



Government shutdown

VCU's DACA recipients advocate protection for immigrant community

In last week's negotiations, President Trump demanded significant funding for border security in ex-

Jessica Moreno-Caycho, co-president of Political Latinx United for Movement and Action in Society at VCU or PLUMAS, seeks to unite and enact social action for Latinx students. She is undocumented and a recipient of DACA. She has lived in the United States for almost 15 years after arriving from Peru when she was 8 years old.

continued on page 2

"Outside these doors, it doesn't matter"

Rhoades and Rams bounce back



George Washington

Afterward, VCU coach Mike Rhoades said the last week was tough, especially on the players. The Rams lost by 27 at Dayton University on Jan. 12 before losing by 15 to UofR at home Wednesday.

continued on page 4

Women's March 2018

More than 1,000 attend Women's March in Richmond

A person wearing a black jacket and a pink beanie holds a white sign that reads "WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM CANNOT REST". In the background, other people are visible, some holding signs, and a sign for the "WOMEN'S MARCH" is partially visible. The scene is outdoors with buildings in the background.

A year after Women's March
page 9

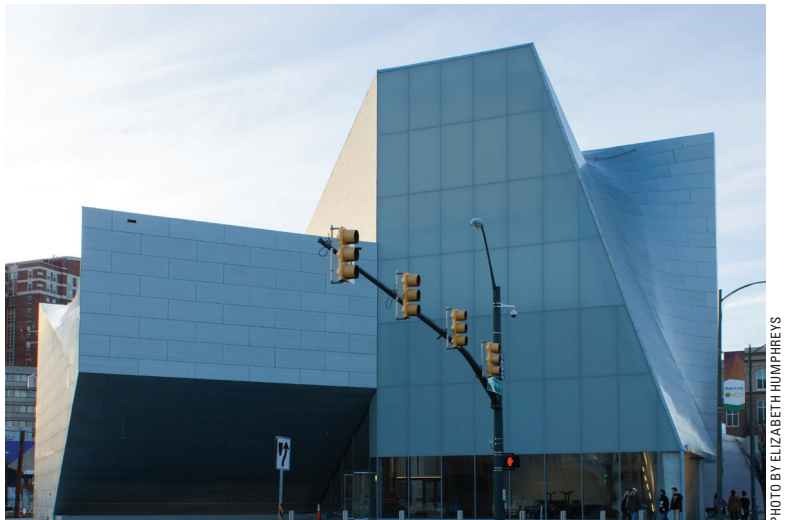
Betsy DeVos' Title IX guidance changed nothing at VCU

Like DeVos' interim guidelines issued in September, the Obama Administration's letter was not en-

DeVos' guidance lets universities choose between "preponderance of the evidence" — a lower standard, which schools were required to use under the Obama Administration — or "clear and convincing" as standard of proof when trying sexual assault cases.

continued on page 2

Retired VCUarts dean appointed ICA Director



The ICA is set to open on April 21. Seipel said he will likely continue to hold the position of interim director until around April, pending the results of a national search.

to find a permanent director. Seipel was involved with the early plans for the ICA, which originated as a renovation of The Anderson Gallery, a space currently dedicated to student exhibitions. "This has been just a dream of mine, to see this come to fruition," Seipel said. "It's an evolution. Fifteen years ago, who would have ever thought we had this world-class building here."

continued on page 7



CRIME LOG

Sunday, January 7

Drug Violation
1250 E. Marshall St.

Hit and Run
550 N. 12th St.

Monday, January 8

Hit and Run
1300 E. Marshall St.

All Other Larceny
417 N. 11th St.

Tuesday, January 9

Hit and Run
515 N. 13th St.

Wednesday, January 10

Theft From Building
401 N. 12th St.

Theft From Building
1250 E. Marshall St.

Hit and Run
515 N. 10th St.

Theft From Building
401 N. 11th St.

Theft From Building
2924 Brook Road

Thursday, January 11

Drug Violation
1213 E. Clay St.

Theft From Building
1213 E. Clay St.

Theft From Building
1300 E. Marshall St.

Friday, January 12

Threaten Bodily Harm
1213 E. Clay St.

Saturday, January 13

Trespassing
1200 E. Marshall St.

Trespassing
1200 E. Marshall St.

Aggravated Assault
1250 E. Marshall St.

Sunday, January 14

Theft From Building
401 N. 12th St.

Trespassing
1213 E. Clay St.

Trespassing
1200 E. Marshall St.

Monday, January 15

Threaten Bodily Harm
401 N. 11th St.

All Other Larceny
1213 E. Clay St.

Trespassing/All Other Offenses
1250 E. Marshall St.

Simple Assault Domestic
1200 E. Marshall St.

Tuesday, January 16

Trespassing
1213 E. Clay St.

Simple Assault
401 N. 11th St.

Hit and Run
15th St/Franklin St.

Wednesday, January 17

Hit and Run
D Deck 515 N. 13th St.

Thursday, January 18

Disorderly Conduct
1200 E. Marshall St

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.

Legislators address tuition, student privacy in 2018 Virginia General Assembly

House Bills

Student Privacy

HB 1: would require written consent from students before student directory information is released. The students or their parent/legal guardian would be able to withhold that information which includes the student’s name, address, birthday, place of birth field of study and more.

HB 351: would impose a four-year cap on tuition for students attending public universities in the state. Meaning, the tuition rate charged to students in the fall of 2017 may not see an increase.

Tuition Freezes

HB 249: would require each public college in Virginia to annually establish a fixed in-state tuition rate for incoming freshman or undergraduate transfers.

HB 147: would exclude a student’s personal cell phone number and personal email address from inclusion in student directories and other records shared under FOIA.

MATTHEW BARRETT
Contributing Writer

More than 300 education-related bills were introduced in the upcoming spring Virginia General Assembly session, covering topics spanning from privacy to tuition freezes.

All education bills must go through the Education Committee in the House and the Education and Health Committee in the Senate before they head to the floor for a vote. Since bills on similar topics were filed by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, there is hope for compromise in the General Assembly.

Del. Tony Wilt (R- Rockingham) introduced HB 1, a bill seeking to require written consent from

students before their directory information is released. The students or their parent/legal guardian would be able to withhold that information which includes the student’s name, address, birthday, place of birth field of study and more.

Wilt said there is bipartisan support for the legislation. Although he couldn’t speak to what concerns legislators may have about the bill, he is confident in a positive end result.

“Students should have a reasonable expectation to privacy,” Wilt said. “The expectation should be that their school is not releasing their personal contact information and other information to anyone that requests it, unless explicit permission is granted.”

Del. David Reid (D-Loudoun) introduced HB 351, if passed, would impose a four-year cap on tuition for students attending public universities in the state. Meaning, the tuition rate charged to students in the fall of 2017 may not see an increase.

Similarly, a bill, HB 249, introduced by Del. Jason S. Miyares (R-Virginia Beach), would require each public college in Virginia to annually establish a fixed in-state tuition rate for incoming freshman or undergraduate transfers.

“I think it would be a great idea,” said Wanda Gibson, a mother of a VCU sophomore. “If it’s not possible to lower tuition, at least freeze the costs of education.”

The General Assembly is also addressing student privacy issues. Although the Virginia Freedom of Information Act guarantees government transparency, allowing access to public records, information on students attending public universities in Virginia may be kept out of public record.

“I think privacy is extremely important and the user has the right to know whether or not their information is in public record,” VCU student Tiffany Srivilay, 21, said. “However, a cell phone and email is direct communication to a person and that is where the line is drawn.”

Del. Hurst introduced HB 147, seeking privacy for students. The bill would exclude a student’s personal

cell phone number and personal email address from inclusion in student directories and other records shared under FOIA.

The legislation follows the The Roanoke Times report that last year, many Virginia universities gave student records data to NextGen America, a progressive political group. The Commonwealth Times revealed VCU gave the records data of more than 30,000 students.

“Nowadays, it seems like cell phone numbers and email addresses are inevitably part of someone’s identity,” Srivilay said. “Knowing that this information could have been entered into the public records frightens me.”

Dreamers defend immigrant community

—continued from page 1

going to fund a wall, it’s not going to keep funding ICE that targets anybody that is brown or black.”

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, an advocacy organization that educates and organizes political action, is taking action on immigration. Welcoming All Coordinator Lana Heath de Martinez, who oversees the organization’s immigration policy, said they are calling on Sen. Mark Warner to support the Dream Act, a congressional bill that would grant legal status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to

the United States as children.

However, activists in the immigrant community are asking the organization not to support a negotiation agreement that would put family members at risk.

“It does have pretty broad ramifications because of some of the earlier executive orders put forth by the administration. Basically it opens up interior enforcement. If they’re saying border security, that could actually apply to anywhere in the United States,” Martinez said. “Nobody would say that the negotiations right now look good for immigrants. We would say we need something to hold us over so we can continue to fight another day.”

PLUMAS remains in contact with the university about what support is needed in the event student’s DACA expires. President Michael Rao has promised the university will not release any information to the public about undocumented students’ status, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

PLUMAS continues to pressure the university to support Virginia legislation that would protect undocumented immigrants. As a federal agreement on DACA and it’s fallout remain up in the air, the Virginia General Assembly is addressing immigration issues in their upcoming session. PLU-

MAS is attending meetings for SB 810 and HB 343, mirrored bills that will grant tuition equity for all Virginians, regardless of immigration status.

Undocumented students are at risk of losing their in-state tuition when the legislation expires.

“We’re really hoping we can get their full support on something that has also been approved by undocumented students,” Caycho said. “HB 343 is the first time that tuition equity bill, all the language of it has actually been approved by undocumented students themselves.”

VCU has Obama-era Title IX laws

—continued from page 1

VCU, which used “preponderance of the evidence” as a standard before the Obama Administration required it, continues to use it today. That policy is consistent with what the university uses for most student misconduct cases, not just sexual assault, Rugless said.

