

PHOTO BY MICHAEL MAULDING

Baseball ended St. Louis’s 15-game win streak Friday before the Billikens turned around and ended VCU’s 14-game streak the next day. While active, both runs were the nation’s longest.

Students could see a tuition hike of up to \$1,000 next year

SARAROSE MARTIN
News Editor

VCU could raise tuition for in-state undergraduate students by 8 percent, according to a university

spokesperson, a move which could result in students paying an additional thousand dollars next year.

The university’s budget proposal included a potential range of 6.8 to 8.1 percent for the hike, contingent

on the state’s budget, which will be finalized in May. If enacted, would be the Tuition increased by 3.8 percent last year and has increased every year since 2001, in response to a decline in state funding.

This is a trend across the state,

with Virginia tuition increasing by 74 percent between 2006 and 2016, according to the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

President Michael Rao presented the Board of Visitors a budget which is 3.7 percent larger

than last year’s on March 21. In the past four years, VCU has lost \$34.3 million in state cuts. The plan may be altered when the state’s budget is finalized in May.

Included in the announcement was a proposal to attract more out-

of-state students, increase pay for adjunct professors, and increase university fees for areas such as dining and health services.

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CRIME LOG

Monday, March 26

Drunkenness
100 N. Harrison St.

Trespassing
815 S. Cathedral Pl.

Theft From Building
830 W. Grace St.

Shoplifting
937 W. Broad St.

Simple Assault
202 S. Linden St.

Hit and Run
1500 W. Broad St.

All Other Larceny
1003 W. Grace St.

Tuesday, March 27

All Other Larceny
810 Cathedral Pl.

Shoplifting
1111 W. Broad St.

Theft From Building
1000 Floyd Ave

Outside Agency

Wednesday, March 28

Simple Assault/Disorderly Conduct/
Drunkenness/ Obstruction of
Justice
900 W. Broad St

Hit and Run
1500 W. Broad St.

Drug Violation
1001 Bowe St.

Hit and Run
1310 W. Broad St.
t.
Outside Agency

Thursday, March 29

Drug Violation
805 W. Grace St

Simple Assault
1101 W. Main St.

City Code Violation - Alcohol
1100 W. Grace St.

Theft From Building/Indecent
Exposure
1438 W. Cary St.

Simple Assault
701 W. Grace St.

Friday, August 30

Sexual Assault
700 W. Franklin St.

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Virginia’s democratic lawmakers say the federal spending bill is a big win for higher education

NIA TARIO
Staff Writer

Democratic Virginia senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine are praising the omnibus federal spending bill, which passed March 23. In a joint press release, the senators touted several measures in the bill which make strides toward improving Virginia state universities.

According to the statement, Virginia public school students should expect: \$1.1 billion investment in Title IV mental health and STEM programs, \$279.6 million for historically black colleges and universities, \$75 million toward increased security training of local police and school personnel; and an improved federal loan forgiveness program that would relieve people like teachers, military servicemen, and public servants of debt.

“There is probably not one Virginian who is not going to benefit from this omnibus bill in some way, shape or form,” said Ravi Perry, chair of VCU’s political science department.

Perry said he was surprised the bill, which includes many key items supported by the minority party, passed the Congress.

“There’s a lot in this bill that Democrats like,” Perry said. “It’s very rare that this happens under a Republican legislature and a Republican president because they are part of a party that has a philosophy of limited government spending.”

A member from the VCU chapter of Young Democratic Socialists of America, who preferred to remain anonymous, said he has cynical feelings towards the two major parties working together to bring these promises to fruition.

“Reaching across the aisle to throw billions of dollars away is a waste of time,” he said. “In terms of damage control, yeah it’s useful to work with the Republican party. But in regards to actually passing legislation that will have a material benefit, bipartisanship is proven to not work historically.”

Former Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder said the bill’s passage is a good first step. While increased HBCU funding, improvements in mental health programs and the loan forgiveness program are positive, Wilder said, it takes more than money to improve these institutions.

“The bottom line is the cost of education has skyrocketed out of proportion to the delivery of service and that has to be addressed,” Wilder said. “The cost of college itself is too expensive. It doesn’t make any sense. The responsibility of the schools is to deliver education, not bureaucracy.”

The YDSA member echoed Wilder’s comment, saying money is not the government’s only obligation to their constituents and called for more transparency in federally-funded programs.

“Throwing money at something is not going to solve the problem,” the YDSA member said. “If you don’t have the infrastructure and people to actually implement programs effectively, then they’re going to fall flat.”

Perry said he hopes students will not be daunted by the intricacies of politics and make an effort to be well-informed citizens.

“In any large bureaucracy like the American government, you’re going to have a lot of moving parts and it is hard to keep track,” Perry said. “You can’t necessarily blame politicians or the system for government inefficiency all the time because it’s up to government bureaucrats — which are regular, everyday American citizens — to actually execute these activities.”

The omnibus spending bill — passed by both chambers of congress and signed into law by president Trump in less than 48 hours — came as a reprieve to what would have been the third government shutdown of 2018. The latest plan also did not include provisions for former DACA recipients, which was the driving force behind the first shutdown in January.

The spending plan will remain effective until Sept. 30.

Spending bill highlights



\$279.6 million

for historically black colleges and universities



\$1.1 billion

investment in Title IV mental health and STEM programs

\$75 million

toward increased security training of local police and school personnel; and an improved federal loan forgiveness program that would relieve people like teachers, military servicemen, and public servants of debt.

INFOGRAPHIC BY KIM PETERS

“Run, Hide, Fight!”: VCU Police hold active shooter preparedness event

LOGAN REARDON
Contributing Writer

VCU’s Student Government Association partnered with university police to hold “Run, Hide, and Fight,” a program which discussed active shooter preparedness on March 29 at the MCV Campus.

While the campus police has held similar events before, it was the first time they collaborated with the SGA. It was also the first time an event like this hosted by the police was open to the public.

At the event, officer Jose Vargas talked about the best options available if caught in an active shooter situation.

He said the first option is to run far away from the building. If it’s not safe to escape, the next best option is to hide where you are and block any entrance areas. The final option in an active shooter situation is to do whatever you can to fight against the shooter.

“Committing to your actions is the most important thing,” Vargas

said. “The mentality I want all of you to have is to just never give up.”

VCU senior Kristina Brandveen thought the active shooter program was effective.

“[The event] talked about what we have on campus that’s good to use as well as any other things that can guide us in the best way possible if we ever encounter a situation that is extreme,” Brandveen said.

