls will be given a provisional ballot and have to deliver an ID to their locality's electoral board by noon Friday to have their vote counted. Photo ID requirements also apply to absentee voters who vote in-person in all elections.

Report violations of voting rights or election law to Virginia Department of Elections: Elections.Virginia.gov/ Voter-Complaints or 800-552-9745

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF ID

- Government-issued photo ID from federal, VA or VA local subdivision (including political)

• VA DMV-issued photo ID card

• Tribal enrollment or other tribal ID

• U.S. Passport or Pass port Card
- Employee ID card issued by voter's employer

• U.S. Military ID

• Nursing Home Resident ID

• Voter ID Card issued by the VA Department of Elections

• U.S. Military ID
- Student ID issued by a VA school of higher education displaying photo

• Student ID issued by a public or private VA school displaying photo

• VA Driver's License - can be expired for less than 12 months

Virginians head to the polls

— continued from page 1

Northam later told the Richmond Times-Dispatch he voted against the bill at the time because it was intended to fear-monger, since Virginia doesn't have sanctuary cities.

The fallout was almost immediate among those in Democratic Party ranks. The progressive group Democracy for America withdrew their endorsement of Northam, calling his decision "morally debased." The group's founder, former party chair Howard Dean, disagreed with its decision, saying it "deeply discredits the organization."

The next day, Virginia's first elected black governor, Democrat Douglas Wilder declined to endorse Northam at a VCU forum. Wilder endorsed the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor, Justin Fairfax, and accusing state Democrats of mistreating Fairfax.

During the forum, Wilder weighed in on a September decision to leave Fairfax off a flier which boasted the state's Democratic ticket. The fliers were given to canvassers from the Laborers' International Union of North America, which had not endorsed Fairfax as a result of his opposi-

tion to two natural gas pipelines the group backs.

"It reeks of subtle racism, if not a tone deafness about how we are going to win in November," said Quentin James, the founder of Collective PAC that supports Black candidates. "Leaving Justin Fairfax off ... even if it's only for a small universe of union members, still sends the wrong message."

Both candidates accused one another of stoking racial tensions during the campaign.

A Gillespie campaign ad which featured menacing-looking, tattooed Latinos, painted Northam's vote as Lieutenant Governor against banning sanctuary cities as enabling the MS-13 gang.

President Donald Trump seemed to echo the ad's sentiment in a tweet urging Virginians to vote for Gillespie.

"Ralph Northam, who is running for Governor of Virginia, is fighting for the violent MS-13 killer gangs & sanctuary cities. Vote Ed Gillespie!" Trump tweeted.

In a rally supporting Virginia's Democratic ticket, Pres. Barack Obama signaled the ad was an extension of Trump's "divisive" politics in 2016.

"If he honestly thought these were serious issues he'd offer

serious solutions. But he's not, because what he's really trying to deliver is fear," Obama said. "What he really believes is if you scare enough voters you might score just enough votes to win an election."

Gillespie accused Northam of the same type of politics in late October when Northam refused to denounce an ad by the progressive Latino Victory Fund which depicted a truck with a confederate flag and Ed Gillespie stickers trying to run over minority children.

The ad ends with a child waking up from a dream as the narrator asks if this is what Trump and Gillespie mean by "the American dream."

The ad was later pulled in the wake of a terrorist attack in New York where a man drove a rental truck into a riverfront bike path, killing eight. The Washington Post editorial board, which has endorsed Northam, criticized the Democrat for not condemning the ad.

"It is sad that it took such a tragedy for the group to realize how out of bounds its ad was. It's also sad that someone who promises to be a governor for all Virginians didn't call them out right away," the editorial board wrote.

Students look to impact election

—continued from page 1

Some of the hot-button issues rallying young adults to get to the polls include immigration, climate change, reproductive rights and mass incarceration in the United States.

"I think state elections are very important because we live in this state and we are apart of the community and we always want the community to grow and improve," said Malaz Elamin, a junior. "As the youth we are the future of tomorrow and we need to do whatever we can to make sure where we live is safe and it full of opportunities for all people."

Robert Kasaizi Burris, a junior studying electrical engineering, volunteered with the Democratic campaign last year during the presidential election. He said there needs to be more of an emphasis among young voters to participate in off-year elections.

"Local and state elections are what determine what goes on in our daily lives," Burris said. "Often times things happen in Richmond or at the state government that change things radically but we don't even talk about it in the first place because we only pay attention to national issues."

Millenials had 20 percent lower turnout than other populations during last year's election, which has raised questions about how pertinent their vote is in the 2016 election.

Cywinski argues otherwise.

"We are a force to be reckoned with. Our issues are just as important as anyone else's issues. Our concerns should be weighted just the same," Cywinski said. "Does your voice matter regardless of whether you vote or not, of course it does, but what it comes down to is do you want someone else to make that decision for you?"

What to expect on the ballot

GOVERNOR

1

**Ralph Northam**  
Democrat

2

**Ed Gillespie**  
Republican

3

**Clifford Hyra**  
Libertarian

The Governor heads Virginia's executive branch and is akin to the president at the national level. He is the state's party leader, chief executive and signs bills into law.

LT. GOVERNOR

4

**Justin Fairfax**  
Democrat

5

**Jill Vogel**  
Republican

Lieutenant Governor is largely a ceremonial role. Their power lies in the ability to cast a tie-breaking vote in the Senate.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Mark Herring**  
Democrat

**John Adams**  
Republican

The Attorney General is responsible for enforcing Virginia's laws and defends the constitutionality of state laws.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES DISTRICT 71

**Jeff Bourne**  
Democrat

The House of Delegates is the lower house in the legislative branch.

RICHMOND COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

**Michael N. Herring**  
Democrat

The Commonwealth's Attorney prosecutes state crimes in their jurisdiction.

RICHMOND CITY SHERRIF

**Antionette V. Irving**  
Democrat

**Nicole D. Jackson**  
Independent

**Emmett Johnson Jafari**  
Independent

RICHMOND CITY TREASURER

**Nichole Ona R. Armstead**  
Democrat

**Michelle R. Mosby**  
Independent

**L. Shirley Harvey**  
Independent



# Trump declares opioid epidemic public health emergency

SARAROSE MARTIN  
Staff Writer

President Donald Trump and the Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid epidemic a national public health emergency Oct. 26, taking action against the growing drug problem that took almost 60,000 American lives last year.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe declared the epidemic a public health emergency last year. According to the Virginia Department of Health, 803 Virginians died last year from fentanyl and/or heroin and 465 died from a prescription opioid overdose.

Assistant Vice President of Health Sciences for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care at Virginia Commonwealth University, Alan Dow, said the administration's announcement is a first step to addressing the crisis.

“I lost my son and I wish I knew what I know now because there’s a possibility I could have saved him.”

Omar Abubaker, D.M.D

“Really the big thing the government can do at the federal level is provide directed funding to help will clinical programs or training programs or other parts of local government response,” Dow said. “The public health emergency is going to shift some funding priorities around and so we’ll have to see what that means to our local area in terms of where does that money move from and what does it move towards.”

Dow said there are two problems underlying the crisis: addiction and substance abuse, and undiagnosed substance abuse disorders.

According to NPR, about 150 Americans die every week from overdoses of heroin, fentanyl and other opioids. Administration of-

ficials have been questioned over the designation of the opioid crisis as a public health emergency rather than a national emergency.

“Everyone who I’ve met who has a substance abuse disorder wants to become abstinent. There might be things related to addiction that may be keeping them from doing it but people that have substance abuse disorders want help,” Dow said. “And a lot of those people are part of chronic pain treatment programs and so their addiction is manifesting as chronic pain management and so we need to do more to be able to understand what’s underlying people’s chronic pain.”

Jenny Fox is a pediatrician in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU.

Fox said she knows the opioid crisis affects all walks of life. Her team manages infants with in utero opioid exposure leading to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome or NAS. NAS is a group of problems that occur for newborns who have been exposed to opiates while in the mother’s womb.

“I encourage any women of childbearing age with an opioid addiction to seek help and counseling as early as possible,” Fox said. “The message I want to get across is that as healthcare providers, our intention is to help these women get care for themselves and their infants.”

Omar Abubaker is an oral surgeon and professor of dentistry at VCU. Abubaker was personally touched by the epidemic, when he lost his 21-year-old son, Adam, in 2014. His son was prescribed Vicodin following a shoulder injury in high school and then became addicted to heroin. Abubaker now serves as an advocate and educator in the efforts to end the epidemic.

“I lost my son and I wish I knew what I know now because there’s a possibility I could have saved him,” Abubaker said. “I wish I knew that the prescription that he got was harmful and potentially addictive, I would have just took them away and had him try something different.”

Pres. Trump said his plan would require federally employed prescribers of opioids to be trained in safe practices, in addition to a new federal initiative to create non-addictive painkillers. He also spoke of increasing efforts to block shipments of fentanyl, an inexpensive and powerful synthetic opioid made in China that has invaded



According to the Virginia Department of Health, 803 Virginians lost their lives to fentanyl and/or heroin.

the United States.