The new document, which was issued as a Q&A, also allows schools to offer an appeals process to either both parties involved or to only the respondent in a case, a departure from the previous administration’s stance that both parties be given an opportunity to appeal a case’s outcome.

VCU will review its process for handling Title IX-related cases in 2018 as part of a three year assessment cycle, and a steering committee will make changes where it sees fit. If the Trump Administration has issued a new guidance by the time the steering committee goes through that process, the committee will take into account the new federal guidance.

“If the federal government mandates a different, higher standard and that becomes legally required, of course we would have to follow that as a matter of compliance,” Rugless said.

While the Title IX process at VCU and other schools isn’t perfect, Rugless said, it is not in need of major overhaul, like DeVos’ speech at George Mason University last September indicated.

At Mason, DeVos said the Obama-era letter contributed to “kangaroo courts” and indicated a lack of due process was unfairly detrimental to those who are wrongfully accused of sexual assault, an approach Rugless called “potentially misguided.”

“It does seem like ... the most egregious, poorly handled cases were used to support potentially sweeping changes that may be coming,” Rugless said.

Instead, Rugless said she feels the procedure at VCU could use minor changes to streamline the process. Students will have the opportunity to chime in on what they feel those changes should be before the steering committee revises its policy this year.

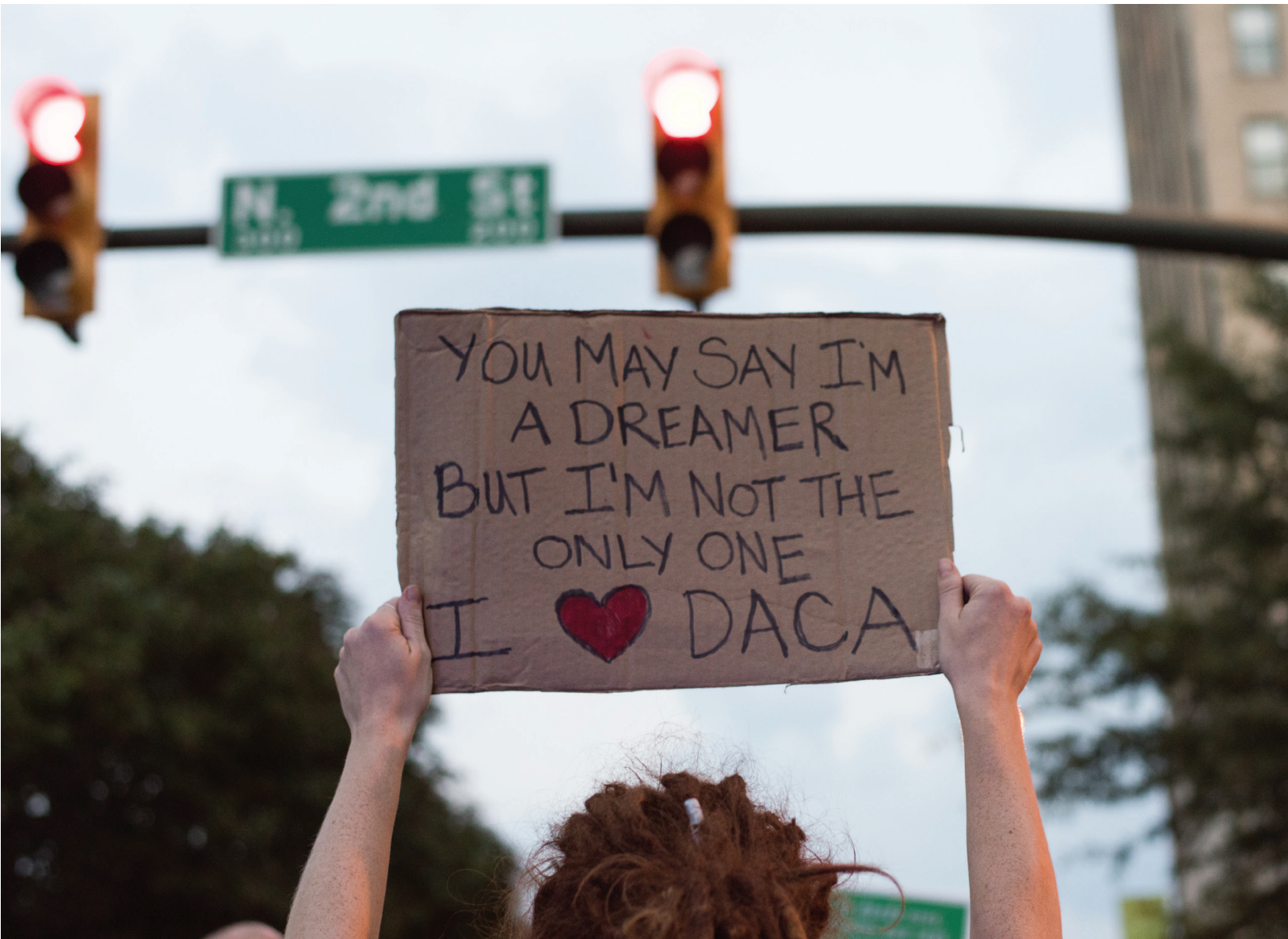


PHOTO BY ERIN DEBERTON

Following failed negotiations on immigration resulting in a government shutdown, DACA recipients at VCU advocate reform that protects the entire immigrant community.

INFOGRAPHIC BY ERIC MEO

Northam inaugural had bipartisan tone, then things took a turn



Thousands watched as Ralph Northam was sworn in as Virginia’s 73rd governor at the Virginia State Capitol on Jan. 13.

SARAROSE MARTIN
News Editor

FADEL ALLASSAN
Managing Editor

Ralph Northam was sworn in as Virginia’s 73rd governor at the State Capitol on Jan. 13 in a ceremony in which Justin Fairfax and Mark Herring also took the oath of office as Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General respectively. Northam promised bipartisan efforts in the 2018 General Assembly session in his Inaugural Address, despite Democrats winning all three statewide seats in last November’s elections. But hopes for bipartisanship were thrown to the wayside after Northam’s first speech before a joint session of the General Assembly last Monday drew the ire of some of its Republican members.

In the speech last Monday, Northam urged the legislature to expand Medicaid and pass universal background checks for gun purchases, according to the Daily-Progress. “This was him throwing down the gauntlet,” Said Del. Steve Landes (R - Weyer’s Cave) in response to the speech, according to the Daily-Progress. “That’s not how the legislative process works. He was challenging us almost to oppose him.” In his inauguration speech, the Norfolk native said he was dedicated to the values he held as a U.S. Army doctor and pediatric surgeon — positions he had prior to becoming governor. He promised to tackle the opioid epidemic, gun violence, Medicaid expansion, homelessness among veterans and income inequality. “The solutions to these problems are not easy. But we do know

what they are. The way ahead starts with access to quality health care and public education for every Virginian, no matter whom they are or where they live,” Northam said. “It depends on smart interventions in the case of addiction or mental health challenges and a focused economic development strategy that connects the right people with the right skills and the right jobs.” Susan Frances Kaufman, a Virginia Beach resident and Northam campaign volunteer, said she supports Northam’s position on health care and hopes he will bring money back to Hampton Roads. “I know Northam can make an impact. I know he’s worked with children and he’s seen the devastating effect of not having Medicaid expansion in Virginia,” Kaufman said. “We’ve been basically giving money away and killing our own children. He was on

the front lines.” The largest inaugural parade in Virginia’s history followed the ceremony. Twenty-six groups marched, including the Virginia Military Institute Corp of Cadets. Northam is a VMI graduate. Shortly after taking office, Northam signed three executive orders which outlawed discrimination in state jobs, enumerated the powers and responsibilities of his chief of staff, Clark Mercer, and empowered the governor to declare a state of emergency. Northam made history with the first majority-female cabinet in Virginia. “The country is once again looking to Virginia to lead the way,” Northam said. “Let us lead with humility and optimism, telling the truth, learning from history and removing every obstacle to progress for all Virginians.”

Virginians’ split on removal of statues, poll finds

SAFFEYA AHMED
Contributing Writer

Virginians have mixed feelings on the removal of Confederate statues, according to a recent VCU poll. Responses, gathered from a sample of 788 adults, were split between keeping the statues in place or making some sort of change to them. The findings were part of the Wilder School’s Winter Public Policy Poll. Forty-nine percent were in favor of keeping the monuments in place, while 46 percent want to change their location or presentation. Robyn McDougale, director of the Office of Public Policy Outreach in the Wilder School, said the poll will further the policy conversation surrounding the statues. Respondents who favored a change chose their most preferred course of action. Twenty-three percent wanted the statues relocated to museums; thirteen percent wanted to add context to them with signs; while 10 percent favored removal. “People are very split,” McDougale said. “When we look at should [the statues] go, that means a lot of different things to a lot of different people.” The poll revealed there is more to this question than simply should these statues stay or go, McDougale said. “There is much more work that needs to be done from a policy standpoint,” McDougale said. Regional and demographic differences show apparent trends. Almost half of residents in the South-Central region, which includes Richmond, supported keeping the monuments in place. Republicans, white participants, those 65 and



Forty-nine percent of Virginians’ are in favor of keeping Confederate monuments in place in the state, according to a recent poll, representing a considerable divide.

older and those with a high school education or less were more likely to vote in favor of leaving the statues as they are. While the state is split on the removal of the statues, most of the respondents responded they were unwilling to pay for any changes to the monuments through an increase in taxes. However, 63 percent of the 10 percent who favor complete removal, expressed a willingness to pay more in taxes.