What stuck with Brandveen most from the event was that hiding, despite seeming risky, is one of the best options in the event of an active shooter situation.

Vargas said he wants students to always be prepared.

“We don’t want students to think about their options for personal safety at the time of an incident,” Vargas said. “We want them to know ahead of time what protective actions they can take.”

VCU police and SGA are hoping to have another event like this on Monroe Park Campus.

Beth Angell, a Rutgers scholar, will take the helm at VCU’s School of Social Work

ANYA SCZERZENIE
Contributing Writer

Beth Angell, a scholar with more than 20 years of experience in social work, was named Dean of VCU’s School of Social Work on March 20. She will assume the position July 16, when she is finished serving as associate professor and chair of faculty at Rutgers University’s School of Social Work.

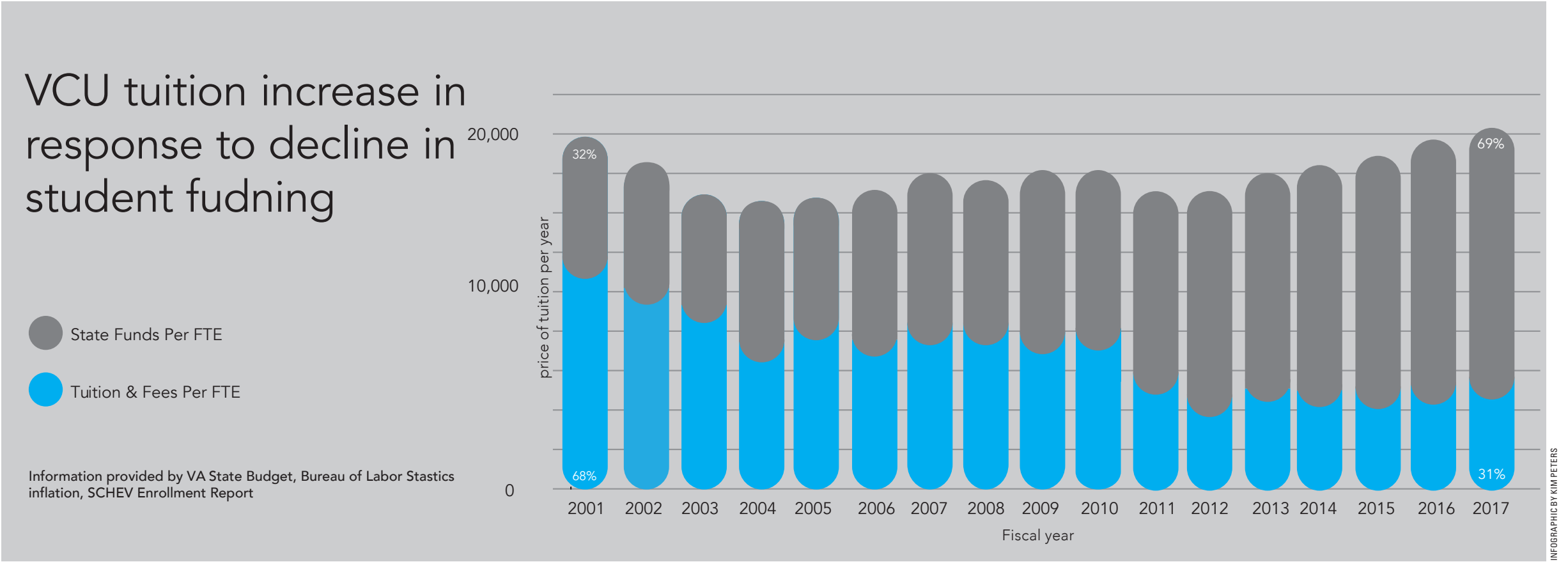
Angell’s research focuses on substance abuse and mental health issues, and has been supported by more than \$10 million in grants from multiple organizations. She has authored more than 30 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

Angell earned her Bachelor’s in psychology at the University of North Carolina. She received her doctorate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work. She has also worked as an associate professor at the University of Chicago.

“I am thrilled and honored to be chosen as this school’s next dean,” Angell said to university public relations. “And am eager to begin working hand in hand with the school’s faculty, staff, students, and community partners to deepen the school’s impact as it enters its second century.”



IMAGE PROVIDED BY VCU NEWS



VCU could increase tuition for the 17th year in a row

continued from page 1

VCU School of Arts adjuncts have been fighting for equitable pay since the fall of 2017. They delivered a petition to the Board of Visitors in December, with more than 1,300 signatures requesting the university look at all forms of allocation outside of raising student tuition to achieve livable wage for adjuncts.

“They continue to link a hike in tuition to pay adjuncts a livable wage yet we continue to have building acquisitions, we continue to have one of the second highest paid state employee work for VCU,

which is President Rao,” said Tom Burkett, an adjunct in VCU arts. “Yet we can’t come up with money to pay living wages to contingent faculty.

Despite being addressed in the budget announcement, adjuncts are still in fear the raise won’t be guaranteed and the university will continue to ignore their concerns about being paid less than half the national average, without benefits.

And although the budget proposes an increase in undergraduate and graduate financial aid as well as additional funding to academic needs, such as

advising, students have complaints about lacks of communication with the tuition increases and the university community.

Former VCU student Brenna Singer had to leave the university because of the increase.

“I am not a current student because of the annual increase in tuition,” Singer posted on Facebook. “I missed out on attending my dream school in my dream program because it was far too expensive. If I were still attending VCU I would be a 2019 Sculpture graduate in the School of the Arts.”

VCU spokesperson Michael

“
I am not a current student because of the the annual increase in tuition, I missed out on attending my dream school in my dream program because it was far too expensive
Brenna Singer
Former VCU student

Porter said the university has reviewed the possibility of tuition guarantees, ensuring students pay the same they were promised when they entered the university, but found it often means increases are built in before a student arrives as a freshman and some institutions continue to increase each year, anyway.

“This budget, while conservative, is appropriate and necessary to operate as a national ‘R-1’ public research university and Virginia Tier 3 institution and in support of our priorities and our public mission,” Rao said in the announcement.

VCU’s Student Government Association and BOV Student Representatives are holding a forum Wed. April 11 from 6-7:30 p.m. in Cabell Library Room 250 to talk about the upcoming budget decision.

A final decision on the budget for next fiscal year will be made at the Board of Visitors meeting on May 11.