Abubaker supports many of the recommendations made in the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. He hopes the national declaration will come with increased education on the national level, create access to addiction and mental illness treatment and to naloxone — a drug used to block or reverse effects of opiates. In 2016, Virginia issued an order allowing anyone to buy naloxone without a prescription.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention “overdoses from prescription opioids

are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in opioid overdose deaths. The amount of prescription opioids sold to pharmacies, hospitals, and doctors’ offices nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2010.”

The National Institutes of Health estimates about 80 percent of heroin users started with prescription pain medication.

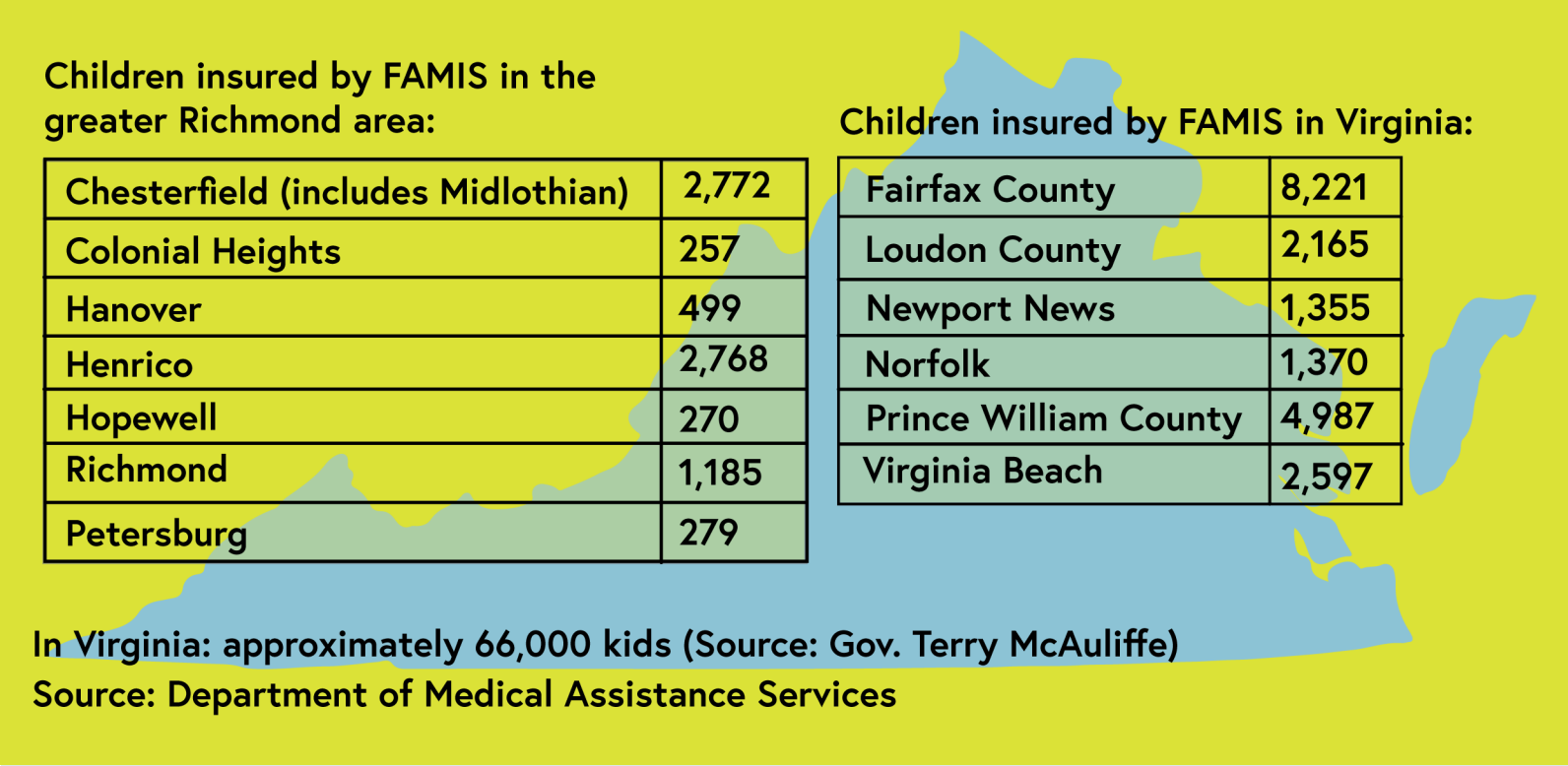
Abubaker recognizes the medical community’s role in the epidemic and works to educate himself and his students on appropriate pain management prescriptions. He said he used to prescribe 20-30 pills for opiates like Hydrocodone or Oxycodone. Now, he writes them for only five or six pills.

“The medical community did not intend to be part of the problem. They are looking for the good of the patients so what they thought was if the patient is in pain then they need pain medication and opioid is the best pain medication,” Abubaker said. “The pharmaceutical companies and the leading experts on pain management mislead doctors and said Oxycontin and Oxycodone are not addictive.”

Abubaker wants to see science of additions, the opioid epidemic, pain management and mental illness in the greater medical curriculum. In addition, he wants to see practitioners educated on evidence based prescribing and pain management.

“I think it’s getting better even here at VCU, the changes in the curriculum. It’s already taking place in the medical school, at the residency level and some at the dental school,” Abubaker said. “If I save one parent who says I’m not going to give my son this Codeine or this Vicodin because I heard Dr. Abubaker say this is not good for you and that kid doesn’t get hooked, that would be worth all of the effort I do.”

## Congress mulls over CHIP, Virginian kids at risk



ALAN RODRIGUEZ ESPINOZA  
Contributing Writer

The health coverage of an estimated 8.9 million children and 370,000 pregnant women lies in the hands of Congress, which has yet to reach on agreement on how to fund the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

CHIP is an extension of Medicaid providing government-funded health insurance to children and pregnant women from families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to afford private health insurance.

Congress missed the Sept. 30 deadline to reauthorize federal funding for CHIP.

“The problem... is one of benign neglect,” stated Karen Remley, CEO of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in a press release. “As efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act dominated the agenda in the Senate, needed attention to CHIP was lost.”

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe stated in a letter to the Virginia Congressional Delegation “partisan infighting and dysfunction” in Congress have jeopardized Virginia’s CHIP-funded program, the Family Access to Medical Insurance Security program, or FAMIS.

According to the McAuliffe letter, an estimated 66,000 children and 1,100 pregnant women in Virginia depend on FAMIS to access medical services. Virginia’s Department of Medical Assistance Services, DMAS, estimates 1,185 of those children live in Richmond.

In response to McAuliffe, Rep. Scott Taylor (R-Va.) stated in a press release of his own “scaring families via press release is not helpful.”

“It is completely disingenuous to insinuate that I or any other member of the Virginia congressional delegation are ignoring reauthorization of this important program,” Taylor stated. “In fact, the present delay is a result of a request by the minority party [Democrats] to fur-

ther negotiations on offsets.”

In the Senate, the Keep Kids’ Insurance Dependable and Secure Act, or KIDS Act of 2017, was quickly sent to the House with bipartisan support. If ratified, the KIDS Act would extend federal funding for CHIP through fiscal year 2022.

“Sen. Warner recognizes it is essential that CHIP is reauthorized,” said Jonathan Uriarte, the deputy press secretary for Senator Mark Warner (D-Va.). “And the KIDS Act is an imperfect but needed compromise to continue funding these necessary healthcare services for children.”

But the KIDS Act does not specify where funding for CHIP would come from. Republicans in the House tried to tackle this dilemma by passing the Championing Healthy Kids Act, which will increase certain Medicare premiums and decrease Obamacare enrollment to offset the cost of CHIP.

Rep. Pete Olson (R-Texas) said

## VCU commemorates centennial of the Balfour Declaration

HIBA AHMAD  
News Editor

On the 100th anniversary of the historical document known as the Balfour Declaration, various departments from the VCU College of Humanities and Science invited esteemed scholars to discuss the role of the document in modern day context.

The Balfour Declaration was a short letter that announced the British support of creating a separate state for Jews in the Ottoman Palestine region.

“What will it take for Palestinians to recognize that America’s help is not going to lead to meaningful dignity, liberation and liberty?”

Noura Erakat

The Center for Judaic Studies teamed up with the Global Education Office, Humanities Research Center and the International Studies Program in the School of World Studies to host the event.

Noura Erakat, a human rights attorney and assistant professor of

legal studies and social justice/human rights at George Mason University presented the effect of the Declaration on Palestinian resistance over the years.

Hillel Gruenberg, director of Israel Engagement at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and The Jewish Theological Seminary, gave a historical overview of what the world looked like for Jews before and after the Declaration.

Both speakers tied the significance of the Declaration to the modern day Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“When I watched the GOP primaries and saw Newt Gingrich claim that Palestine was a created territory, I had to ask myself what country was more created than the United States?” Gruenberg said.

Erakat focused her remarks on how the Balfour Declaration informs Palestinian resistance, or sometimes the lack thereof, in modern times.

“There is a belief amongst Palestinians that the U.S. is the only state that can deliver the Palestinian state. This leaves Palestinians stuck with them, rather than resisting against them,” Erakat said. “What will it take for Palestinians to recognize that the America’s help is not going to lead to meaningful dignity, liberation and liberty?”