In an interview with The Washington Post, Gov. Ralph Northam said the statues should be relocated to museums. Although the Governor doesn’t have the authority to remove confederate statues, many are state-owned, which means he may seek out legislation in the state’s upcoming General Assembly session. Del. Mark H. Levine (D-Fairfax) has introduced HB 1099 that seeks the removal of the Robert E.

Lee statue in the National Statuary Hall Collection at the United States Capitol. The bill also asks the General Assembly to recommend a replacement statue. “The portion of the poll concerning the Confederate statues reaffirmed the abundance of different perspectives and the necessity to drill those down into one concise policy plan,” McDougale said.

More than 1,000 Attend Women’s March in Richmond



Hundreds marched down Cary Street Saturday in the second annual Women’s March to protest Trump Administration stance on women’s rights and immigration.

RYAN PERSAUD
ALEXANDRA SOSIK
Capital News Service

Demonstrators took to the streets of Carytown on Saturday for the second annual Women’s March, recalling the demonstrations a year ago when hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Washington and cities around the world to protest President Donald Trump’s inauguration and the GOP’s stance on issues such women’s rights and immigration. Hundreds of demonstrators held up signs that ranged from mocking the president to promoting equality. They chanted phrases such as “This is what democracy looks like,” “Women’s rights are equal rights” and “Coexist.” Kim Young, a demonstrator who missed the Women’s March last year due to health issues, said she was excited to attend Saturday’s event. “It’s about freedom, choice, ‘Love is Love,’ [and] showing the president that not all Americans in the United States are in agreement with him,” Young said. The Richmond demonstration was one of many across the country Saturday. Brigitte Newberry, a demonstrator who attended last year’s Women’s March in D.C. and a counterprotest against the Confederate statues on Monument Avenue in September, said it is necessary to resist the current administration. “I feel like it’s important that women unite together,” Newberry said. Kathe Wittig, a retired Virginia Commonwealth University faculty member who participated in anti-war protests in the 1970s, said she worries that Trump’s policies will set society back decades. “We have to let the world know that we’re not going to sit back,” Wittig said. “He is a disaster.” Gov. Ralph Northam also joined event organizers in leading the march. Northam helped carry a banner that read, “Women’s March RVA.” Mary Leffler, one of the organizers of the event, attended the 2017 Women’s March in D.C. As the anniversary approached, she looked for whether others locally were commemorating that demonstration. “I sought out to see if there was already a march happening, and

there wasn’t. So I made a few phone calls, called the city manager’s office, helped decide this location and then just started spreading the word,” Leffler said. Leffler said she was surprised at the size of the crowd. “We’ve had estimates of a little over 3,000 – some more like 1,500,” Leffler said. “We’re thrilled.” Mark Loewen, a children’s book author, brought his family with him, including his 5-year-old daughter. “We talked about girls can do anything that boys can do, and that girls should be making the same amount of decisions that boys make,” Loewen said. “We’re so excited about women’s voices getting stronger, and we need them to be stronger.” Members of the National Organization for Women, which advocates for equality for all women, were also in attendance. Andrea Lancaster, president of NOW’s Richmond chapter, said she was pleasantly surprised by the event’s turnout. “A few of our board members, me included, went up to the march in D.C. last year, which was overwhelmingly huge, so we didn’t know what to expect from Richmond,” Lancaster said. “It’s exciting to see how much momentum the movement still has.” NOW and other groups are urging the Virginia General Assembly to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The ERA would explicitly state that women have the same rights as men in the U.S. ERA supporters believe that if two more states ratify the amendment, it will be added to the Constitution. There is a legal debate about that because the deadline to ratify the ERA has passed. According to Lancaster, Virginia has become a focus of ERA proponents because Democrats have gained power in the General Assembly. Last fall, the Democratic Party picked up 15 seats in the House; however, Republicans still hold a 51-49 majority. Lancaster said there is a need for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing women equal rights. “If you ask a lot of people in the streets, they think we already have that,” Lancaster said. “But we don’t, and there is no constitutional protected equality.”

Stat of the Week

The University of Richmond became the lowest ranked (Kenpom) team to defeat VCU since 2009 (UNCW) Wednesday.

Women’s tennis dominates VCU 4-1 Invitational

RODNEY ROBINSON
Contributing Writer

After a tough loss to Florida Atlantic University to open the season, the Rams dominated the VCU 4-1 invitational by only losing one match in two games. The Black and Gold downed the Dragons of Drexel University 4-1 Friday afternoon before sweeping the Campbell Camels 5-0 Saturday afternoon.

Campbell

VCU swept Campbell to close out the VCU 4-1 Invitational, marking their second win on the season. The Rams did not lose a set in the Saturday matchup. Similarly to the matchup against Drexel, the freshmen powered the Rams to victory.

Freshmen standout Paola Exposito Diaz Delgado swept her opponent at the No. 2 singles court, 6-0, 6-0, as she gave the Rams an early 1-0 victory. During the 4-1 Invitational Diaz Delgado was on a hot streak, only dropping three games. Freshmen Marina Alcaide Bakari clinched the victory for the Rams, winning in straight sets 6-3, 6-2.

After an easy first set, Junior Anna Rasmussen came from behind in her matchup on court one, winning the second set 6-4, after going down 4-3. Sophomore Kana-ko Yano finished the sweep for the Rams by winning in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.

Drexel

The Rams cruised past Drexel to open the 4-1 Invitational.

VCU bounced back after a tough loss to FAU in their season opener. The Rams dropped a mere 13 games throughout the matchup Friday. Rasmussen set the tone for the Black and Gold in singles play by winning her match handily 6-1, 6-0. Rasmussen improved her singles record to a team best 5-2. But, it was the play of the under-



PHOTO BY MICHEL MAULONIG

Freshman Marina Alcaide Bakari earned one WTA ranking point prior to attending VCU.

classmen that powered the Rams to victory on Friday.

Freshmen Melissa Ifidzhen and Sofia Sualehe opened the match with a win on the doubles court, defeating Providence and Cruz of Drexel, 6-3, 6-2. This marks the third win of the season by the freshmen pair. Freshmen Paola Exposito Diaz Delgado extended the Rams’ lead in the match, 3-0, after a dominant second set. Fresh-

men Marina Alcaide Bakari sealed the deal for the Rams by winning both sets 6-2, marking her second win of the young season. The Black and Gold will look to carry over the momentum from the dominant play in the 4-1 Invitational when they return to action Tuesday, Jan. 30 at home against Old Dominion University. The Rams’ match against Morgan State University Sunday was postponed.

Track and field: Keydet Invitational

JESSICA WETZLER
Staff Writer

The Black and Gold track and field teams opened up the Keydet Invitational at Virginia Military Institute this past Friday and Saturday — the men’s team finished the meet with a total of 26.5 points, placing them 11th out of 16 schools. The women totaled 15.5 points, placing 14th.

Sophomore Bryce Catlett set the pace becoming VCU’s top scorer on day one, collecting eight points after placing second in the 5,000-meter. Catlett finished with a time of 15:17.30.

Sophomores Ashley Brown and Judith White both placed in the top-10 in the 1,000-meter, adding points to VCU’s

total. Brown placed sixth with 3:01.86 and White finished eighth at 3:04.79.

Junior Austin Conway added points for the men’s team during the 1,000-meter, placing eighth with a time of 2:33.85.

The 500-meter also showed the Rams finishing within the top eight as sophomore Kayla Smith and junior Ashley Greenlee combined for three points. Smith covered the two and a half laps in 1:16.88. Greenlee came in 10 seconds behind Smith.

In the 60-meter dash, seniors Jamik Alexander and Kareem Payne advanced to the semifinals. Alexander earned a spot in the second days’ 60-meter final after placing seventh with a time of 6.87.

Senior Amiaya Carey cleared a mark of 1.60m in the high jump and ended up claiming 1.5 points for VCU.

Sophomore Marian Osafo scored in the triple jump and set a personal best in the event with a mark of 11.12m.

On the final day of the Keydet Invitational, both team added to their total points after a strong showing in the 4x400-meter relay.

Senior Kahlil Shepard sprinted to a fifth place finish in the men’s 400-meter with a time of 49.40.

Shepard also lead off the 4x400-meter relay team that scored big with a third place finish. Shepard was followed by fellow senior Zayd Abdul-Ali, sophomore Chukwuezugbo Aguolu, and freshman Austin Hatchett. The team ran the relay in a collective 3:17.95.

The women’s 4x400-meter relay team placed third out of 20 teams. Smith set the pace during the first leg of the race and was followed by juniors Latrice Morris, Greenlee and Ann Sheehy.

Morris had a notable race during the 200-meter, completing her lap in 25.09, just shy of scoring position.

Sheehy’s 59.12 finish in the 400-meter landed her tenth place in the event.

After qualifying for the finals during the first day of the meet, Alexander claimed fifth place points in the 60-meter. Alexander’s time in the finals was 6.90.

Freshman Xyan Xrichardson took fifth place in high jump with a 2.00m leap. Xrichardson has placed in the top five in each meet he’s competed in thus far.

Track and field will return to action next weekend at the Liberty Kickoff in Lynchburg.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VCU ATHLETICS

The women’s 4x400-meter relay team finished third out of 20 teams at the Keydet Invitational.

Rams earn redemption against Colonials

—continued from page 1

VCU was led in scoring by sophomore guard De’Riante Jenkins and senior forward Justin Tillman with 18 each. Tillman knocked down 7-of-11 from the field, 4-of-4 at the line and led the team in rebounding with eight, good for 190 this season.

Senior guard Jonathan Williams added 14 points and four assists, while freshman forward Marcus Santos-Silva provided 11 points and 5 rebounds off the bench.

Freshman guard Sean Mobley recorded his first career start Saturday. Even though the Cocoa Beach, Florida-native only recorded two points, he contributed to the win by dishing out 8 assists.

“With these dudes around us, it’s hard not to get assists with the way they shoot and they score,” Mobley said.