Don’t be fooled. Marijuana is addictive, psychology scholar says

SAFFEYA AHMED
Staff Writer

Amelia Arria, a researcher at the University of Maryland and director of the university’s Center on Young Adult Health and Development, spoke about marijuana’s addictive qualities to a crowd at VCU March 30.

Arria’s research indicates 24 percent of university students who used cannabis once had signs of abuse or dependence. The drug is now mainstream among young adults, especially on college campuses, Arria said.

“This drug in particular, is the one where people will not realize they have any problems,” Arria said. “It’s getting worse because people aren’t calling them out. It’s becoming more accepted and maybe even beneficial.”

Marijuana use disorder, also referred to as cannabis use disorder, affects approximately 30 percent of regular marijuana users, according to the National Institute on Drug

Abuse. Six million people in the U.S. suffered from the disorder in 2015, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

For young adults aged 19-22, the NIDA found the daily marijuana use level is the highest it has been since the 1980s, at 7.8 percent.

Arria spoke briefly about her research on multiple substance abuse disorders, including alcohol use disorder (AUD), caffeine addictions, opioid use, sleep problems and marijuana use, often experienced by college students.

Her studies showed prevalence of abuse and dependence increasing as cannabis use increased.

Arria’s research focuses specifically on people aged 18 to 29 -- a stage called ‘emerging adulthood’ -- who suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues. She studies the risk factors and impacts when these illnesses go untreated.

“What this age group is trying

to do is figure out their place and their connection to the rest of the world,” Arria said. “[They’re figuring out] their relationships to their own community and to themselves, figuring out what it is that they can do to push the world forward.”

Specifically among university students, the prevalence of marijuana use, marijuana use disorder and THC concentration have all increased dramatically over the past decade, according to Arria’s research. Arria said these increases are concerning.

“A lot of times when I go to colleges, people don’t understand that cannabis has a disorder associated with it,” Arria said. “The myth that it’s not addictive is still alive and well.”

Arria’s talk was part of the VCU Department of Psychology’s Distinguished Speaker Series, where renowned scholars of psychology visit the university to speak on relevant topics. This semester’s series is focused on

substance abuse and addiction.

Arria stressed approaching college students about substance abuse issues differently. She said the focus should be on having meaningful conversations rather than aggressive interventions.

“Young adults think they are invincible,” Arria said. “Our studies have shown repeatedly that they think they can handle it on their own and they don’t need to seek help.”

She said there must be multi-level conversations that tackle each element of substance abuse separately.

“We need to arm our existing [school] staffs with better skills and tools, rather than saying you need to buy ‘program x’ and administer it,” Arria said. “Prevention and intervention shouldn’t come in a box that you buy, it should be based on real, meaningful conversations.”



IMAGE PROVIDED BY VCU NEWS

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VCU’s Student Government Association will hold its executive officer elections this week

SAFFEYA AHMED
Staff Writer

Students will be voting on three positions: Vivek Kuruvilla running unopposed for president.

Zara Zahid running unopposed for vice president of Graduate and Professional Students.

Christopher Oltorik, Cameron Luster and Hassen Hafiz running for vice president of Undergraduate Students.

“All students want to be recognized and heard by the university administration,” said Keith Zirkle, vice president of Graduate and Professional Students. “I’d like to see the newly elected board [have] more communication and more frequent interactions between undergraduate and graduate students and their campuses.”

SGA serves as the governing body for student voices on both the Monroe Park and MCV campuses. In the summer of 2017, the Monroe Park and MCV SGAs merged to create a unified SGA. Now the undergraduate and graduate students work together alongside university administration to make changes to the university that align with what students want.

“I love working with everyone in SGA,” Oltorik said. “They all bring different perspectives to what our overall goals are.”

Oltorik and Kuruvilla have been a part of SGA throughout their time at VCU, holding multiple leadership positions within the organization. The pair has been campaigning together. Their platform includes fixing funding request opportunities and pushing the pursuit of more creative ideas from SGA members.

“I want to create an environment where ideas are fostered and conversations can be had,” Oltorik said. “As vice president I could just focus on my ideas, but I think it’s more important to serve as a

resource to all the senators and committee chairs.”

Luster who is a sophomore and also running for undergraduate vice president, based his campaign platform on the importance of informing students about tuition and financial aid.

“I want to connect, achieve and motivate the student body,” Luster said.

SGA functions within three branches — legislative, executive and judicial — with officers, senators and committees/subcommittees in each. The entire

“All students want to be recognized and heard by the university administration. I’d like to see the newly elected board [have] more communication

Keith Zirkle,
Vice President of
Graduate and
Professional Students

association is headed by a president, undergraduate vice president and graduate vice president.

To run for an SGA officer position, a candidate must fill out an application and get at least 100 signatures indicating student body support. For people running for senator positions, they must get

at least 50 signatures. After the petitioning process, candidates give speeches and run their campaigns, leading up to the student body elections. The officer with the majority of votes from the student body begins governing in May.

Kuruvilla said the past two years he’s been involved with SGA have prepared him for a presidential role.

“It’s a cool experience helping VCU become a better place,” Kuruvilla said. “You’re kind of like a small cog in the greater machine that is SGA and working towards big goals.”

The running candidates presented their campaign platforms to the SGA undergraduate and graduate senates after petitioning ended. Students were able to hear

candidate positions as well as an open forum March 27.

Kuruvilla stressed the importance of both undergraduate and graduate students getting involved and especially coming out to vote.

“The continued support of the student body is really important going into next year so we can effectively make the changes that

we want to get done,” Kuruvilla said. “We need that backing.”

The student body can watch candidate speeches and vote online April 2-4 for the SGA executive board at <https://sga.vcu.edu/elections/>. Election results will be announced April 9.



Christopher Oltorik and Vivek Kuruvilla are campaigning as runningmates for SGA vice president and president, respectively.

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sports

Stat of the Week
VCU, St. Johns, Temple and California will headline the 2018 Legends Classic at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. Nov. 19-20.

Nation’s longest win streaks end

ADAM CHEEK
Staff Writer

Baseball suffered its first loss since March 4 last week, snapping a 14-game win streak. The Black and Gold posted a 2-2 record over the week, winning the Duel at the Diamond against the University of Virginia and the opener of a three-game series against St. Louis before falling in the final two games to the Billikens in a doubleheader Saturday. VCU’s streak was the longest in Division 1 baseball aside from the Billiken’s own 15-game streak — something had to give in this highly touted showdown for A-10 supremacy.