The lecture was followed by a reception in which students and faculty members could meet and talk with the speakers. This lecture comes as an effort of the College of Humanities and Sciences to bring more learning opportunities for students outside the classroom.





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Stat of the Week  
Field hockey’s season ended after 14 wins by new coach Stacey Bean and her Rams — the program’s highest total since 1992.

PRESS BOX

# Facing early gauntlet, chemistry is key for Rams

ZACH JOACHIM  
Sports Editor

VCU men’s basketball faces a conundrum of circumstances entering its 2017-18 campaign.

On one hand, the Rams return a mere four players — senior forward Justin Tillman, senior guard Jonathan Williams, sophomore guard Malik Crowfield and sophomore forward De’Riante Jenkins — who previously recorded minutes for the Black and Gold.

On the other hand, this is not necessarily a young roster. Three freshman — guard Tyler Maye, forward Sean Mobley and forward Marcus Santos-Silva — could eventually push for playing time, but any real contributions from this talented, raw trio should come as added bonuses for coach Mike Rhoades and RamNation.

VCU’s core is experienced enough, just not at playing together. If the Rams hope to maintain their cherished streaks of 24-plus win seasons and seven consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances, then two returning starters, three transfers and two returning contributors must gel as fast as possible with a daunting out of conference schedule looming.

Williams, Tillman, Crowfield and Jenkins join sophomore transfer guard / forward Mike’l Simms, sophomore transfer forward Issac Vann and senior transfer forward Khris Lane to form what must be the Rams’ primary rotation, at least early on this season.

VCU is known for playing 8-10 deep in order to facilitate the infamous up-tempo, hectic, defensive style of play known as HAVOC. Accordingly, Rhoades played 12 men in last Friday’s 98-74 exhibition win over Virginia Union University. Although Rhoades is known for and will likely institute the same approach as the new year draws near, he knows it may be difficult during the Rams’ loaded early schedule.

“The biggest thing that we have to do is gain experience quickly because of our schedule,” Rhoades said.

A seven-man rotation is not uncommon in college basketball, and this will be Rhoades’ best option for the time being. Rhoades said he is confident in his team’s ability to build chemistry quickly, because they genuinely enjoy playing with one another.

“The thing I like about our team is they really like playing with each other,” Rhoades said. “Now we’ve got to continually build on feeling each other out and how we play together, who plays best off each other.”

After the regular season opener and homecoming game this Friday against Grambling State University, the University of North Florida visits the Siegel Center Monday, Nov. 13. In these games, an 8-10 man rotation and chaotic style is realistic given the level of opposition.

Then the Black and Gold enter a stretch that will likely define their NCAA Tournament hopes, if not their season all together.

The University of Virginia comes knocking at the Stu Friday, Nov. 17 for a showdown between the two premiere college basket-



ILLUSTRATION BY JOSE DANILA

ball powers the state has to offer. Rivalry implications aside, the Cavaliers are a perennial top-25 team and legitimate Final Four contender. This will be the new-look Rams’ first real test and an optimal barometer for their ceiling going forward.

After going to war with the Wa-

hoos, the road only intensifies. A subsequent trip to Hawaii for the Maui Jim Maui Invitational Nov. 20 - 22 brings a trio of matchups with top-tier competition.

The field, which includes pre-season No. 7 Wichita State University, the University of Notre Dame and national player of the

year candidate Bonzie Colson, last March’s cinderella sensation the University of Michigan and Will Wade’s Tigers of Louisiana State University, will be a minefield for the raw Rams to navigate.

Success in Maui will hinge on an opening matchup with Marquette University. A win will open

the door to further opportunities for statement wins — or even close losses that will be attractive to the tournament committee and boost the Rams’ RPI — against the rest of the field. An opening loss could render the whole trip a failure.

Additionally, we all know RamNation wants a shot at Wade

and his shiny new top-five recruiting class.

After Maui, VCU welcomes Appalachian State University to Richmond for a prospective reprieve. The breath of air will be short lived, however, as December brings a deceptively difficult final six games of non conference play.

An old rival journeys up I-64 before a new one travels across the country. Old Dominion University, who always seems to give the Rams more trouble than expected, arrive in the capitol Dec. 2 before Shaka Smart and the University of Texas at Austin come calling just three days later.

Neither opponent made the NCAA Tournament last year, but that won’t stop emotions from reaching fever pitch in these highly anticipated tussles. The close proximity of these emotionally charged matchups will be a tall task for Rhoades and the Rams to manage.

A trio of NCAA Tournament teams from last year round out VCU’s early season gauntlet.

A trip to Seton Hall University precedes home matchups with Bucknell University and Winthrop University. Although these opponents may lack the name recognition and familiarity of Texas, UVA, Maui and ODU, they are equally if not superiorly formidable opposition. All three lost in the first round of the big dance last year.

Then, finally, the Black and Gold will look to settle into their season and expand their rotation. Virginia Military Institute comes to the Stu before A-10 play commences with a home game against Fordham College on Saturday, Dec. 30.

But during nine non-conference games — UVA, three in Maui, ODU, Texas, Seton Hall, Bucknell and Winthrop — before the calendar turns, Rhoades and the Rams will have to stick to their experienced, seven man core if they hope to emerge from this stretch with a winning record.

Yes, I said a winning record. Anything greater than a 5-4 mark, which would be par for the course, in these nine contests will have VCU well on their way to an eighth consecutive tournament appearance. That’s the immense level of opportunity this loaded stretch garners.

Williams, Tillman, Jenkins, Crowfield, Lane, Simms and Vann hold the hearts of RamNation in their hands. Reinforcements will develop, but not fast enough for the Black and Gold to realistically take full advantage of arguably their most difficult non-conference schedule ever.

“We’re not making any excuses,” Rhoades said. “It doesn’t matter that we have new guys, new coaching staff — our job is to improve.”

And improve they will. Make no mistake, this year’s montage of talented yet unknown pieces will eventually morph into a well oiled machine with Rhoades at the helm.

The question is, will their experienced core develop chemistry fast enough?

Because you can bet Tony Bennett and our friends up on that hill are formulating a way to silence the Stu, right now.

And that just can’t happen now can it?



PHOTO BY JACOB MEDLEY

Junior forward Emily McNamara led the Rams with 21 goals — no other player scored in double figures this season.

RODNEY ROBINSON  
Contributing Writer

VCU field hockey’s 2017 campaign ended Friday, as the University of Massachusetts at Amherst squeaked by the Rams 2-0 thanks to two shot deflections that found the back of the net.

After an early back-and-forth, the Minutewomen broke through in the 25th minute, after Sophie de Jonge scored off a deflection. UMass scored again in the 50th minute and never looked back.

The story of the match, however, was missed opportunities by the Black and Gold. Although UMass held a 6-4 advantage against VCU

in penalty corners, the Rams had ample corner opportunities and shots on goals in crucial moments of the match that could have affected the outcome.

VCU earned a penalty corner in the 37th minute and had an opportunity to tie the game, but the shot was blocked. VCU created another penalty corner opportunity in the 46th minute but the shot was blocked before it could travel thru traffic. The Rams surrendered another goal in the 50th minute, making the deficit tough to overcome.

Defensively, the Rams were led by senior goalkeeper Chessa Kownurko. Kownurko had six

saves on the day on eight total shots on goal from the Minutewomen.

Junior forward Emily McNamara led VCU with five total shots, one on goal. Freshman midfielder Svea Sturm created another opportunity for the Rams as well, with one shot on goal. UMass had a slim advantage in total shots, but the Minutewomen held a notable advantage in shots on goal, outshooting the Rams 8-2 as they were able to convert chances into scoring opportunities at a higher rate.

Although the Rams fell short of their goal in capturing an A-10 Tournament Championship, VCU field hockey has a lot to look forward to next year.

The Rams won 14 games on the season, the most in the program since 1992. VCU also finished second in the A-10 regular season standings, their highest finish since joining the league.

*The Rams graduate six seniors this year; however, they will return 16 players from this season. With a wealth of returning talent in tow and a coaching staff on their second year, the Rams will look to settle into their newly established winning culture and make another run in the A-10. Field hockey will look to veteran leadership to lead the way next season, as they will have seven seniors — including leading scorer McNamara — returning for another shot at an A-10 title.*



# Women’s soccer heartbroken in A-10 final, men earn No. 2 seed



Freshman midfielder Samantha Jerabek has a bright future for the Black and Gold. She’s recorded three points on one goal and one assist this season.

ADAM CHEEK  
Contributing Writer

VCU women's soccer recorded a .500 record over their final weekend of play, after emerging victorious over Saint Joseph's University in the Atlantic 10 semifinal on Friday by a final of 1-0, but falling in two overtimes to the La Salle University Explorers in the A-10 title match by the same score.

WOMEN V. LA SALLE

The A-10 Championship featured the Black and Gold against the 17-3-2 La Salle Explorers, a team that recorded an undefeated record and one tie in the A-10 conference this season.

VCU fell in the title game despite a valiant, two-overtime effort, with a lone late goal proving to be their undoing. The Explorers won their first matchup with the Rams two weeks prior to the final match by the same 1-0 score.

La Salle notched the only and winning goal in the second overtime, a walk-off championship for the Ex-

plorers. However, VCU fought and held La Salle to zero goals until the very end. With 29 total shots — 14 on goal — the Black and Gold provided La Salle with a handful at their end of the field.