Rhoades commended his team for their defensive efforts. VCU outrebounded GW 34-22 and did not allow any second chance points, while GW allowed 18.

“We did a really good job on the rebound, eliminating the one and done,” Rhoades said.

VCU showcased its depth Saturday, allotting all eligible players on the roster playing time. VCU’s bench recorded 27 points, compared to GW’s 5.

Richmond

VCU struggled to find momentum Wednesday against town rivals UofR as they dropped their second game in the row by a score of 67-52.

This loss ended a six-game VCU winning streak in the rivalry.

The Rams shot 34 percent from the field and a mere 17 percent from three. The Spiders outrebounded the Rams 38-28, which only al-

lowed for five second chance points.

This was just the fifth game this season Richmond has outrounded an opponent and by the largest margin.

“In the first half I don’t think we moved enough and we were getting good shots and getting to the rim but we missed post moves we’ve been making and finishes,” Rhoades said. “We had some wide open threes but we just didn’t knock them down and we got in a hole.”

Richmond shot 53.7 percent (29-of-54) from the field, including 58.3 percent (14-of-24) in the second half.

“We’ve had enough struggles on the defensive end of the court and it just magnified today with our lack of production on offense,” Rhoades said.

Tillman and sophomore guard/forward Mike’l Simms led the Rams in scoring with 12 a piece. Tillman fell short of recording his eighth double-double in a row but still led VCU in rebounds with nine.

After shooting 50 percent in the first half, the Spiders had an even stronger second half, shooting 58.3 percent to break the gap open by as much as 21 in the last few minutes of the game.

At the end of the first half, the Rams narrowed the gap, courtesy of a 7-2 run, to only seven, but Richmond hit each of its first six shots of the second half and opened the lead to 14, 49-35, just over five minutes into the half. Richmond held the lead the entire game.

“When the offense wasn’t going, we were losing our confidence and it hurt us on the defensive end,” said Rhoades. The Rams are now tied for fourth in the A-10 with a 4-3 record. Up next, the Rams travel out west to take on the Saint Louis University Billikens Tuesday at 9 p.m.



PHOTO BY ERIN EDGERTON

Senior guard Jonathan Williams (left) was efficient Saturday, putting up 14 points on 6-9 shooting against the Colonials. Sophomore forward Issac Vann (right) scored 10 points Wednesday in just 17 minutes of action.

Press Box

The Minneapolis Miracle

A reflection on the long term prognosis for American football

ZACH JOACHIM
Sports Editor

While Minnesota Vikings' wide receiver Stefon Diggs turned upfield with zeros on the clock and a swath of gloriously green grass in front of him during the final play of his team's divisional round victory over the New Orleans Saints, football's lifespan stood frozen in time.

That's not to say one play or player could ever begin to change the time frame encompassing American football's diminishing future. It can, however, give cause for reflection on the prognosis for an issue that threatens the life of our beloved game — concussions and how to manage them.

Diggs gave the Vikings a 29-24 win, sending them to the NFC championship and allotting Minnesota the chance to become the first team to ever host a Super Bowl. His game-winning 61-yard touchdown came as time expired and will go down as one of the most inspiring, improbable and exciting plays in the sport's history.



If I had a son, I'd be very reluctant to let him play football, knowing what I know now.

Brett Favre, Super Bowl Champion

However subliminal, the "Minneapolis Miracle's" prestigious place in the NFL canon cannot do anything to change the current regression of football's cultural spirit. This reality is what came to mind as I watched Diggs' teammates celebrate with him in the endzone.

The discovery of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) has forever changed the game, and for good reason. The Alzheimer's-like disease is developed as a result of repeated head

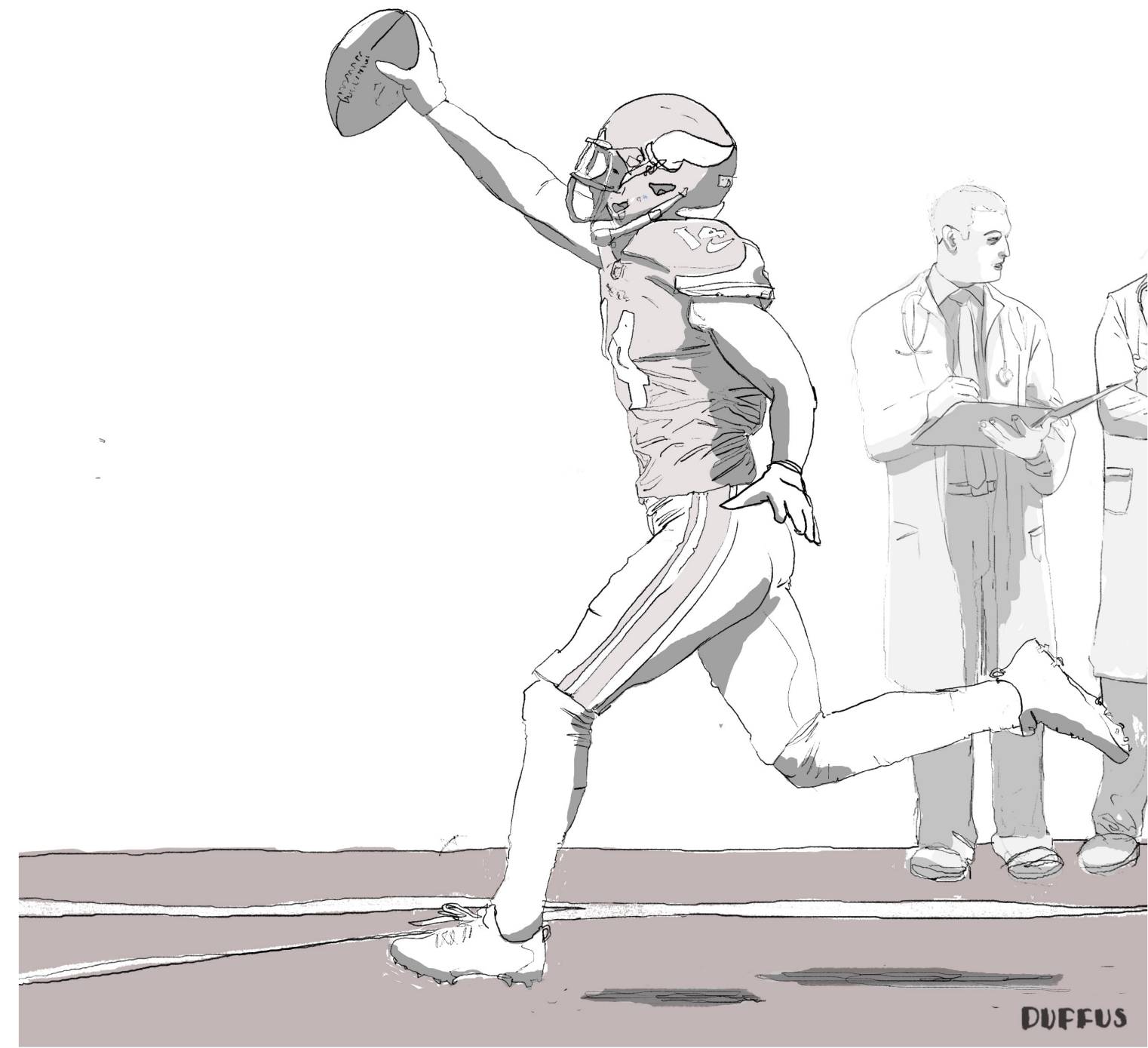


ILLUSTRATION BY VIN DUFFUS

injuries normally tied to jarring, head shaking, torque-based motion — not necessarily impact — which is highly common on a football field. The condition has claimed the lives of former NFL players such as Chicago Bears safety Dave Duerson and San Diego Chargers linebacker Junior Seau.

Dr. Ann McKee, professor of neurology and pathology at Boston University, conducted a study of CTE for CNN in 2015. Her team found indications of the disease in 44 out of 55 college football players.

"To find it in 44 players sug-

gests that it isn't a rare condition," McKee said. "Just a condition that we didn't look for before."

The shocking reality that physical trauma experienced in normal football games can cause long term, life threatening brain disease has, to this day, not fully sunk in for most football fans. Heck, Will Smith played the lead role in a movie about the revelation. It has captured the hearts and minds of the American public, to the point that an ongoing debate about the long term prognosis of the sport is now a daily news item.

Even hall of fame players are

taken aback by the newly discovered safety hazards associated with football. Former Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre told Fox Business in March he would be very reluctant to let his own children play the game he loves.

"If I had a son, I would be very, very reluctant to let him play (football), knowing what I know now — which is not a lot. For us, there is still so little about CTE we know. But we do know it's not good, especially for youth."

I love football to death, as does Favre, obviously. Moments like the Minneapolis Miracle are simply religious experiences for

me and much of America.

I will probably not let my children play football until they are 18. There are simply other, equally magical sports for them to spend their youth enjoying. I could not, in good faith, put a helmet on my children when doctors studying this disease are making proclamations such as those made in McKee's findings.

"I think it's becoming more and more clear that the developing brain is more susceptible to concussions; it has a delayed recovery," McKee said. "We really need to limit the amount of head contact that young children and

adolescents are experiencing."

Favre recently released a documentary titled "Shocked: The Hidden Factor in the Sports Concussion Crisis." In it, the cheese-head icon details his work with Brock, a company that markets a padding material designed to reduce the amount of concussion athletes experience from hitting their heads on field turf. The 48-year-old Favre — who says he is already experiencing the effects of CTE — has made it his mission to explore ways in which football can be rendered a safer sport, since retiring from the gridiron himself.

"I was always great with names and faces," Favre said. "But that's not so much the case anymore. Sometimes I'll be talking, and it's like I'll know what I want to say, but I just can't get it together in my head and make it come out."