VCU improved its overall record to 18-10 and 4-2 in conference last week. Despite two losses to close out the week, the Rams capped a stellar 14-game winning streak that featured everything from blowouts to walk-offs and 15-inning marathons.

SATURDAY

St. Louis wore down VCU in Saturday’s doubleheader, with senior outfielder Haiden Lamb providing the standout offense for the Rams. Over the course of the two games, Lamb went five-for-eight, scoring VCU’s only run of the day. Sophomore infielder Paul Witt added two hits in the first game, and freshman infielder Liam Hibbits reached base three times, and three additional players had a hit apiece.

The Black and Gold’s weariness showed in the second game, as the Billikens added a win to their record with a 9-0 shutout. St. Louis scored all nine runs in the first four innings of play, as they scored between one and three runs from the second through the fifth innings. VCU, unable to manage a rally, was able to limit the damage there, shutting down the Billiken offense for the remaining three innings.

The Billikens plated all seven of their runs in the first game before five innings had elapsed, scoring every other inning without an an-

swer until VCU drove home a run in the opening half of the sixth. The Rams couldn’t get a rally going, however, and fell to snap their winning streak.

FRIDAY

Friday’s opener against St. Louis proved to be a strong start for the Rams in the series, as the Black and Gold took a 4-2 victory over the A-10 conference leader and snapped their winning streak. Witt and Hibbits both recorded two RBI apiece on Friday, with each player hitting two-run homers to provide the Ram offense.

As of Friday, VCU’s winning streak was the longest active in the entire country, and junior Mac McCarty tallied his 12th save of the season. Graduate student Braxton Wilks added his third win to the season total while relieving for starter Connor Gillispie. Senior infielder Daane Berezo also added a run scored and a double with a one-for-four effort.

WEDNESDAY

The Rams took on the ranked Virginia Cavaliers on Wednesday and showed their might as they ran away from the ‘Hoos with an 11-3 victory. Virginia pitcher Griff McGarry struggled early, forcing him to walk the bases loaded before he hit sophomore infielder Brett Willett with a pitch to plate the first run of the game. The Rams took a 7-0 lead after two innings, as sophomore infielder Steven Carpenter singled home two more runs in the opening inning. Willett tripled home two more the following inning and scored on a wild pitch. Sophomore pitcher Hayden Moore recorded the win after 2.1 innings of shutout relief and three strikeouts. Baseball will look to return to their winning ways Tuesday at 3 p.m. against Towson University.



Junior infielder Zac Ching has 15 RBI and 13 runs scored in 27 games played this season.

Men’s tennis grounds Seahawks, bows down to Monarchs; Women’s tennis cruises in first Atlantic 10 matchup of season



Freshman Marina Alcaide Bakkari hails from Gurb, Spain.

RODNEY ROBINSON
Contributing writer

WOMEN

Women’s tennis cruised to victory against George Washington University Saturday, 6-0.

The Rams opened up conference play in dominant fashion. The Black and Gold claimed the doubles point early on Saturday and never looked back. Freshmen Paola Exposito Diaz Delgado and sophomore Doumea Witmus clinched the doubles point for the Rams on court 2, 6-2.

Delgado and Junior Anna Rasmussen continue to fuel the Rams in singles play. Rasmussen and Diaz Delgado tallied their team-leading 14th singles victories against George Washington. Diaz Delgado cruised to a straight set victory 6-4, 6-1. Rasmussen extended the Rams’ lead 5-0 in a tough, 2-set match, 7-5, 7-5.

The Rams continued to receive stellar play from their upperclassmen. Freshmen Marina Alcaide Bakkari sealed the victory for the Rams on court 3 after winning a tough second set 6-1, 7-6(1).

Women’s tennis is three weeks away

from tournament play. The Rams will be back in action Saturday April 7, at East Carolina University.

MEN

Men’s tennis won 1 of 2 matches at home over the weekend.

ODU

After squeezing by UNC-Wilmington on Saturday, the Rams fell to Old Dominion University at home Sunday, 4-0.

The Monarchs got off to a quick start in the matchup by clinching the doubles point without dropping a game. ODU went on to complete the sweep in singles’ play after winning three close matches.

Freshmen Inigo Torre Martin and junior Vitor Lima were deadlocked at three on court 3 in doubles play, but the match did not finish, as ODU won the first two doubles’ matches. In singles, Martin almost added his team-leading 16th singles victory Sunday.

Martin won the first set 6-2 and led in the second set 5-4, but the match did not finish as ODU reeled off 3 consecutive wins to end the team contest. Lima managed to force a third set after losing the first, but his match was unable to finish as well.

The Rams had trouble with closing sets, and the 4-0 scoreline doesn’t tell the entire story. The Black and Gold were in close matches throughout the contest.

UNC Wilmington

The Rams won a nail biter at home Saturday against UNC Wilmington. VCU fell behind early, losing the doubles point. However, the Rams tallied three singles victories in a row, building a 3-1 lead. UNC Wilmington mad a late push, winning two singles matches in a row to tie the contest 3-3. Court 5 was the deciding factor for the Rams — after losing the second set, sophomore Ignacio Rivero Crespo sealed the victory for the Black and Gold by winning the third set 6-3.

Torre Martin continued his incredible play on Saturday by winning his team-leading 15th singles match of the year. In his first match on the season at the No. 1 singles court, junior Arvid Noren won in straight sets, fueling the Rams’ early surge.

Men’s tennis looks to bounce back as they return to action Saturday April 7 on the road against Middle Tennessee State University.

VCU basketball managers win national title

ZACH JOACHIM
Sports Editor

VCU has once again made a magical run in March — this time resulting in a national title.

The managers of the VCU men's basketball team danced all the way to the National Championship of the Manager Games in San Antonio, an annual tournament for collegiate support staff held in conjunction with the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

VCU played Texas twice in the championship round. The managers from Austin -- who in the regular season work for former Rams coach Shaka Smart -- pulled out the first game 37-36. Because of time restrictions, the sides played a three-minute game for the championship — they tied 7-7, prompting a sudden death, next-basket-wins showdown. VCU's Lamont Moore procured a steal and drew a foul on the fast break. Moore made the free throw, handing the Black and Gold its first Manager Games championship in dramatic style.

"We got stops. We knew Texas was tired and turned up the pressure," said senior criminal justice major Chris Gaines. "Their main players had played a lot that day so we just kept throwing people at them."