The Explorers only managed 12 shots, sneaking the winning shot by junior goalkeeper Audrey Sanderson, who made six saves on seven opportunities. Senior defender Megan Dell managed a team-leading five shots, while freshman midfielder Lyndsey Gutzmer added four shots of her own.

WOMEN V. ST. JOSEPH'S

The Rams were triumphant in the Atlantic 10 semifinal game against the Saint Joseph's University Hawks, edging the Philadelphia-based team by a score of 1-0.

A second-half penalty kick netted by Dell proved to be the winning goal — her fifth of the season. VCU outshot Saint Joseph's by a margin of 15-7, with eight shots on goal, three more than the Hawks' five, but VCU's three corner kicks couldn't match Saint Joseph's eight.

Dell and Gutzmer had prime opportunities early on with a header and a shot off the crossbar, respectively, but neither could break through until later in the match.

The Hawks were called for a handball in the box in the 71st minute, setting up Dell's decisive penalty kick. The Rams shut down the Hawks for the remainder of the second half on their way to a win and a berth in the A-10 tournament title match.

The Rams returned to the championship game for the first time in five years, their last appearance coming in 2012. Sanderson's 11th win of the season came against the Hawks, as she made five saves in a shutout effort.

*The Black and Gold's loss to La Salle is a bitter end to the Rams' 11-win season, their most wins since recording 12 in 2012.*

MEN V. ST. BONAVENTURE

Entering the week ranked No. 22 in the country, VCU men's soccer fell to the Bonnies of St. Bonaventure University Wednesday

night by a final of 2-1. The Rams were unable to recover from a 59th minute goal despite outshooting their opposition 9-5 and winning the corner kick battle 7-2.

Senior midfielder Rafael Andrade Santos netted the lone goal for the Black and Gold just four minutes into the match. Andrade Santos slid his effort into the lower left hand corner after a scramble for a loose ball in the box resulted in sophomore forward Siad Haji finding him in space.

Freshman defender Ulrik Edvarsen nearly salvaged a draw for the Rams in the waning seconds of the match, but his effort rattled off the crossbar.

*Despite the loss, men's soccer (10-5, 6-2 A-10) earned the No. 2 seed for the Atlantic 10 Tournament. They will get another shot at the No. 7 Bonnies Sunday, Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. Results were not final in time for publication.*



Senior midfielder Rafael Andrade Santos leads the Rams in points this season with 22 — nine goals and four assists.



Junior middle blocker Tori Baldwin has recorded 181 kills this season.

## Ram in Action: Tori Baldwin

JESSICA WETZLER  
Contributing Writer

VCU volleyball junior middle blocker Tori Baldwin has been a key contributor every step of the way during the Black and Gold's historical journey to capturing the nation's longest winning streak.

Baldwin was named A-10 Conference Defensive Player of the Week for her performance against Saint Louis University and Dayton University two weeks ago. It is clear Baldwin is a primary reason VCU owns the longest win streak in the country at 24 matches.

During her freshman year, Baldwin was named to the A-10 All-Rookie squad and Female Newcomer of the Year during VCU's annual Rodney Awards. Baldwin continued to play her heart out on the court as she's ranked third in the A-10 her sophomore year in blocks per set at 1.31, good for third in school single-season history.

The junior has gained several other titles including Virginia Lottery Student-Athlete of the Week and A-10 Co-Player of the Week.

**Describe the transition from playing volleyball in high school to competing at the collegiate level.**

I started playing volleyball my freshman year of high school at a very low level, I did not start playing club until my junior year. Club was such a different experience,

that was when I really began to learn the sport. My club coach Kim Mansfield really opened the world of volleyball to me, he turned me into a Division I volleyball player. Transitioning from that to college ball was very hard. I worked really hard my freshman year with the help of both Chad Gatzlaff and Tim Doyle. Because of those two and the later addition of assistant coach Pat, I am the player I am today.

**How would you describe your game play on the court?**

Consistency. I like to consider myself to be the safety outlet, being a middle hitter, you won't always have a chance at making the flashy play. My job is to constantly be in the air and fake out the opposing middle. I'd also like to consider myself the "calmer," making sure my team is cool, calm and collected is a major key when we are on the court.

**What are your weakness?**

Staying confident when things get tough for me is probably one of my biggest weaknesses that I would like to say I have gotten better at over the three years I have been at VCU. I used to get in my head so much over the smallest things, an attack error or even a blocking error.

**What are your strengths?**

The overall energy and leadership I bring to the court.

**You have been awarded several A-10 titles such as Co-Player of the Week and Defensive Player of the Week. How does it feel to gain that accomplishment not only once but multiple times during this season?**

Words can't describe the feeling to be honest. I mean not only am I getting these accolades, the whole team is. We continue to receive weekly awards all over. It's absolutely amazing and I hope to get many more.

**How does it feel to be a part of the nation's longest winning streak?**

The amount of time, dedication and love this team has for this sport is the reason we are doing so well. We all are rising as one, everyone is on the same boat paddling at the same time. When one falls, we all pick her up, there is no one left behind. Those emotions and those actions are what we bring to the court every game day and it is why we will win the Atlantic 10 Championship.

**Are there certain things in your game play that you are still trying to work on?**

I wouldn't consider myself to be perfect in anything. There's always something I can work on to help better the team. It doesn't always even have to be technical, I could also learn to be better in my leadership role on this team.

**Do you find yourself moving into a leadership role?**

I've been a captain for two years now. I believe I have always played some type of leadership role from the very beginning. As new girls are joining, I'm not getting more "captain territorial" but more as someone who one could look up to. Family and loyalty are two words that mean everything to me. Those are two words that I try to emphasize to everyone, I want to be the teammate that no one feels scared to come to and that always look to when needing someone to lean on.

**If you could go back to before the season started, is there anything you would do differently?**

No, everything that I have done, everything that the team has done, has gotten us to where we are now. Yes I'm sure there are things I could have done better, but who cares. We are on a 22 [at the time of this interview] game winning streak, there's nothing I would change at all about that.



# Rams bounce back in final preseason exhibition

NICK VERSAW  
Staff Writer

Following a tough loss to visiting Liberty University in the Rams' season-opening exhibition, VCU basketball bounced back with a commanding 98-74 win Friday night against nearby Virginia Union University in the Black and Gold's preseason finale.

"The Liberty game was a wake-up call," said sophomore wing De'Riante Jenkins following Friday's win. "We needed that...to clean up everything, from top to bottom. Everyone got better from there."

The Black and Gold dominated their cross-town opponents in nearly every statistical category, shooting over 50 percent and forcing 23 Panther turnovers as the Rams led for nearly 38 of the game's 40 minutes.

"I really liked our guys' approach this whole week," said coach Mike Rhoades. "We're improving, never at the rate the coach wants to improve, but we're improving and we're getting better."

"The biggest thing I liked today is that we had 20 assists on 38 baskets," he said. "And that means guys are keeping the ball hot and sharing it and looking for each other, and that's really important."

Senior forward Khris Lane led six Rams in double-digit scoring Friday night, as the native Richmonder put up an impressive 21 point, 8 rebound, 3 block and 2 steal statline in his second appearance for the Black and Gold.

Lane said his growing familiarity with his new teammates has al-

ready opened up a lot of doors on both ends of the court.

"It's huge," Lane said. "I've always been a pretty good offensive player, but it's just about me finding my spots and knowing who I play with and where they're going to be. So, it's just a learning experience and I think we took a big step forward tonight"

After a bit of a slow start, sophomore wing duo Jenkins and Malik Crowfield led the charge, combining for seven made threes on the night. Rhoades said Friday was just a taste of what the Rams are capable of from beyond the arc.

"I think, with experience, that will come and we'll have a 16-, 17-, 18-made-threes game one of these days," he said. "Those guys know they've got the green light. I was even mad at a couple of those guys for not shooting open threes. We have to make sure we're firing them up and knocking them down."

Although the Rams offensive firepower shone Friday night, Rhoades said he wasn't content with his team's effort level on defense, as the Black and Gold allowed the Division II Panthers to score 74 points.

"On the defensive side, we have a long, long way to go," Rhoades said. "We lack a lot of defensive discipline, but that comes with experience. That comes with reps in practice. That comes with leadership. That comes with getting a freshman to finally play defense for the first time in their life, and we're going to continue to work on that."

The Rams leading for most of the night allowed Rhoades and his coaching staff to experiment with a

variety of lineups and the first-year head coach said he was happy with the versatility of his players and their ability to play all over the floor.

"The one thing I do like about our team is that we have guys that can play multiple positions," he said. "Issac Vann can play, we're not a numbers team, but a two through a four. That versatility gives us lots of options and I think that really helps."

Vann, in particular, was a bit of a crowd-pleaser in front of the home crowd Friday night. In addition to his 17-point, 6-rebound performance, the redshirt-sophomore had two thunderous dunks in the second half that put the entirety of Ram Nation on their feet.

Overall, Rhoades said he was happy to take the victory after what was a massive disappointment against Liberty, but urged his squad is not going to be content with just winning.