Recognizing and mitigating this frightening reality portrayed by Favre — and many athletes who suffer from CTE — must be the priority going forward for anybody else who felt some type of way watching Diggs cross that goalline. Like Favre, every-day fans are coming to the understanding that, as it stands right now, football as we know it will not survive these discoveries. There are too many ex-players complaining of severe mental and emotional distress, and too many doctors telling us CTE is the reason why for anybody to turn a blind eye in good conscious.

A massive overhaul in American football's safety precautions is immeasurably necessary in order for the sport to remain in existence long term.

Currently, the prognosis is critical — and that's what popped into my head watching Diggs score that immaculate touchdown.

I asked myself if the clock was ticking on moments like this.

I asked myself what I would say if my child were watching with me and posed the question, like I had countless times as a child to my parents, if I could be a football player and do awe-inspiring things like that.

I think I would tell her or him no...and that tears me apart.

Men's tennis sweeps opening weekend



Sophomore Javier Amantegui led VCU with 20 singles wins as a freshman.

ADAM CHEEK
Contributing Writer

Men's tennis scored three straight wins in their first trio of matches over the weekend, sweeping the VCU 4-1 Invitational to start the season with a 3-0 record. The Black and Gold downed Georgetown University on Friday before beating Drexel University and Campbell University on Saturday.

Campbell

The Rams scored an easy 5-0 win over the Campbell Fighting Camels Saturday afternoon, propelling the Black and Gold to a 3-0 record and dropping Campbell to 1-1.

Freshman Inigo Torre Martin swept in singles, while junior Arvid Noren and sophomore Javier Amantegui teamed up to best Campbell in doubles by margins of 6-2, 3-6 and 6-2. Sophomore Ignacio Rivero Crespo and freshman Timo Zraggen also each earned victories at the No. 3 singles position.

Drexel

The Black and Gold faced the Drexel Dragons earlier on Saturday, winning 4-1 and sending the Dragons below a .500 average on the season.

Straight-set victories in all

four singles matches went to the Rams, as Torre Martin edged out wins in straight sets. Noren and Amantegui also added singles match wins of their own.

Georgetown

VCU swept the Georgetown Hoyas Friday, winning by a score of 5-0. Opening the spring on the right note, the Black and Gold overwhelmed the Hoyas by all but shutting them out in every set played.

Zraggen excelled in a stellar debut, pairing with junior Philip Mobius to win by margins of 6-0 and 6-4, securing the doubles point in the process. Noren dominated in his singles appearance, winning 6-1 and 6-4.

Amantegui fell 4-3 in the first set, but battled back to win nine of the last 11 games against Georgetown, winning 6-4, 6-2 in No. 1 singles and clinching the match for the Rams. The sophomore also leads the Black and Gold with seven wins on the season. Junior Vitor Lima and Torre Martin lost the opening sets of their matches, but each rallied and secured three-set victories to sweep the day for the Rams.

Men's tennis returns to action Friday, Jan. 26 at home against the Flyers of Dayton University at 2 p.m.

Freshman phenom drops 31, Rams fall at UMass



Freshman guard Tera Reed led VCU with 15 points Sunday.

NILE MCNAIR
Contributing Writer

Women's basketball traveled north Sunday for a battle against the Minutewomen of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The Black and Gold fell by a final of 79-75, dropping the Rams to 4-14 on the season.

UMass was looking to secure their first A-10 win of the year. The Rams got off to a slow start in the first quarter, allowing 25 points while only scoring 14 of their own.

After getting off to a fast start the Minutewomen did not relinquish their lead for the rest of the game. The Black and Gold did, however, bounce back after their slow start by outscoring UMass for the remaining three quarters.

In a high scoring affair, the Rams had four players in double digits. Freshman guard Tera Reed led VCU with 15 points to go along with five rebounds. Both teams combined for a total of 22 made three pointers, but committed 30 turnovers.

UMass had a star player on the floor in freshman guard Bre Hampton-Bey — Hampton-Bey ended the game with a whopping 31 points. Her performance along with Umass hitting clutch free throws down the stretch allowed the minutewomen to defeat VCU.

The Women's team will have their next game on the road, as they take a trip to go face the La Salle University Explorers, who are just above the Rams in the A-10 standings.

PHOTO BY MYLES FRANCISCO

PHOTO BY CASEY COLE



Got the munchies?

Get a free cookie and a free financial coaching session.

At **The Money Spot at VCU** you can boost your financial confidence and satisfy your sweet tooth. Get a voucher for one free Red Eye cookie when you participate in a free financial coaching session.

Visit vacu.org/GoRams to find out more.



No substitutions or cash equivalent.



— WE'RE ADDING —
1500
ADDITIONAL BEDS
TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR
HOME ON CAMPUS.

VISIT HOUSING.VCU.EDU TO APPLY.
The Housing Application closes Feb. 9.



spectrum

On this day
Roe vs Wade Supreme Court Case
legalizes abortion in the U.S in 1973.

Panel displays perspectives on Richmond publishing projects



The panel allotted time at the end of the event to allow attendees to ask questions one-on-one and review the publications.

GEORGIA GEEN
Spectrum Editor

GenderFail, a publishing group centered around queer and transgender people and people of color, presented experiences of three Richmond-based art publishing projects at a panel discussion at Sediment Gallery on Jan. 20.

GenderFail founder Brett

Suemnicht said art publishing focuses on looking at a book or other publication as art, instead of a product to be sold at high volumes. Oftentimes, the priority is not to make money, but finding or creating “work that really resonates.”

“Especially by starting my own project, I can produce whatever I want. I am not saying ‘oh, I need to make a publication like this so it

sells,’ it’s really for the integrity of the work,” Suemnicht said.

While many publishers make money off of their work, Suemnicht said most use other forms of employment to fund the projects.

As the discussion began, the mismatched seats in the gallery were filled quickly; by the end of the event, attendees were seated in a semicircle that reached the

building’s entrance.

“I’m blown away by how many people came out,” Suemnicht said. “It shows that there is a thirst for having programming like this more, arts publishing and just publications in general.”

All three of the panelists are professors in the VCU Department of Graphic Design. Nicole Killian has published the work of current

and former students in her annual publication, *Issues*, which centers around people of color, queer people and women.

“We’re just looking for work that has a strong voice that is maybe not so visible,” Killian said.

During the panel, Killian discussed the absence of diversity in art publishing, even in traditionally LGBTQ spaces.

“I think if you don’t see or hear people that look like you, you’re less likely to become involved in those professions or genres of making,” Killian said.

Unlike the other panelists and other members of the industry, *Issues* does not have online content, though Killian said the publication may move in that direction in the future. *Issues* remains centered around the print publication because the idea of having an object for readers to pass around among friends is appealing to Killian.

“It’s not something you can kind of flip through,” Killian said, “There’s a lot of eye candy but there’s a lot of really important words and interviews that people have done.”

Nontsikelelo Mutiti’s online publication, *Reading Zimbabwe*, is an archive of Zimbabwean literature, including references to more than 1,500 books. Mutiti said in the panel that she was driven to create the site in part because of gaps in her and her colleague’s knowledge of Zimbabwe’s history. As content was amassed, bigger implications arose.

Mutiti said there are few bookstores or libraries in Zimbabwe,

but many people read with smartphones, making this online archive an effective way to disseminate content.

“We all need this content, Reading Zimbabwe is not just for Zimbabweans,” Mutiti said. “It’s not just about doing it for your own community, this is necessary to open up international understanding.”

In addition, Mutiti spoke on the concept of creating a range of content, from “precious” items to those that are easy to disseminate.

“Some things need to be in a form where they are going to be collected, taken care of. Some things need to be passed along rapidly, exchange hands rapidly,” Mutiti.

Lauren Thorson’s one-page publication, *Margin*, was inspired by a Church Hill community newsletter. As a result, Thorson said being in Richmond is an important aspect of the publication.

There are few restrictions for writing to be published in *Margin* — while a 350 word count is suggested, “if someone wants to decide they want to write a whole essay novel, we’ll make it work. If somebody wants to write a poem, we’ll make it work,” Thorson said.

Margin’s written content is placed around the margins of the page, which is dominated by artwork in the center. The publication isn’t scheduled, which makes it a “non-stress” project, Thorson said.

“I think the panel discussion is really interesting and important in terms of the difference between publishing perspectives,” Thorson said.

Retired VCUarts dean appointed as new ICA Director

continued from page 1

After a few “quieter” years when little was happening to develop the ICA, Seipel made the ICA a priority when he became dean of VCUarts, as VCU was the only top-ranked art school without an art museum.

More than 1,000 individual pieces make up the inaugural exhibition, “Declaration,” which consists of 55 works — many of the works are complex with a number of smaller parts. Thirty artists contributed to “Declaration,” many of which are nationally and internationally significant.

No changes will be made to “Declaration” as a result of Seipel’s appointment.

“The idea now that young people can come see this artwork and understand that it is possible for them to reach these kinds of benchmarks in their career is going to be so important,” Seipel said.

“Declaration” will explore themes of connection, social justice, protest and creative community. Seipel said he hopes the ICA will serve as a “gathering point” where individuals can challenge one another and discuss ideas presented in the artwork.

The ICA’s High School Teacher

Advisory Group was formed to connect with the education community — it consists of 23 educators from the City of Richmond and Henrico and Chesterfield Counties.

“For a young student to come here and see this artwork for the first time, 14-year-old or 15-year-old or 12-year-old, it’s going to be a great experience for them,” Seipel said. “We want to make sure that we’re able to give them the kind of direction and help them understand what is being said in the artwork.”

Numerous outreach programs are scheduled to begin in May, including Coffee and Conversations,

where attendees can RSVP to meet with a staff member and learn more about the ICA. Tours of differing lengths and types will also be available, among other programs.