The competition was open to all staff except head coaches. Joey Rodriguez, a hero during the Rams' 2011 Final Four run and now the team's director of player development, led the VCU managers in scoring during the championship round. Rodriguez was matched up in the last three games against his former Broad Street back-court mate Darius Theus -- now part of Smart's staff.

"The last game was stressful," Gaines said. "The second that Lamont made the free throw, it was an amazing moment. We said at the beginning of the season it was going to be championship or bust. It was cool to actually win it all."

Gaines said the run has been years in the making.

"Our first game was three years ago. We spend every day together —



Joey Rodriguez led VCU to the Final Four in 2011. Now the Director of Player Development, Rodriguez led the manager's team in scoring in San Antonio.

it's a real close group, even though we've only known each other a couple years," Gaines said.

Gaines's success on the basketball court runs in the family. His mother, Ellen Corum Gaines, played on the VCU women's team and graduated in 1985. Gaines is from Warsaw, where his mother teaches and coaches at Rappahannock High School.

Managers from 172 Division 1 schools competed in 387 games during this year's regular season. VCU went 7-1, including wins over Texas, Rhode Island, Seton Hall and Old Dominion. The Black and Gold's only loss was Jan. 26, when a game-

winning three as time expired lifted George Mason to an 85-83 victory.

Head coach Tyrone Green, a junior sociology major, said the team's success stems from its chemistry and the players' understanding of one another. Most members played at the high school level.

"Really, it's all our players," Green said. "They show up to the game and know what to do with me just saying, 'Fellas, you already know what to do.'"

VCU earned a No. 2 seed in the 64-team tournament, opening against a No. 15 seed, the College of Charleston en route to its deepest run in the tournament. The Rams exited in the

round of 32 and Sweet 16 the last two years.

"We decided about a year ago we wanted to get better and go further in this tournament than we ever had," Gaines said. "And here we are."

Teams have the option of playing every opponent in person. But because of travel expenses, most matchups are determined on a 50-50 basis by two factors: the expected score at a neutral site based on projections derived from live play and fan voting using Twitter polls. VCU is ranked No. 14 nationally in the KPI (Key Performance Indicator) Manager Game Rankings.

The Black and Gold defeated

Charleston in the opening round before ousting Fordham in the round of 32 and James Madison in the Sweet 16, all in online competition.

Due to travel constraints, only five teams — Texas, Michigan, Missouri State, Wisconsin and VCU — made the trip to San Antonio for the Elite Eight, setting up a double-elimination format. VCU defeated Wisconsin 40-33 Friday in the quarterfinal round, earning a spot in the winner's bracket semifinal.

The Black and Gold defeated Texas early Friday evening in the semifinal. Texas then defeated Missouri State in the loser's bracket, setting

up a championship round in which the Longhorns had to beat the undefeated Rams twice.

The team started a GoFundMe to finance its trip to San Antonio for the conclusion of the tournament. Just five days in, VCU had raised \$2,200, exceeding its initial goal of \$2,000. Green said his team owes everything to its supportive fan base.

"The fans are the best. Without them, we wouldn't be down here competing for a championship," Green said. "They always ask how we do and cheer us on. We appreciate them so much."

Yankson shines, Rams run rampant at Fred Hardy Relay Invitational



Several Rams set new personal bests at the Fred Hardy Invitational.

NILE MCNAIR
Contributing Writer

Both the men's and women's track and field teams competed in the Fred Hardy Relay Invitational in Richmond over the weekend. The Rams had multiple top 10 finishes in separate categories over the course of the two-day event.

Sophomore Samantha Yankson put on a show in the women's hammer throw, beating out all opponents and finishing first. Her overall distance on the winning throw was 46.89 meters — six meters more than the second place finisher.

In the women's 100 meter hurdles senior Olivia Coopwood placed top

three. Coopwood finished shy of first by just one second, as she finished with a time of 14.70.

Another top three finish for the lady Rams came in the high jump. Senior Amiaya Carey placed third with a high jump of 1.6 meters.

The men were no slouches when it came time for them to compete — they matched the excellence and performance the women put forth on days one and two.

In the men's 800 meter run VCU had two top 10 finishes. Sophomores Jordan Fountain and Matthew Pittman placed top ten in this event, tied for third and tied for eighth, respectively. Fountain achieved his personal best in the 800 meter run with a time

of 1:56.

In the men's 400 meter hurdles the Black and Gold had a freshman place top 10. Thomas Bradley finished seventh in the grouping with a time of 58.45.

To end the invitational, VCU had two Rams finish side by side in the 1500 meter run. Senior Bismillah Alidost and redshirt-freshman James De La Rama finished 10th and 11th, respectively.

Next week both teams will be traveling to Williamsburg to take part in the Colonial Relays April 5-7.

Lacrosse drops two to A-10 rivals

JESSICA WETZLER
Staff Writer

With 10 games under its belt this season, VCU lacrosse has had a tough time breaking a run of narrow defeats. Last week the Black and Gold fell twice to conference rivals the University of Richmond 21-11 and St. Joseph's University 18-7, dropping their record to 2-8 overall, 0-2 in A-10 play.

RICHMOND

The Richmond Spiders opened the game with a 3-1 lead before back-to-back goals from VCU junior attack Molly Barcikowski tied the game with 20:35 left in the first half.

Richmond then outscored the Rams 7-2 to build a 10-5 lead going into halftime.

The Rams opened the second half with two goals from junior midfielder Sky Hyatt and one goal from junior midfielder Blaire Langelier, cutting the deficit to 10-8 with 22:39

remaining in the game after trailing 10-5 at halftime.

The two teams traded goals as Richmond clung to a 12-10 lead before scoring six unanswered to go up 18-10 with 11:37 remaining.

Sophomore midfielder Keriann McTavish scored the final goal of the game for the Rams with 11:01 remaining.

Hyatt scored a team-high five goals on just seven shot attempts. Hyatt also had a team-high five draw controls and two ground balls. Junior goalie Ria Peralta made 16 saves in the cage for VCU. Sophomore attack Jessica Del Rossi, Langelier and junior midfielder Clare Murphy each scored once.

SAINT JOSEPH'S

The Saint Joseph's Hawks opened the scoring just under three minutes into the game, but Murphy responded quickly with a free position goal to tie things up at 1-1.

The Hawks scored six consecutive goals to take an early 7-1 lead that VCU could never surmount. By halftime, the Rams trailed 10-3.