"The hardest thing to do in college basketball is to win a game and I'll never, ever take that for granted," Rhoades said. "but go get more. We're not defining our season on tonight and we won't define it on the next three games we play. We're going to define our season on how much better we can get and how we can affect college basketball. You have to dream like that, and that's how we are every day."

*VCU kicks off their 2017-18 campaign Friday as they host Grambling State in the Rams' regular season opener. Tip-off is set for at 7 p.m.*



Freshman forward Marcus Santos-Silva scored two points in 15 minutes played against VUU.

# Volleyball captures 24th consecutive match



Volleyball will begin the A-10 tournament as the top seed on Friday, Nov. 17 in Pittsburgh.

DANIEL PURYEAR  
Contributing Writer

Volleyball (27-2, 13-0 A-10) hosted the University of Dayton Flyers (19-7, 10-1 A-10) on Sunday, Oct. 29 in a showdown for conference supremacy between the two premiere powers the A-10 has to offer. The Rams hit the road Friday, Nov. 3 to face off against the La Salle University Explorers (13-15, 3-9 A-10) before heading down to Duquesne University (12-14, 7-5 A-10) Sunday, Nov. 5.

DUQUESNE

The Rams faced the fourth place Duquesne Dukes at their house and managed a 3-1 win after tight third and fourth sets. Duquesne and the Rams both put up decent stats and the deciding factor for VCU was blocking.

The Black and Gold managed 14 blocks to only 4 from the Dukes. Sophomore opposite hitter Gina Tuzzolo put up an impressive 14 kills and 4 blocks. Senior outside hitter Alicia Kandler and junior middle blocker Tori Baldwin continued to accel with a combined 18 kills and 9 blocks.

Sophomore outside hitter Vicky Giommarini aided in the kills tally with 11 on the match, while sophomore middle blocker Jasmine Sneed matched Baldwin with seven blocks.

VCU slacked in the third set with only 13 kills to Duquesne's 16, while getting seven errors and no blocks. The Dukes took the set 25-21. A few attack errors by Duquesne and a kill from junior opposite hitter Julia Adler gave the Rams the fourth set and the match. The victory gives the Rams 24 wins in a row, the longest active streak in collegiate volleyball.

LA SALLE

After a tough game against the second place Dayton Flyers, volleyball breezed through La Salle with a 3-0 win.

The Rams did not exactly ease through in the second set, however, as they were pushed past 25 and narrowly won the set 26-24 after a Kandler kill and Explorer attack error.

Kandler and Baldwin came out with good numbers with .765 and .455 hitting percentages, respectively. A combined 20 kills and 2 blocks pushed the Rams to their 23rd win.

Sophomore setters Dajah Ard and Tyler Sroufe combined for 36 aces.

DAYTON

The Black and Gold put their 22-game win streak on the line against the Dayton Flyers and came out on

top 3-2, breaking the Flyers' Atlantic 10 regular season win streak of 45 matches.

Despite VCU having more kills, Dayton's higher hitting percentage and fewer errors let them take the first set. The game stayed pretty even with steady back and forth from the Flyers and Rams, so it came down to a tight fifth set.

VCU gave their best performance with a .435 hitting percentage and 11 kills to 1 error. Adler and Tuzzolo got six kills together, pushing the Rams past their A-10 rivals.

Kandler recorded a match-high 17 kills. The real factor that put the Rams over the top was their blocking. VCU's 18 to Dayton's 11.5 blocks kept the Flyers to a .139 hitting percentage — their lowest in A-10 play this season.

With the win, the Rams have a strong hold an outright regular season Atlantic 10 Championship.

*VCU hosts Davidson College (10-15, 3-9 A-10) Saturday, Nov. 11 for their last regular season game.*

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# spectrum

On this day  
In 1975, The Sex Pistols made their live debut at St Martin’s School Of Art in central London.

## VCUQatar Day: Celebrating cross-cultural education

GEORGIA GEEN  
Staff Writer

The seventh annual VCUQatar Day was held Nov. 1 at the Commons Plaza in hopes to inform VCU students in Richmond about the campus in Qatar and promote connections between the two groups.

“We used to come, I used to bring students here, and they would say ‘Qatar? We have a campus there?’ Nobody knew about it. Now, we actually get a sense of being welcomed,” said VCU said Valerie Jeremijenko, Qatar Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

This year, the entire Commons Plaza was filled with visitors for the duration of the VCUQatar Day, with many spilling outside the confines of the tent housed the event.

The students who ran VCUQatar Day were participants in the joint week-long exchange programs. In the first, students from the Richmond campuses traveled to the VCUQatar campus. In the second, VCUQatar students visited Richmond. The latter program lasted from Oct. 28 to Nov. 3.

Some VCUQatar students feel Richmond students are not aware of the campus in Qatar.

“I don’t think many people know about the campus that’s over there,” said graphic design student Steffi Biaganza. “We want people to know more about us and the culture.”

Qatari culture is taken “really seriously” at VCUQatar, Biaganza said. Most student work is rooted in the culture of the region.

VCU’s Qatar campus opened in Doha’s Education City, a center that now houses six U.S. universi-



PHOTO BY CASEY COLE

The annual event celebrates cross cultural exchange between VCU’s campuses in Richmond and Doha.

ties, in 1998. VCUQatar offers a master’s program in design and five undergraduate art programs: art history, fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking.

Elements of Qatari culture were presented at VCUQatar Day, including henna, Qatari food and

fashion, with a fashion show featuring works from VCUQatar Fashion Design students. Also offered was Arabic calligraphy, which VCUQatar Art History student Hind Al Jaidah considers to be a defining factor of Arabic culture.

“I can tell that they’re very into our culture, they want to know

about where I’m from and where’s Qatar and how is it like there. That was really nice,” Al Jaidah said.

Summer Bateiha worked in the U.S. before becoming a math faculty member at VCUQatar. She accompanied the VCUQatar students on their trip to Richmond and feels that both groups were excited to

connect with one-another.

“I felt very welcomed. I feel the students feel very welcomed,” Bateiha said.

VCUQatar Day is facilitated from their prospective campuses by Jeremijenko and VCU LEAD Director Jimmie Gahagan. The event, however, is oriented towards the student

governments from both campuses.

“The events that we’re trying to host really showcase the collaboration between campuses, help to to make people aware of the hospitality that surrounds islamic culture, especially the Qatari culture,” Gahagan said.

Many students, like Al Jaidah and Biaganza, had not previously traveled to the U.S. and wanted to experience the country for themselves.

“People are more accepting over here,” Biaganza said.

She also noted the diversity found on the Richmond campus.

Biaganza said many VCUQatar students have found inspiration for their art upon travelling to Richmond and hopes this most recent group of students will have the same experience.

“It could be really anything. It could be the graffiti on the walls or looking at someone else’s work and getting inspired,” Biaganza said.

Other programs to connect the Qatar and Richmond campuses have also arisen, including longer exchange programs for art students and collaborations involving VCU GLOBE.

“I think there’s always room for growth,” Gahagan said. “We can often stay in our own worlds and forget that we have a campus across the world.”

Jeremijenko said the cultural environment of VCUQatar day are what initially attracts visitors, but the end result is much deeper.

“They learn about each-other, barriers are broken down, friendships are made and it has a long-lasting impact,” Jeremijenko said.

## Review: John Mulaney brings laughter to the Altria

EMILEY BAGALAWIS  
Contributing Writer

Former *Saturday Night Live* writer and stand-up comedian, John Mulaney, performed at the Altria Theatre Nov. 2 to a sold-out audience, titillating the crowd with his biting internet humor and stage presence.

Mulaney’s show, titled “Kid Gorgeous,” is his fourth stand-up show after “The Top Part,” “New in Town” and “The Comeback Kid.” He’s best known for writing SNL’s segment “The Weekend Update” and co-creating the character “Stefon,” played by Bill Hader.

“Kid Gorgeous,” opened with The Daily Show writer David Angelo, who performed his own stand-up set for 15 minutes. His set was solid though some of his jokes were lackluster. However, his monotone voice made his delivery much more engaging, as it created an ironic and nonchalant approach to his set.

Mulaney came on right after Angelo finished his set. Mulaney had a presence resembling an excited child, throwing the audience into a fit of laughter right off the bat. Compared to Angelo’s monotone voice, Mulaney’s intentionally obnoxious voice made the audience light up and many couldn’t help but laugh when he spoke.

Most comedians have a bar stool and water as their set pieces. Compared to the standard theatre performances, in stand-up there’s not much to look at besides the performer, but Mulaney knows how to make the open space seem full.

Mulaney utilized the stage to make grand gestures, act out the scenes that were part of his jokes and ran around to interact with the audience. Using voices to differentiate other people in his conversations, Mulaney made his set feel more like a theatrical production.

Mulaney transitioned from joke to joke seamlessly as if he were in a normal conversation. He often made call-backs to jokes made earlier in the show, adding to the immersive, casual audience experience.

Another unique element Mulaney had in his routine was his ability to be relatable to a younger crowd. His style of comedy reflects the often dry, satirical nature of internet humor.

“

**Compared to the standard theatre performances, in stand-up there’s not much to look at besides the performer, but Mulaney knows how to make the open space seem full.**

Emiley Bagalawis  
Contributing Writer

Included in his set was his comparison of Trump’s presidency to a horse being loose in a hospital, saying, “You never know what’s gonna happen next.”