“When we designed this, and I was pretty directly involved in choosing the architect and the initial design of this place, it was really important to us that there was no front and no back to this building,” Seipel said. “There’s a doorway to Broad Street, there’s a doorway to the university and that’s a metaphor for how we expect to work with the community.”



Seipel retired in 2016, but agreed to return to VCU to serve as Interim Director of the ICA.

RVA Table Talks presents Richmond’s works towards religious inclusivity



SIONA PETEROUS
Staff Writer

Several dozen people gathered in the Virginia Holocaust Museum for a night of discussion surrounding religious identity, the changing American religious landscape and religious inclusivity on Jan. 18.

The event, Religion and Interfaith Understanding, was part of a year-long series sponsored by Altria Group, RVA Table Talk.

Throughout the 2017-18 season, several events focusing on specific topics of class, gender, religion, race and several other similar social discussions will occur in various locations throughout the city. The intent is to promote understanding between different people of diverse backgrounds. Each event will be hosted by a different group that specializes in the topics being discussed.

The Interfaith Community of Greater Richmond (ICGR) hosted Thursday’s event. The non-profit organization can trace its roots back to the joint Protestant, Catholic and Jewish led organization, The Council of Church Women, which formed in 1929.

Since then, the organization has had several name changes to reflect its growing religious membership and settled on the current name in 1986. This was also a time when Richmond was experiencing the growth of Southeast Asian communities, as well as other ethnic minorities, including the growth of Hindu, Sikh, Baha’i and Buddhist members in the ICGR.

“I haven’t come out to my family exactly to let them know that I don’t identify with the Christian community or any religion for that matter, because I am aware I am risking being cut off from them for a while,” said Rebecca, a graduate student at University of Richmond. She said she found support

from religious groups and events where there are atheist or agnostic people. Even those who strongly follow a faith are understanding of her beliefs.

The event was discussion based by design: small roundtables with five or six people discussing topics like the difference between religion, belief and spirituality and how one’s background influences religious belief.

“At my table, we discussed the fact that spirituality came as we got older and we had a chance to look at religion outside of the rituals we were taught to do as children,” one attendee said during the brief rounds of open discussion. “None of us ascribe to a strict religious belief but we go to our church or mosques because we found community and spirituality as we got older.”

Highlighted during the event was the city’s long history in religious diversity.

Sarah Amick AlZubi, vice president of programs for the ICGR, presented research by the American non-profit The Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), a non-partisan group focusing on quantitative and qualitative research research on the relationship between religion and public policy.

The research released in April 2017 shows America’s youngest and fastest growing religious groups are under 30 years old and are from non-Christian backgrounds. They are mostly Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim where around a third of each group strongly identify with their religious group. At the same time, almost 34 percent of those under 30 who are not religiously affiliated are white Americans who come from Christian backgrounds. Those who strongly identify as Christian are increasingly non-white.

“Twenty-five years ago, nearly nine in ten (87 percent) Catholics

were white, non-Hispanic, compared to 55 percent today,” the report states. “Fewer than four in ten (36 percent) Catholics under the age of 30 are white, non-Hispanic; 52 percent are Hispanic.”

In 2013, the two-decade long Harvard-led religious research initiative called The Pluralism Project focused on Richmond and the metro area as a case study of this trend. AlZubi paraphrased the research to the audience which found that despite racial tensions in the city, religious openness is traced to the 1786 passing of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.

Richmond experienced one of the largest growths in the country of Southeast Asian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism due to the growth the communities in the region throughout the 1980s.

“I always felt at home in Richmond and not because it’s an inclusive city, but because I always felt that there is a strong effort to make it religiously open.”

Religion and Interfaith Understanding Attendee

VCU grad incorporates transgender experience into comedy



French plans to relocate to Los Angeles this year, a move motivated by her comedy career.

EMMA SUE SIMS
Contributing Writer

Pulling up to Wonderland Comedy, it’s uncertain what one may be walking into. The sign outside holds the establishment title, Wonderland, each letter tilted at a different angle and washed in a different bright color.

The building contains a room where many local comedians’ careers begin. Skulls and cloaked figures riding horses adorn the walls and ceiling. A poster of the famed The Velvet Underground & Nico album art hangs directly next to the stage.

Saturday night, five comedians took to this stage for Wonderland Comedy Presents: Mary Jane French. The headliner was

Mary Jane French and the rest of the line-up included Kim Durfee, Patience Iv, Katherine Malone and Patrick Buhse — all hailing from Virginia. Each talent was varied in their approach to comedy but similar themes cast over the show as a whole.

Topics including relationships, kid talk and mental health managed to creep into each performer’s setlist. However, the discussion of gender topics was unique to three performers including French. When she approached the stage as the headlining act, she took one step onto the stage, her 6’ 2” stature a demanding presence in the room. She looks out and announces to the crowd, “and I’m transgender!”

Laughter poured from many audience members as she continued

to talk about her transition and recent bottom surgery.

During an interview the day of the show, one out of every seven people must have stopped to say hi to her. Her energy was high and later it was obvious when she described herself as a “manic” performer, she wasn’t kidding.

She grew up in Sterling, Virginia and moved to Richmond for the comedy scene and diversity. French has been in comedy for five and a half years.

“When I was little, I liked kid shows and sitcoms, stuff like The Simpsons or Scrubbs. Then around middle school, I think, is when friends started showing me standup,” French said. After that she took a liking to it on her own, she said.

“My senior year of high school I took improv classes at the community college and I found a standup open mic one county over,” said French.

Once a week, she would attend an open mic until beginning school at VCU. She said her official start in comedy was in 2012.

French recently graduated from VCU as a cinema student. At 23, French says she plans on moving to Los Angeles later this year.

“When considering where I want to move, comedy is one of the big factors because I do plan to pursue it and definitely never stop doing it,” French said.

French’s work, including her podcasts, EP’s and upcoming show dates can be found on her website at MaryJaneFrench.com.

SAM’S TAKE

The TOP 10 MOVIES of 2017

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Staff Writer

I believe 2017 will go down as one of the best years in film history. While it may have been an anxiety-inducing year for most, film and art in general were there to make things slightly better.

There were too many movies to pick from for this list and I haven’t even seen everything I wanted to see. Somehow, I came up with a selection of movies I’m proud to showcase, but know that there are probably 20 other movies I’d love to put on this list.

10 — MOTHER!

While 2017 was the year for bold choices in filmmaking, nothing compares to the celluloid atom bomb Darren Aronofsky dropped into theaters. Wrongly advertised as a psychological horror flick, “mother!” is an environmentalist sermon portrayed as an infinitely upsetting nightmare. This was one of the most unique films I saw all year and the near panic attack I had while watching it will stay with me for a long time.

9 — BABY DRIVER

Edgar Wright is one of my favorite directors, so I was bound to like anything he was going to do with “Baby Driver.” What I did not expect was how much I would love this tightly constructed musical action film. While an average heist movie on the surface, Wright elevates the material with charming characters and a killer soundtrack matches the film almost perfectly, down to the gunshots and body movements.

8 — THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI

Despite recent controversies at the Golden Globes, I still believe “Three Billboards” is one of

the year’s most well written films. Frances McDormand gives the performance of her life, playing a complex, and at times unlikable, mother searching for answers and justice in a cruel world. The dark comedy and themes of personal justice elevate this movie from a simple revenge flick into an award worthy film.

7 — THE POST

Spielberg reminds audiences why he is one of the greatest directors with his expert eye for visuals and camera movements. The plot is relevant to modern concerns with the freedom of the press, but Spielberg and company manage to keep everything from getting too preachy, turning “The Post” into an effective and exciting drama.

6 — LOGAN

Coming out early in the year, “Logan” set the bar for how mature superhero movies should be made. It is at once melancholic, yet narratively satisfying and exciting. Disappointment is a main theme explored in almost every aspect of the film. By the end, there is still hope, not for a sequel, but for these characters and for the superhero genre in general.

5 — THE SHAPE OF WATER

Guillermo del Toro is a modern master of filmmaking and his creature love story proves his relevance in our time. A tale of love through adversity, “The Shape of Water” also celebrates diversity and acceptance in the face of toxic oppression in 1950s America. This dreamily shot film is so pure in its expressions of love and empathy that it’s impossible not to be charmed by the end.

4 — I, TONYA

Tonya Harding’s story of rising success as a figure skater and

subsequent downfall after a brutal misunderstanding is undoubtedly entertaining. “I, Tonya” takes what could have been a stale biopic full of nostalgic ‘90s references, instead making a wonderfully acted exploration of the cycle of abuse in Harding’s life and how mass media perpetuated her suffering.

3 — GET OUT

When people look back on the year 2017, Jordan Peele’s “Get Out” will be remembered as the most 2017 thing that happened all year. A horror-comedy with scathing political commentary, this film is nearly perfect in execution. The script is full of brilliant foreshadowing and jokes, the actors are phenomenal and the editing and pace are masterful.