Saint Joseph's opened the second half scoring another six straight goals before the Rams answered with back-to-back goals from Gordon and Hyatt as the Hawks led 16-5 with 11:38 left in the contest.

Both teams scored two more goals over the final 7:57, making the final margin 18-7.

Hyatt scored a team-high two goals along with a game-high five draw controls. She also caused two turnovers.

Murphy scored a goal and added four draw controls. Sophomore attackers Isabella Evans-Riester and Ayana Gordon, Langelier and Del Rossi each scored once. Peralta made six saves in the cage for the Rams.

Lacrosse will return to action Friday at Duquesne University at 4 p.m.



Sophomore attack Jessica Del Rossi has nine goals and two assists this year.



On this day
U.S. President Woodrow Wilson asks Congress to declare war on Germany on April 2, 1917.

Scholar and activist Su’ad Abdul Khabeer delves into what makes “Muslim Cool”

SIONA PETEROUS
Staff Writer

More than six dozen students, faculty and community members filed into the Cabell Lecture Hall March 27 for the Humanities Research Center Spring 2018 Speakers Series featuring Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, the author of “Muslim Cool: Race, Religion and Hip-Hop in the United States.”

Khabeer is an associate professor of American culture and Arab and Muslim-American studies at the University of Michigan. She is a self-described “scholar-artist-activist” who uses anthropological methods to explore the reflective and intersecting experiences of race, religion and pop culture, with a specific focus on Blackness and Islam in America.

The lecture focused on Khabeer’s research process and impetus for writing “Muslim Cool.” According to the book’s introduction, and as echoed in her lecture, there is a “push and pull” in the relationship between “Muslim Cool” and hip-hop.

The relationship creates a “loop,” where Islam, hip-hop and Blackness interact. The phrase was inspired by the process of DJs sampling an existing piece repetitively to create a newer version.

“Muslim Cool” is a story of young Muslims, U.S. Blacks, Latinx, Arabs and South Asians who use art and activism in a way that contends with racial norms and hegemony of their communities, Khabeer said.

Khabeer was born to Muslim parents but describes the disconnect she, as well as other Black Muslims experience when Islam is strictly associated with Arabs, South East Asians and an overall

conception that to be Muslims is to be “from over there,” and to look Brown. This feeling is experienced by other Muslims, like Latinx Muslims or converts who do not fit into the social archetype of how Muslims “look.”

Fatima Khaled, an Egyptian-American pursuing a political science degree at the University of Richmond and Muhammad Ibri, a VCU student born to a Sudanese mother and Black American father both said they aware issue of anti-Blackness among the immigrant Muslim community.

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t aware how many Muslims, especially parents who immigrated here, have very anti-Black views,” Khaled said. “Because many in my community struggle with assimilation, especially after 9/11, I see more young Muslims from Arab or Southeast Asian backgrounds willing to pursue more racially-aware social justice. But the tension is definitely still there.”

For Ibri, growing up between cultures as a Muslim-American made him aware how fragile racial tension among the larger Muslim community is.

“It’s interesting because some people within the Muslim community view me as Arab, others don’t and it’s an issue that is frustrating because issues of Islamophobia and anti-Blackness affect me equally afterall,” Ibri said.

“Muslim Cool” not only explores these disconnects but argues that historically, Islam and Blackness in America go hand-in-hand. It’s a connection dating back to the Atlantic Slave Trade as well as more recent cultural influences such as the formation of hip-hop in the streets of Black and Latino ghettos as early as the 1960s and the role of Islam during the Civil

Rights movements.

“The book came out in late 2016 even though I first started researching this topic in 2001. I was in Damascus studying Islamic Studies and the American cultural center there was doing Black History Month programming,” Khabeer said.

Khabeer said she was asked to speak during programming after commenting that a more expansive version of the Black American experience should be discussed. This is where her research into U.S. American Islam, Blackness and pop culture began.

The term “U.S. American” is strategically chosen by Khabeer who reminded the audience that the United States is just one part of the larger American landscape which includes both Central and South America as well as North America.

“I sat down to write the book in 2014. I began to ask these essential questions, ‘what the hell am I doing with my life?’” Khabeer said.

The question drove the direction of her book since it was just a few years from 2012 when the Black Lives Matter movement started as a result of what Khabeer described as “state sanctioned and extrajudicial violence of of Black men and women.”

According to Khabeer, the relationship between Islam and Blackness is often only talked about in terms of radical political movements. The Nation of Islam, the Five Percent Nation, The Black Panther Party, as well as key civil rights activists like Malcolm X were founded in Islamic belief systems and connected to the wave of anti-colonial resistance movements happening within Muslim majority countries. The negative perception of these movements has led to



PHOTO BY MICHEL MAULDING

“Muslim Cool” addresses the connections between Islam and Blackness in the U.S.

a lack of acknowledgement of how Islam influenced American political and social structures.

In pop culture, artists like Tupac, Lauryn Hill, Kendrick Lamar, A Tribe Called Quest and Talib Kweli are either openly Muslim and/or openly reference Islam in their lyrics. Often, these songs act as “warning songs,” which provide motivation to challenge injustice.

This, according to Khabeer, is an extension of proper Islamic tradition which uses prayers to create community in order to challenge social issues.

“The future of Muslim Cool and of Muslims in the United States more broadly lies in this investment in its alternativity,” Khabeer said before closing with her own rendition of lyrics written by Assata Shakur

and Kendrick Lamar. “The ability to imagine, articulate and to participate in alternate choices of resistance and political vision. It’s a prospect that comes with high risk but we have nothing to lose but our chains, we gonna be alright.”

Panel addresses policy needs of transgender people



PHOTO BY TERESA BRICKER

Panelists encouraged audience members to support the transgender community by asking individuals’ correct pronouns and educating others.

GEORGIA GEEN
Spectrum Editor

The inability to acquire accurate gender markers on documentation — such as driver’s licenses — can result in challenging situations for transgender and nonbinary people, according to members of a March 28 panel held at Cabell Library.

Only four states, Oregon, Washington, California and New York, and Washington D.C., recognize a third, nonbinary gender. Panelist Austin Higgs said having proper documentation validates the identities of nonbinary people. Higgs works at Richmond Memorial Health Foundation, which funds local initiatives addressing racial and health inequality.

“For me, [my gender identity] is a huge part of who I am and I want everything that’s associated with me to reflect that,” Higgs said. “I don’t want to be misunderstood. I don’t want to be stigmatized. I don’t want to be shrouded in mystery and part

of that is making myself visible.”