Overall, Mulaney knows how to entertain a crowd. He relates to people with his self-deprecating jokes, strange though relatable stories from his childhood and all the random internet thoughts he thinks of, which all comes together to create a coherent, funny, entertaining night of comedy.

## “Thor: Ragnarok” is bolt of stylish ecstatic lightning



ILLUSTRATION BY AIN DUFFUS

SAMUEL GOODRICH  
Staff Writer

The weakest link in the Marvel Cinematic Universe has always been Thor. While it’s great when playing off other characters in the team-up movies, his own films usually miss what makes a Marvel flick interesting or memorable.

After the disappointingly average “Spider-Man: Homecoming,” this past Summer, I had high hopes for the stylish looking “Thor: Ragnarok.” Thankfully, Marvel returns to form with a hilariously action-packed ride that simultaneously revealing the ever larger cracks in the superhero foundation.

This third “Thor” film begins with him stopping the apocalypse, known as Ragnarok, only to discover that time spent away allowed Hela, the goddess of death, to begin taking over Asgardian civilization. After losing an initial fight, the god of thunder finds himself on a distant planet trapped in a gladiator match with Hulk. Now Thor must form a new team of heroes to reclaim Asgard and stop Hela from spreading her domination across the universe.

Director Taika Waititi is best known for his indie comedies like “What We Do in Shadows,” which use awkward humor and go against expectation to create hilarious and quotable films. In “Thor: Ragnarok,” Waititi is given free reign to make this one of the

funniest and most entertaining films in the Marvel pantheon.

“

**This new direction for Thor is a welcomed change to the nearly humorless predecessor “The Dark World,” showing that these characters have great potential to rival the “Guardians of the Galaxy” in terms of comedy.**

Samuel Goodrich  
Staff Writer

The humor is sharp and near-constant, ranging between puns, slapstick, and ad-libbed conversations. This new direction for Thor is a welcomed change to the nearly humorless predecessor “The Dark World,” showing that

these characters have great potential to rival the “Guardians of the Galaxy” in terms of comedy.

Waititi also proves he knows how to film an action scene. The opening scene features Thor single-handedly takes on demonic monsters in a hellish cavern in tune with Led Zeppelin’s “Immigrant Song.” Sequences like these are throughout the film and each utilize sequences utilize slow-motion and rhythmic timing to make every punch, shot and stab feel weighty, turning every battle a true spectacle. The highlight of these scenes is when Waititi uses a mixture of slow-motion and special effects to create mythological paintings out of the action, truly embodying the spectacle aspect of a blockbuster.

Within these eye-boggling visuals lie great actors, with the entire cast giving performance that range from good to start-making. Chris Hemsworth finally adds the comedic edge to Thor to make him interesting, while Mark Ruffalo is given a chance to play Hulk as a character instead of a green smash machine.

The biggest stand-outs are Cate Blanchett as Hela and Tessa Thompson as Valkyrie, one of Thor’s allies on the planet. While Hela has little to do plot wise, Blanchett makes up for this with her sinister and playful performance, making this villain one of the more effective in the Marvel

franchise. Thompson is fantastic, simultaneously being a hilarious badass while also maintaining a subtle character depth.

Despite these high praises, not everything in “Thor: Ragnarok” works as well as it should. There are scenes in which Thor speaks with his father Odin that serve as the emotional crux of the film. These sequences are great thematically and lead to one of the best revelations in any Marvel film, but they are done so cheesily that it’s difficult to take them seriously.

The other issue is more indicative of the entire Marvel franchise. The Marvel story structure formula serves as the base of every Marvel film, and “Thor: Ragnarok” is no exception. There were only a few story beats I could not see coming, as every plot point fit perfectly in the mold of what a Marvel movie is supposed to be. Only “Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2” has managed to escape this formula, and I wish Marvel Studios would take more chances and try different plotlines and genres.

Despite the familiar structure, “Thor: Ragnarok” is still one of the best Marvel Cinematic Universe films. Not only does it finally take Thor in interesting and exciting places, but it also manages to incorporate outside elements like Waititi’s comedy to make something that is entertaining and memorable.



# Oregon Hill’s highly anticipated Halloween Parade turns 12



Richmond’s 12th annual Halloween Parade in Oregon Hill was hosted by ALL SAINTS THEATER and featured fantastical costumes, political statements and commemorations to loved ones.



## John Water’s Film Series Takes First Stab with “Serial Mom”

**SAMUEL GOODRICH**  
Staff Writer

Trashy, vulgar, spontaneous. These words and more describe the films of John Waters, who has been one of the most cult friendly directors since he first gained popularity in the 1970s. Films like “Multiple Maniacs” and “Pink Flamingos,” Waters was known for highlighting counterculture with an independent and loving spirit, which soon gained him a dedicated following. Forty years later and Waters now spends most of his time making appearances and going on the road with various storytelling

series. The latest is “A John Water’s Christmas,” which comes to Richmond’s Byrd Theater on Dec. 20 and is hosted by Chop Suey Books and Movie Club Richmond. In preparation for the event, both companies have teamed up to curate the “John Waters’ Film Series,” where a film of his is shown once a month in various locally-owned Richmond theaters until Waters arrives in December. Last Monday, the series began with the horror comedy “Serial Mom,” which is one of two films directed by Waters produced within the Hollywood system. “We can’t imagine doing this

without showing the movies,” said Andrew Blossom, one of the organizers for Movie Club Richmond. “We can begin the experience early by just celebrating his films.” Blossom and his partner Anna Wittel started the movie club four years ago to serve as a repertory theater of sorts. They show a variety of films, ranging from older cult classics like “The Fly” to newer favorites like “Oldboy.” “Movie Club is a little bit of everything, we try to have it not be one thing,” Blossom said. This John Waters film series came about from Blossom and Ward Tefft, who work together at

Chop Suey books. After they managed to bring Waters to Richmond two years ago, they decided to do it again, while taking the opportunity to celebrate his work and introduce Waters to people who may never have heard of the director. “His name is one that is fading, he’s not as relevant to the younger crowd as he should be,” Tefft said. “Even for the older crowd, he’s not a household name.” “Serial Mom” itself is a bizarre film full of goofy 1950s Americana troupes mixed with violence and vulgarity. It’s an absurdist film falsely claiming to be based on a true story, playing on the satirical

nature of the affair. “The way of taking social conventions and idealized life and breaking them apart from the inside really found a hook in the American psyche,” Blossom said. The audience seemed to understand the satirical tone, laughing at the campiness of the dialogue and the absurdity of the violence. Blossom believes that this goofy and likable tone is what keeps Waters relevant. “I adore his work and how committed he is to celebrating all sorts of people,” Blossom said. “No matter how tame or out there, these movies are just joyful.”

The next film in the series is the original 1980s version of “Hair-spray,” showing Nov. 21 at the Byrd Theater. Three days before the live performance, they’ll show “Female Trouble,” Water’s 1974 film that dark-comedy the explores the violent and abusive life of a mother-daughter duo, Strange Matter on Dec. 17. “Do yourself a favor and come out and see [Waters] live,” Tefft said. “It’ll honestly be one of the best performances you ever see.”



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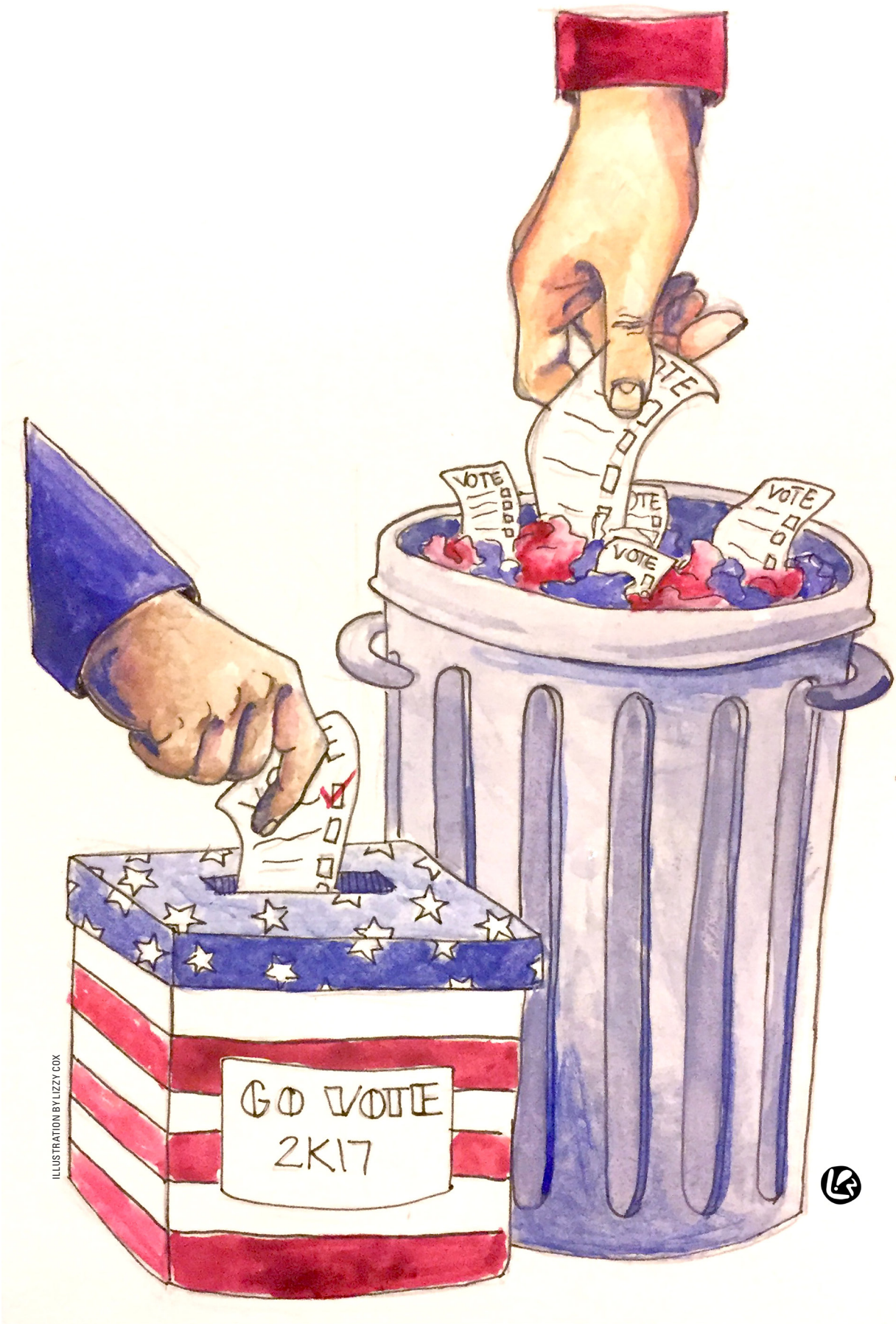