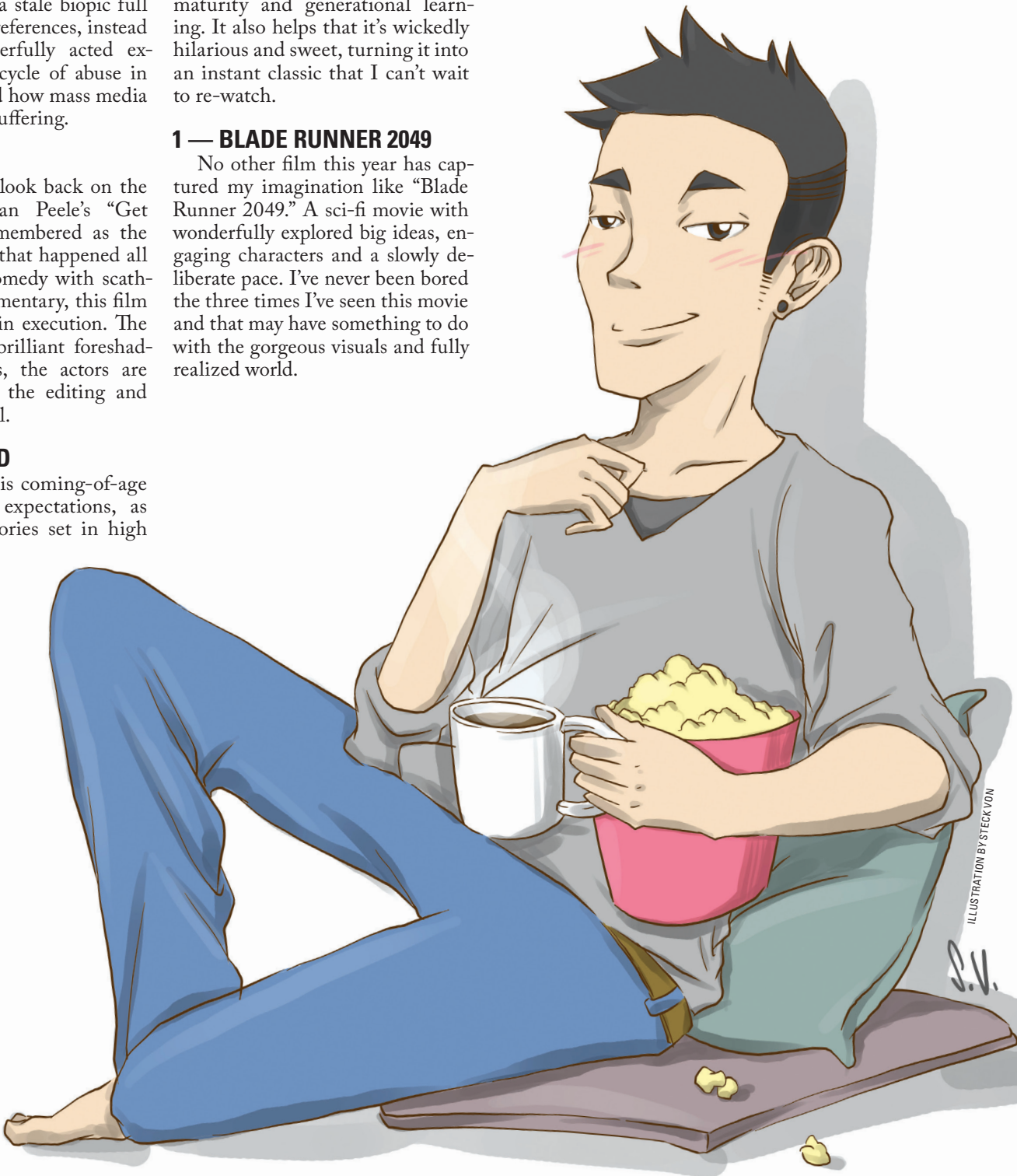
2 — LADY BIRD

I went into this coming-of-age story with low expectations, as I usually hate stories set in high

school. However, “Lady Bird” managed to punch me right in the gut with its relatable themes of maturity and generational learning. It also helps that it’s wickedly hilarious and sweet, turning it into an instant classic that I can’t wait to re-watch.

1 — BLADE RUNNER 2049

No other film this year has captured my imagination like “Blade Runner 2049.” A sci-fi movie with wonderfully explored big ideas, engaging characters and a slowly deliberate pace. I’ve never been bored the three times I’ve seen this movie and that may have something to do with the gorgeous visuals and fully realized world.





VCU RAMS: 50% OFF BARKBOX

Use code **VCU50** at barkbox.com for half off your first monthly delivery of high-quality toys and all-natural treats and chews.



opinions

Quote of the week

“In actuality, the fact that Trump is a racist is pretty cut and dry. He repeatedly mocks, denounces and discriminates against non-white people based solely on their non-whiteness.” — Rachel Terrell



ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN GARDNER

RACHEL TERRELL
Contributing Writer

President Trump’s now infamous remark, questioning why America is accepting so many immigrants from “shithole countries,” has been making headlines since The Washington Post broke the news Jan. 11.

As news outlets jumped on the story, many readers expressed surprise and displeasure over several major publications’ decision not to censor Trump’s expletive. Some criticized news programs for failure to be family-friendly — while others cried “fake news” — insisting such a distasteful comment would never have come from the president’s mouth.

The problem with these critiques is they only find fault in those who reported on Trump’s crude comment. The fact that the President of the United States, who according to multiple officials who heard it first hand, spoke the crude language in the first place seems to be overlooked.

Naturally, the most important element of a reporter’s job is to report. Readers, viewers and listen-

ers of the news should be offended when they learn about Trump’s vulgar statement, but manifesting this anger into resentment for the media is not only misguided, it’s exactly what Trump would want.

The New York Times sparked similar controversy last week by publishing a “definitive list” of instances in which Trump has done or said something undeniably racist. The compilation documents everything from Trump’s refusal to rent apartments to African Americans in the 70s to his most recent “shithole” remark.

News outlets have been dancing around the topic since Trump’s run for office. Fox, USA Today and MSNBC have all dodged directly referring to the President as a racist by using hollow terms like “racially charged.” The Times’ bold choice to explicitly call Trump’s actions racist was quickly condemned by readers who believe it wasn’t the publication’s place to declare motives behind Trump’s behavior.

One critique came from the National Review, who asserted that determining whether or not Trump’s actions are racist is impossible, as racism is up to interpretation and therefore not fact-based news. The author contradicted himself in the

“
Readers, viewers and listeners of the news should be offended when they learn about Trump’s vulgar statement, but manifesting this anger into resentment for the media is not only misguided, it’s exactly what Trump would want.

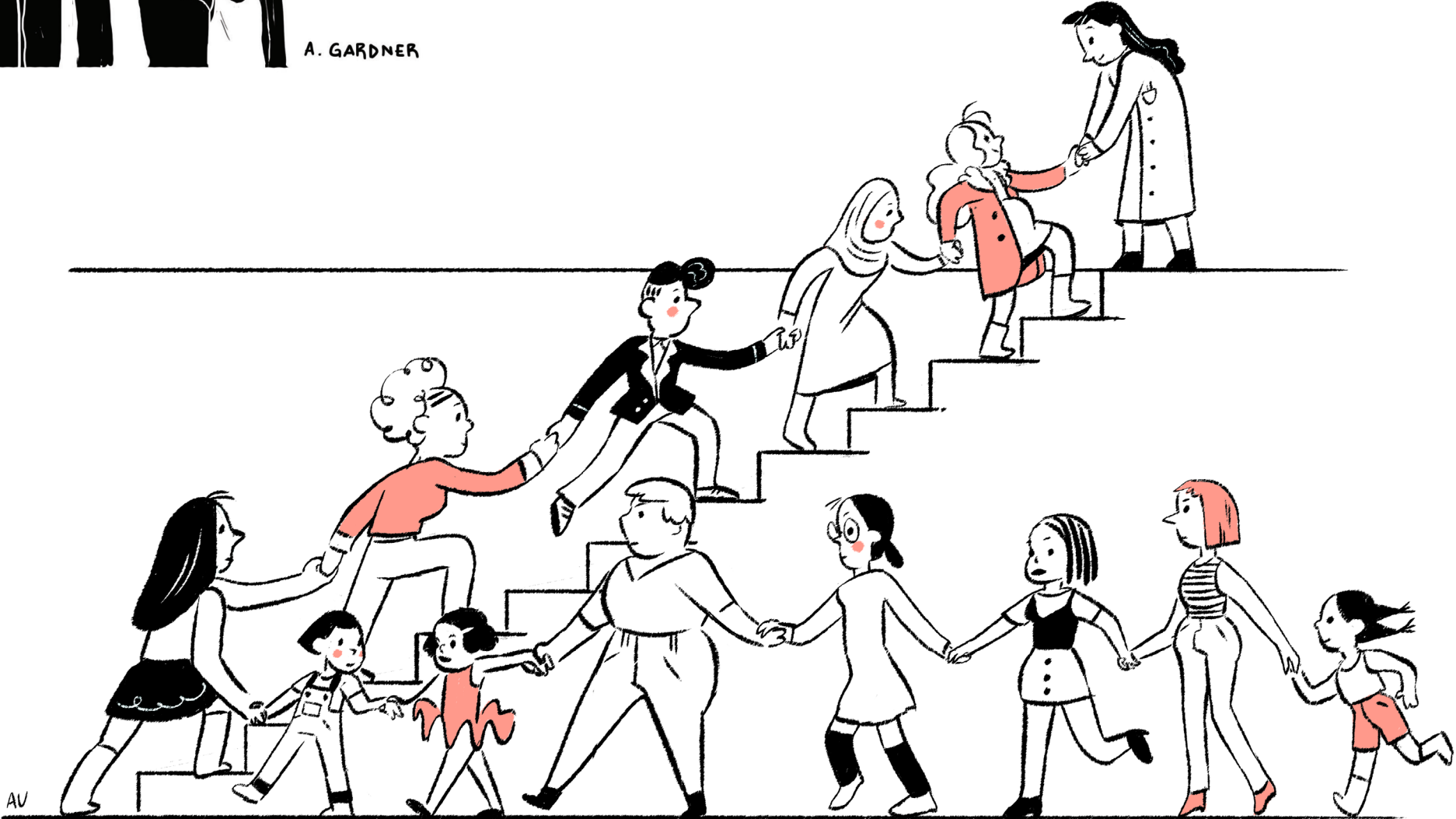
Rachel Terrell

next sentence by stating that calling Trump a racist could be a “correct opinion,” and there is no such thing.