According to a 2017 report by GLAAD, a media-monitoring group formed by LGBTQ people, 12 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 34 identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. Higgs said awareness of the size of the population could give more power and leverage to transgender people.

Sociology professor Liz Coston said a lack of documentation, in addition to inconsistencies in gender markers in documentation, makes it hard for transgender and nonbinary people to navigate health care and criminal justice systems.

“It’s really important to have those identities validated,” Coston said. “Of course it won’t prevent every problematic interaction that trans and nonbinary people might have with those institutions, but it would be a good first step.”

Zakia McKensey, the founder of the Nationz Foundation — a Richmond organization that provides education on health and wellness,

including HIV prevention — said medical providers are not usually informed about the needs of transgender people. McKensey, who implemented the Transgender Clinic program at the Fan Free Clinic, said it’s important for transgender people to build a “network” so they know which facilities to go to for care.

This network wasn’t available to McKensey in Richmond when she transitioned more than 20 years ago. She said she had to go to Baltimore for hormone therapy and then to Atlanta for surgery.

“You have to find those resources,” McKensey said. “If you don’t find those resources then create those resources.”

Panel members also noted the importance of intersectionality; transgender people of different races and economic backgrounds have varying experiences.

“If we’re looking out for supporting the Black community, the Muslim community, the disabled community, all of those intersect with the trans community,” Higgs said.

Coston said it’s important to recognize White individuals have traditionally been at the forefront of the LGBTQ rights movement. As a result, issues like marriage equality were dubbed more important than those of homelessness and unemployment.

“I do think that we can challenge ourselves to say, ‘What have we overlooked by centering the voices of White, cis people,’” Coston said.

Panelist Shabab Mirza, a research assistant for the LGBT Research and Communications Project at Center for American Progress, said transgender people, like other demographics, still have to “do the work” of unlearning bias and racism.

Mirza also said the stress of being a minority or impoverished can make things more challenging for transgender people.

“If you’re in a family that’s experiencing poverty, if you’re dealing with the indignities of being a racial minority in this country over and over again ... and then you find out

that one of the children, or one of the parents, is LGBTQ identified, is a trans person, what does that added stress do to the family dynamic?” Mirza said.

Familiar rejection leads to other issues, like homelessness and unemployment, which are responsible for the higher levels of police interaction with transgender people. According to a 2011 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 21 percent of transgender women have spent time in jail or prison.

Detention is an issue for the transgender community in other contexts, too. A Center for American Progress report found that 60 percent of recommendations for release of LGBTQ immigrants were overridden by ICE in 2014, compared to 16 percent for the general population. According to the same report, 90 percent of LGBTQ immigrants were put into detention by ICE, despite the fact that detention was only recommended for 18 per-

cent. “Even when they’re harmless, they’re being kept in detention unnecessarily and that puts them at extremely high risk,” Mirza said. “When you think about the bullying that happens to queer kids in schools, imagine a horrible parallel within the prison system.”

The question of how to better support the transgender community was brought up by audience members during the panel’s Q&A session. Panelists encouraged individuals to point out offensive language when they come across it and use their privilege to educate other people in situations where the voices of transgender people might not be listened to.

“It doesn’t matter what your expertise is, what your field is,” Mirza said. “It’s about finding what is your entry point into this work and starting from there.”

Social media rises as revolutionary modeling tool

SAFFEYA AHMED
Staff Writer

Social media is revolutionizing the fashion modeling industry, according to fashion design and merchandising chair Patricia Brown. “It’s become much more real,” Brown said. “There’s openness to more normal body types, different looks, different ages and multiculturalism.”

For fashion models, social media is a pivotal tool and Instagram is becoming more than just a phone app to share and like pictures. Brown said it provides aspiring models a platform to brand and connect with potential employers by showcasing content and photoshoots.

“I constantly post photos and stories. I interact with people and my photos show my real life and portray me.

Almira Zaky
Part-time model

“Social media shows actual pictures. Bloggers show different looks on real people,” Brown said. “[Modeling] is a lot more democratic now and there’s more reality.”

Agencies use Instagram to find models for photoshoots and runway shows. Major fashion names — including Louis Vuitton, Givenchy and Prada — have recruited models from browsing on social media

sites, specifically Instagram.

Brooklyn-born model Theresa Hayes broke into the fashion world after connecting with modeling agencies through her social media. According to Harper’s Bazaar, Hayes finished her second season as an international exclusive for Louis Vuitton in 2017.

Instagram is ideal for budding student models, too. Student model Yasin Islam said social media has played a part in his modeling career by giving him inspiration and the opportunity to market himself to different agencies.

“I see [other models’] posts [on Instagram] and what kind of looks

they put on. I use that as somewhere to start,” Islam said. “Everyone has their own way of expressing themselves and I’m slowly developing mine.”

Islam began his modelling career a little less than two years ago and said he admires how accessible fashion is thanks to social media apps.

“The modeling industry is global now,” Islam said. “People with different stories and backgrounds are all being given the opportunity to display themselves in so many ways rather than using words.”

VCU junior and part-time model Almira Zaky also said social me-

dia has been a huge mobilizer for her career. The key to boosting her modeling career is increasing her following, which she said can be tough for aspiring models.

“A big social media following has a lot to do with consistency, genuineness and your real life interactions,” Zaky said. “I constantly post photos and stories. I interact with people and my photos show my real life and portray me.”

In addition to functioning as a tool for budding models, Instagram and its modeling platform affects more than just the fashion world, it affects consumerism trends through promotion. Models serve as huge

influencers on the app, promoting certain products and brands to their followings.

“Now consumers might buy [a product] just because their favorite model or promoter is supporting the product,” Zaky said.

Islam said not everybody can simply become a model; it takes skill. Everyday Instagram users with high-quality content on their profiles start to call themselves “models,” downplaying what the industry truly demands.

“For some it’s just a great place to share moments they’ll cherish forever,” Islam said. “Some people have amazing accounts and pic-

tures ... but that doesn’t necessarily mean they’re a model.”

Instagram modeling can harm the industry if not used properly, according to former supermodel Abbey Lee Kershaw. In an interview with W Magazine, Kershaw said modeling life is often portrayed as something far more glamorous and flashy than the reality.

“I don’t care what anyone says about the fashion industry, it’s hard work,” Kershaw said. “And those dumb videos where you see Gigi Hadid and Kendall Jenner jumping around a hotel room — that’s not how it is at all.”