THE  
CT

opinions

Quote of the week  
“College-educated voters at VCU, a key voting demographic of the Democratic Party, mirror the importance of this midterm election.” - Sriteja Yedhara



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Funding schools with property taxes causes segregation

*continued from page 1*  
Because of the Federal Housing Administration’s call for “suitable restrictive covenants” to avoid “inharmonious racial or nationality groups” in housing, it was nearly impossible for many Black Americans to leave their poor communities and move into a better one. In simpler terms, Black people couldn’t just pack up and move, because suburbs practiced racial discrimination and the government encouraged it.  
It’s also important to note the government wasn’t the only group that purposely made it harder for Black people to receive mortgages, private lending institutions also discriminated against minorities. Even until the 1990s, private institutions practiced discriminatory lending, with Whites getting their loan requests accepted 1.6 times more often than minorities even when all factors including credit score are the same.  
Unfortunately, even when the government outlawed these practices, the damage had already been done. The loans allowed families to buy properties and generate wealth from them, while also having disposable income for other goods and services. This prosperity attracted businesses, which then raised the demand for housing, causing prop-

erty values to rise.  
This domino effect not only left the schools segregated, but their funding too. Because property values rose much more rapidly in White communities than in minority communities, Black schools had much more trouble obtaining qualified teachers, school supplies and facilities.  
Black schools are also less likely to provide a college prep curriculum such as AP classes for their students. About 9,300 public school students across Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and Richmond were enrolled in an AP class during a 2013 federal survey of public schools. Of those 9,300, only 455 of those students were from Richmond, a heavily segregated school system.  
The consequences of poor education has been felt. A majority of the homeless population in Richmond is Black, and it’s the same way no matter what city you’re in. Black people make up 13 percent of the population in the U.S., yet account for 40 percent of all homeless people in the United States.  
So what changes can we make? One mainstream answer is redistribution. Collect all property taxes in a state as a whole, and redistribute. That’s what Wyoming did, and every school district in the state re-



If we can end the practice of property taxes funding schools, and instead find a method that provides adequate funding to every district, the playing field would be a little more equal.

Taylor Nguyen

Why the 2018 midterm election is crucial

SRITEJA YEDHARA  
Staff Columnist

With the 2018 Midterm election right around the corner, those working on Democratic campaigns are faced with the same question: will liberal voters turn out to vote for the Democratic candidates?  
Though Democrats run aggressive campaigns, their biggest downfall has historically been voter turnout. The New York Times’ David Leonhardt wrote on this issue in an Op-Ed piece comparing liberal voters to conservatives. He claimed “if liberals voted at the same rate as conservatives, Hillary Clinton would be president.”  
This begs the question “why don’t liberals vote in midterm elections?” The Atlantic’s Ronald Brownstein points out although minorities and millennials are historically the groups with the lowest voter turnout, they have also been the groups showing the greatest opposition to Trump’s agenda. Brownstein says funding for Planned Parenthood, the climate-change agenda and barring refugees are all critical issues that “face preponderant Millennial opposition.” This is why Brownstein and other left-leaning journalists and political analysts are hopeful for increased turnout from Millennials in the 2018 election.  
Democrats would have to gain three seats in order to gain control of the Senate; the Republicans would have to gain eight seats to be filibuster-proof. This is at the crux of this election and makes it crucial for the President’s politics

and his opposers.  
If recent events are any indication, it’s clear a somewhat “gridlocked Congress” is not helping the country move forward in legislation. At the same time, Democrats would argue this gridlock, however stressful, is the only way to keep President Trump’s hyper-conservative agenda from furthering. This election could determine whether the gridlock is broken in favor of Democrats or Republicans, and by extension in favor of the president or not.  
During his speech at a campaign rally for Virginia gubernatorial candidate Ralph Northam, President Obama implored Democrats to vote. He urged against a reductive thought process that your vote doesn’t count or is not important.  
“We can recognize that even if our past is not perfect, we can honor the constitutional ideas that have allowed us to come this far, and to keep moving toward a more perfect union,” Obama said.  
College-educated voters at VCU, a key voting demographic of the Democratic Party, mirror the importance of this midterm election. Many VCU students have been active on campus with efforts for the Northam campaign and by making sure fellow students are registered to vote on time. The final battle is for students to implore each other to get out and vote on Nov. 7.  
Voting is one of the core constitutional ideas that fuels every imperfect democracy. It is your right and your responsibility to get out and vote and make sure your voice is heard.

An ode to self care



SHAUN JACKSON  
Staff Columnist

**My homie’s boyfriend is the worst. Within my squad we all really dislike our home-girl’s boyfriend. He doesn’t have many redeeming qualities and his list of cons is ridiculous. We don’t know what she sees in him and we worry that she is allowing herself to be held back by his foolishness in one of the best times of her life. How can we respectfully approach her and let her know what’s up?**  
  
This is such a conundrum to be in because it’s so hard to make someone who is wearing rose-colored lenses to take them off. It seems the easiest way to approach your friend would be to ask her out for a good old fashioned ladies’ night. No boys, no troubles and then vocalize your concerns about her boyfriend and how he’s affecting the friend group in such an adverse manner. Now, I don’t know if your friend is going to be open to hearing criticisms like that or if she’ll come out of a bag on you, but advocate and vocalize your feelings and good luck! Some of the stupidest fights between friends have been over boys. Don’t fall victim.

**Can two friends really just be or will one person always want more? When should you break the friendship or move on?**

I think in most situations it’s better to end things amicably, but that is not always a possibility for everyone. However for lovers-turned-friends, it can be especially daunting to do, largely for people who were just so intimate with one another and things did not end on a bad note. If maintaining the friendship is too much to handle, then for your own health you should definitely break it off. Get to know yourself outside the realm of this person and try to be friends later if you still desire to be connected to this person in some way.

**My boyfriend makes me feel that I owe him sexual favors in return for how much he’s been there for me emotionally. When I don’t comply with everything he requests, I’m told that I’m asking for more than I’m willing to give. Is the problem really me here?**

Absolutely not. The only one here with a problem is your lame boyfriend who thinks it’s okay to emotionally blackmail you for sex. If he’s offering you support just for sex at the end this guy does not (and probably never did) have your best interests in mind. I’d highly recommend evaluating if he even deserves to be in your life and to be linked to you romantically.

**How do you start a new chapter in your life in general? What would you suggest for the first step?**

Firstly, I believe you have to have a new mentality that you didn’t have before, you don’t want to end up changing your scenery but not your situation. Secondly have a plan. A lot of people love the spontaneity of dropping everything and going somewhere else, but as you get older that’s not as viable, and thirdly — inhale logic, exhale purpose. Have a semblance of what you want your life to look like in the future.

If you’d like to send Shaun a question you can submit them via email at [Jacksonsk@commonwelathtimes.org](mailto:Jacksonsk@commonwelathtimes.org) or anonymously at [Lascivious-Witch.Tumblr.Com/Ask](https://lascivious-witch.tumblr.com/ask)



ceives more funding than the national average.  
But not every state has done that, and many states will continue not to. So I propose this: Discontinue the practice of funding school through property taxes and let the federal government provide funding. This will allow school districts across the country to be adequately funded like Wyoming.  
But won’t that mean the federal government gets to control how the money gets spent too? Possibly, but it doesn’t have to be that way, that’s a political decision. States can pass laws to give the local districts more autonomy over what to spend the money on. California for example passed a law in 2013 called the Local Funding Control Formula which granted local school districts more control over how to spend money in their districts. Virginia can do this too.  
I’ve always supported the notion that we don’t defeat racism by at-

tacking it directly. We defeat it at its roots. At the very root, Blacks are less likely to prosper because they start out in poorer communities with higher crime and bad schools. These factors make it less likely for kids in these communities to be accepted into college, preventing them from generating a higher income. If we can end the practice of property taxes funding schools, and instead find a method that provides adequate funding to every district, the playing field would be a little more equal.  
Over time, this funding will raise graduation rates, which in turn raises college attendance rates and eventually higher incomes. If we create a system that allows you the opportunities to be successful no matter where you’re born, we might see schools slowly but surely desegregate.