In actuality, the fact that Trump is a racist is pretty cut and dry. He repeatedly mocks, denounces and discriminates against non-white people based solely on their non-whiteness. For reputable news sources to lessen the significance of Trump’s actions by labeling them as “racially offensive,” instead of outright “racist,” is to do the public a disservice.

The duty of a journalist is to report the truth — the good truth, the bad truth and the deplorable truth. The media should not have to censor itself for the sake of readers who would rather remain ignorant than informed.

As long as the freedom of the press is protected by the First Amendment, reporters have every right to cover relevant and newsworthy stories, no matter how negative or unsettling they may be. So, if seeing your news feed flooded with the word “shithole” bothers you, perhaps you should take it up with Trump.



AV
ILLUSTRATION BY ALLISON VERJINSKI

A year after the Women’s March

We’re not finished yet

KATIE BASHISTA
Opinions Editor

Last Saturday, smaller (yet still impressive) groups of people continued the tradition of the Women’s March in cities across the world to challenge and object to injustice, hate and the Trump administration. The impact of the march was evident in the notable moments that occurred in 2017 for women and minorities.

Ashley Bennett was inspired to run for the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders in New Jersey after one member, John Carman, mocked the Women’s March on Twitter. Bennett unseated Car-

man in the 2017 election.

One year after the Women’s March, we should reflect on how we’ve succeeded, how we’ve failed and how we can improve this year.

The #MeToo movement erupted on social media in October after women came forward to accuse Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault. Eighty-four women came out against the director and hundreds of additional women have come forward with accusations against other public figures. The list of offenders includes Kevin Spacey, Matt Lauer, Louis C.K. and most recently, Aziz Ansari. The victim’s stories range from the horrific accounts by Weinstein’s victims to

the less obvious, but much more common, experience told by Ansari’s accuser. The movement has opened up a global conversation about the various forms of sexual assault, aside from the stories making headlines.

However, what many fail to realize, is that the movement was actually started in 2006 by civil rights activist and founder of Just Be Inc., Tarana Burke. The organization and the movement aim to support women of color who are victims of sexual assault. She was unfortunately overshadowed by the stories containing household names constantly being published. She was finally acknowledged and

was featured in TIME’s 2017 Person of the Year: The Silence Breakers.

Just as Tarana Burke wasn’t a household name at the start of this movement, neither are the majority of sexual assault victims. Aside from actresses, politicians and olympians, women around the world in a range of occupations are sexually assaulted and do not get headlines in the most influential publications. Activism cannot start and end with the cases deemed most notable.

The other most significant moment in 2017 was the success of women in elections across the country.

Danica Roem was the first openly transgender person to be elected to the Virginia House of Delegates after beating Robert Marshall, a sponsor of the “bathroom bill.” Andrea Jenkins won a seat in the Minneapolis City Council becoming the first openly transgender person of color to be elected to public office. Vi Lyles was elected Charlotte, North Carolina’s first Black female mayor.

These successes are important to acknowledge, but there’s still work to be done.

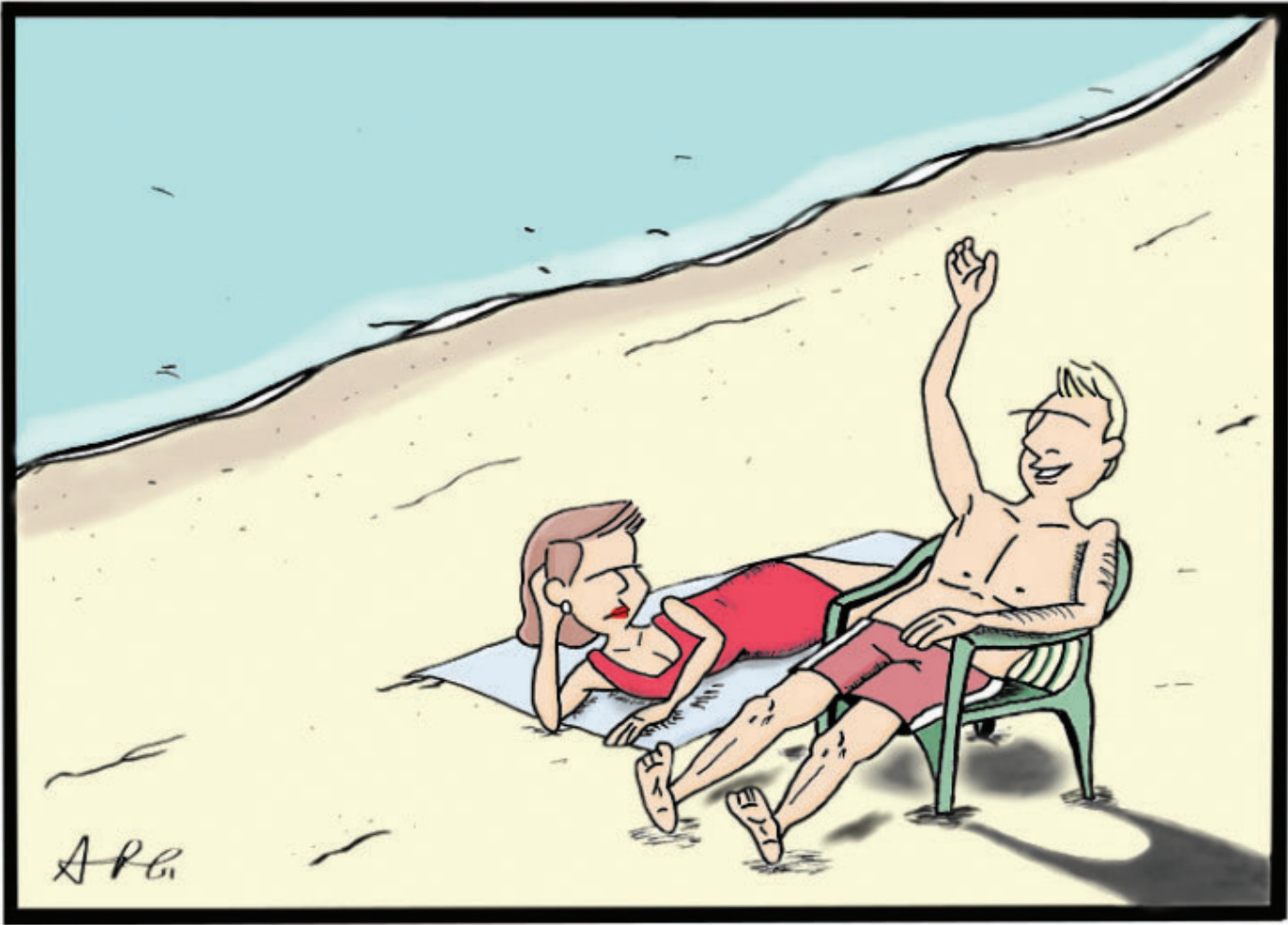
As we head into the second year of Trump’s presidency, there are some things we need to keep in mind. Do not forget the different

ways people experience the world because of factors such as race, sexual orientation and economic status. Those pink pussy hats are a symbol of the narrow form of feminism that simply doesn’t cut it.

Remember every issue we experience as privileged members of society are felt much deeper by those who are not. Think about people outside of your circle when you march, when you post Facebook statuses, when you call your lawmakers and when you ask yourself how you should participate as an activist. Injustice doesn’t just occur where you can see it. I encourage some of you to look a little harder.

VLP by Adan Goodman

VERY LITTLE PULP



"103 DEGREES IN JANUARY? - THIS WHOLE
'GLOBAL WARMING' THING IS PRETTY
SWEET!"

Brunch by Bobby Miller



School Night by Jacque Chandler



THE CT STAFF
Executive Editor Sophia Belletti bellettsr@commonwealthtimes.org
Managing Editor at Large Fadel Alassan allassanfg@commonwealthtimes.org
Creative Director Desiree Choe choeda@commonwealthtimes.org
Copy Editor Jesse Adcock adcockj@commonwealthtimes.org
News Editor SaraRose Martin martinsr@commonwealthtimes.org
Sports Editor Zachary Joachim joachimz@commonwealthtimes.org
Spectrum Editor Georgia Geen geengr@commonwealthtimes.org
Opinions Editor Katie Bashista bashistakp@commonwealthtimes.org
Illustrations Editor Iain Duffus duffusim@commonwealthtimes.org
Photography Editor Erin Edgerton edgertonee@commonwealthtimes.org
Staff Writers Siona Peterous peterous@commonwealthtimes.org Sam Goodrich goodrichs@commonwealthtimes.org Jessica Wetzler
Staff Photographers Ali Jones jonesa@commonwealthtimes.org Casey Cole
Staff Columnists Shaun Jackson jacksonsk@commonwealthtimes.org
Staff Illustrators Steck Von Yewei Wang Allison Verjinski
Outreach and Marketing intern Dina Alemu

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
The opinion pages of The CT are a forum open to the public. Contributions are welcome by email to Katie Bashista, by mail or in-person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220. Opinions expressed are those of individual columnists and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times. Unsigned editorials represent the collective opinion of The CT staff. 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
VCU STUDENT MEDIA CENTER
Graphic Designers Desiree Choe Eric Ngo Mai-Phuong Bui Kim Peters Ryan Rich designers@vcustudentmedia.com
Advertising Representatives Cristian Castiglia Kayleigh Crandell Morgan Mckenny Adriel Velaquez advertising@vcustudentmedia.com 804-828-6629
Outreach Coordinator Daniel Puryear smc_outreach@vcustudentmedia.com
Director Allison Dyche abdyche@vcu.edu 804-827-1975
Creative Media Manager Mark Jeffries mjeffries@vcu.edu
Business Manager Jacob McFadden mcfaddenjc@vcu.edu
Assistant Business Manager Mikaela Reinard smc_assistant@vcustudentmedia.com