-Taylor Nguyen





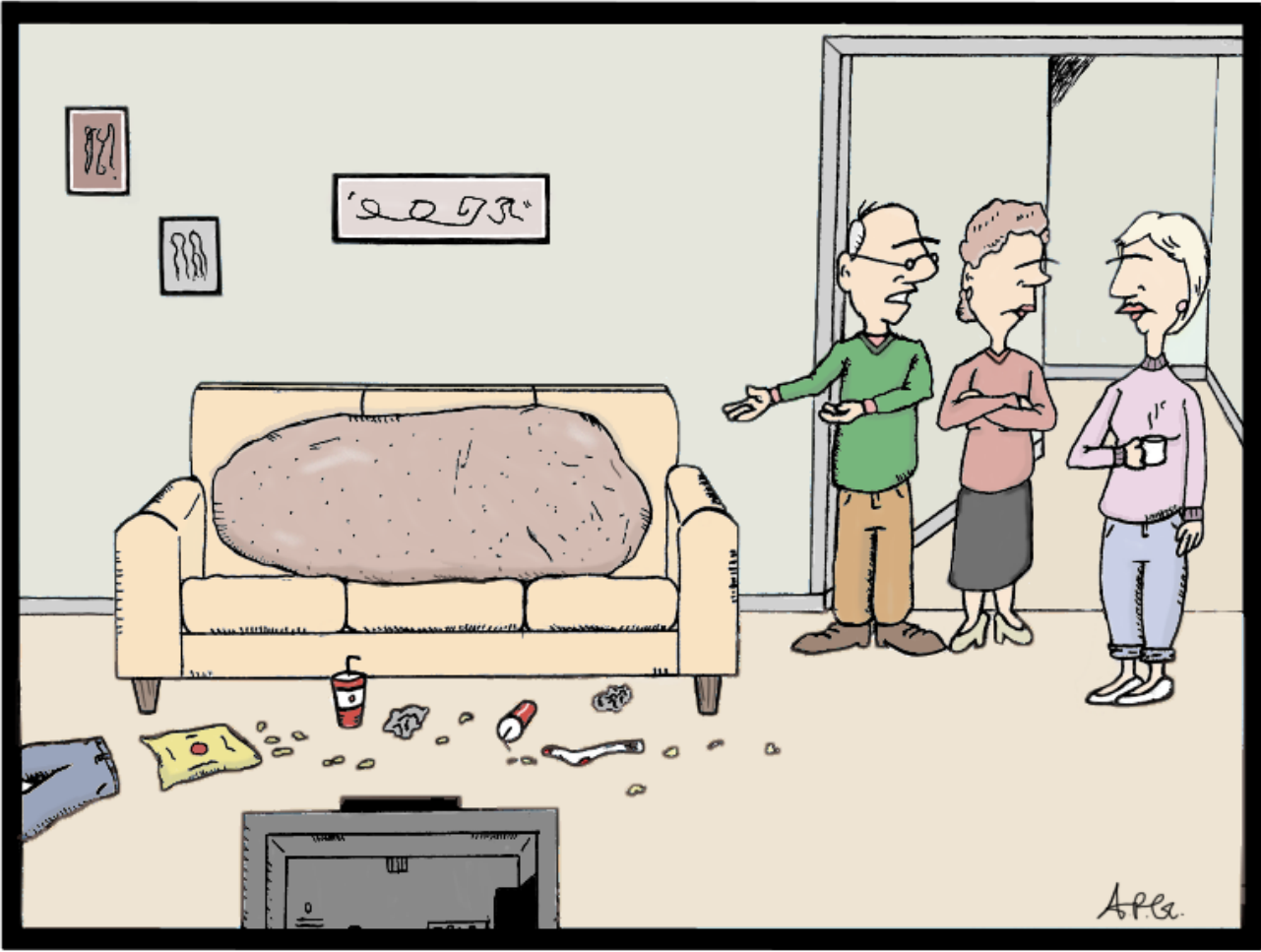
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## November by Steck Von



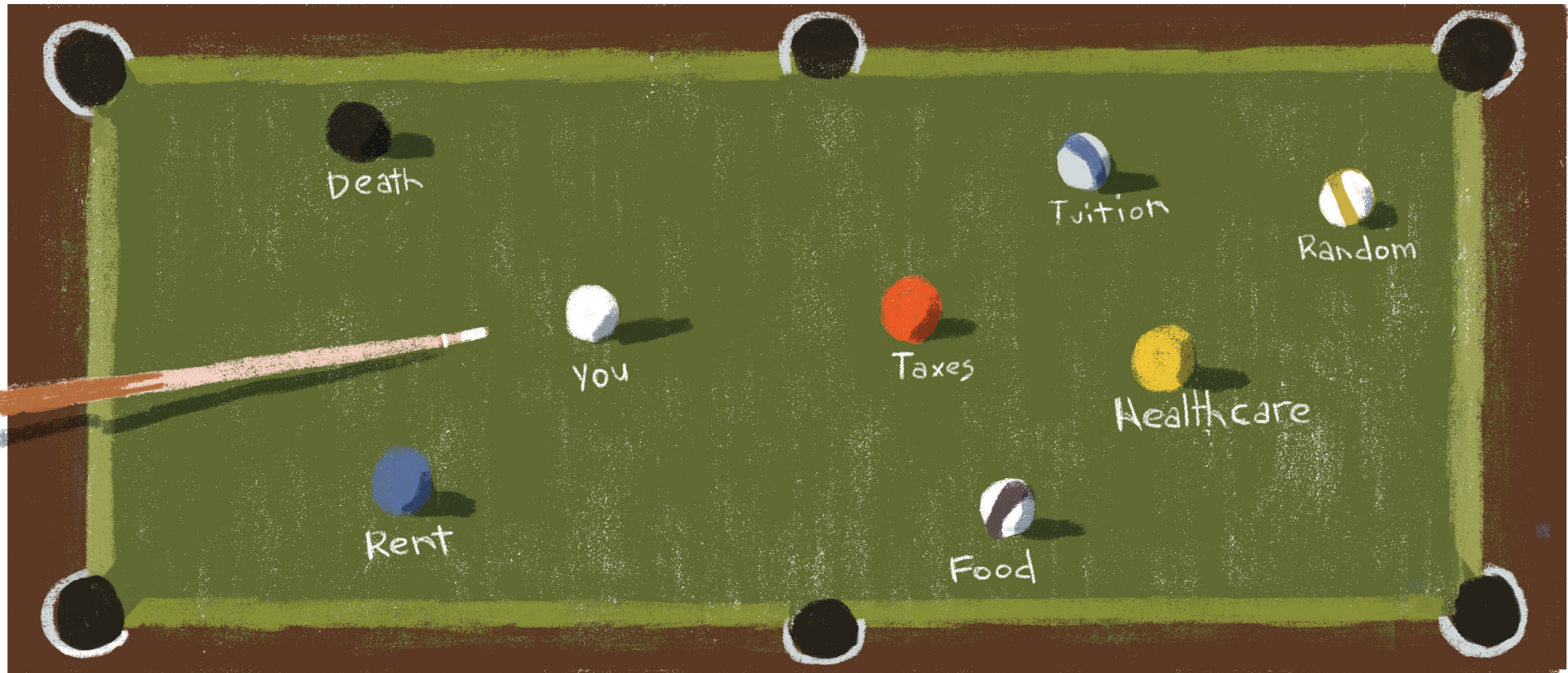
## VLP - Couch Potato by Adam Goodman

VERY LITTLE PULP



"AND THIS IS OUR 25 YEAR OLD SON WHO JUST MOVED BACK IN WITH US."

## Corner Pocket by Jacque Chandler



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### ABOUT THE CT

The Commonwealth Times is the award-winning independent student newspaper at VCU, since 1969. The CT staff maintains all editorial and operations discretion. There is absolutely no prior review by the public, university or VCU Student Media Center administration or staff. The Executive Editor writes and manages the Operations Budget.

The CT's Operations Budget is a reflection of independent advertising revenue accumulated throughout the previous academic year(s). Operations expenses include salaries, phone and internet, postage, professional memberships, award submissions and banquets, FOIA requests, programming costs and travel. Each spring, the CT staff elects the next year's Executive and Managing Editors, who then hire the remaining staff.

### ADD YOUR VOICE

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The Commonwealth Times strives for accuracy in gathering news. If you think we have made an error, please email the appropriate section editor. Corrections will appear on the opinion pages and/or online. One CT per person. Additional copies can be purchased at the Student Media Center

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