Sam’s Take

“Ready Player One” barely counts as a movie

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Staff Writer

In the late 2000s, a series of spin-offs of the “Scary Movie” franchise released. Directed by the now infamous Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer, these movies like “Epic Movie,” “Disaster Movie” and “Meet the Spartans” were critically panned but financially successful.

These comedies were criticised for not having jokes or characters or coherent plotlines and deriving their “comedy” by throwing iconography onto the screen and assuming the audience would recognize it. These movies felt like lists of pop culture references rather than actual films, making them insufferable to watch for anyone outside their teen years.

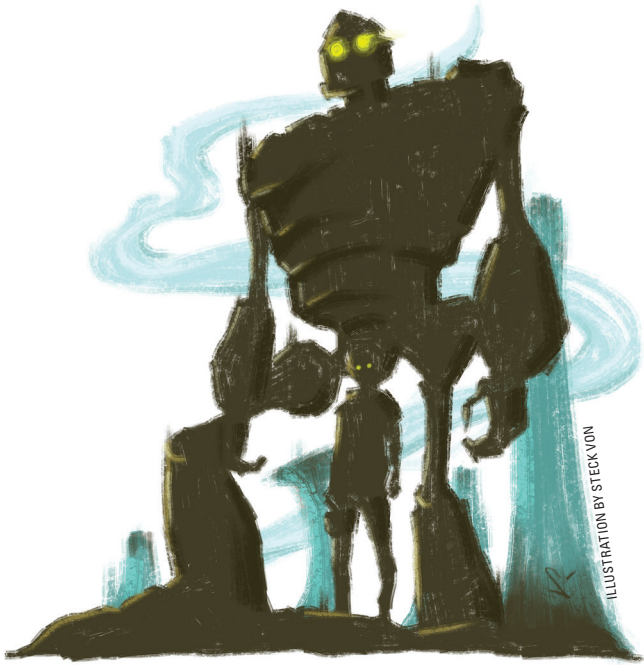
While watching “Ready Player One,” a nearly \$200 million adaptation of a 2011 novel of the same name, I couldn’t help comparing it to the low-budget, low-effort movies from Friedberg and Seltzer. An amalgamation of pop culture references and icons, this “film” amounts to nothing more than obnoxiously wasted potential.

In the year 2045, the virtual reality world OASIS has consumed the lives of millions, including the main character Wade Watts. When James Halliday — the creator of this infinite virtual world — suddenly dies, he leaves three challenges for players to discover and compete in a treasure hunt. Whoever can overcome these challenges will be rewarded with Halliday’s fortune and control over the OASIS. Watts and his friends decide to take the challenge and save the fantastical world from those who may want it for nefarious reasons.

To get the positives out of the way, Steven Spielberg directs “Ready Player One” with such impressive control that it almost feels out of place. He proves here how masterful of filmmaker he is, making sense of the chaotic action scenes and finding ways to humanize the CGI-laden OASIS.

The visual effects themselves are impressive. They’re not lifelike, but feel like a modern video game with realistic animation. The amount of details and references the animators are able to cram into a scene is just as impressive. Sadly, this film does little to warrant the amount of time and care that went into the filmmaking.

Watching “Ready Player One” is



like talking to someone who lacks social skills but is incredibly knowledgeable on one subject. The conversation is interesting and maybe even impressive at first, but once you realize that they don’t know how to talk about anything else, you start to find a way to escape.

The characters are empty vessels defined only by their knowledge of pop culture and Halliday’s personal life. Every conversation, every plot point, is related either to a reference to a movie, video game, or song. While cute at first, it becomes apparent early on that Spielberg doesn’t know what to do with these references. They’re thrown in with reckless abandon, rarely used in interesting ways and quickly become insultingly annoying.

Because of this focus on references, the characters are simplistic to the point of lacking any definite traits or characteristics. I’m not even sure Wade Watts has a personality beyond knowing Halliday’s favorite ‘80s movies. This means when we get to the impressively filmed, massive-scale action scenes, it’s difficult to get invested since we don’t get to know any of the characters.

The movie is banking on the audience investing not in these people, but in their avatars, which are usually nostalgic, iconic characters throughout pop culture. This is frustrating, as the plotline involving Halliday’s past is the only genuine thing in the entire film, and it seems to want to criticize how people rely on nostalgia.


Mark Rylance plays Halliday as a tragic figure whose social awkwardness and reliance on escapist media made him a regretful man. The scenes looking into his past are emotionally engaging, making me wish there was an entire movie dedicated to him and how he created the OASIS.

Another major problem with the focus on pop culture is that “Ready Player One” never considers the larger questions surrounding escapist media and the dystopian world Halliday’s virtual reality invention has created. It’s too busy trying to look cool and pretending to be relatable that it never engages with the possibilities of its hypothetical future.

We never get to understand why this world is failing, how the current generation is shaped by their escape into the OASIS and how that might actually be hurting them socially and mentally. The whole story feels childish, as if it’s trying to appeal to a younger audience, but the suffocating amount of ‘80s references make the film hard for anyone below the age of 30 to understand.

It’s difficult for me to call “Ready Player One” a movie. Devoid of characters, themes, or originality, it hides behind recognizable brands and pop culture icons to escape the responsibility of having to be about anything. By the climactic battle scene, I was begging for the annoyingly rapid references to stop so I could finally leave the theater.

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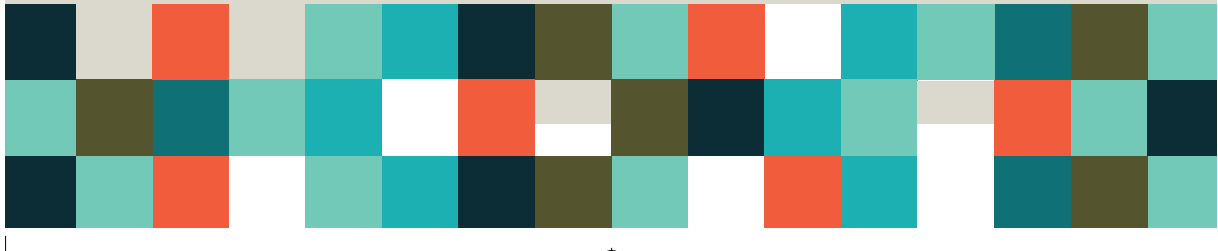
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opinions

Quote of the week

“As a transracial adoptee who has struggled for years to come to terms with their own identity, I can argue that being transracial is a reality.” — Mai-Lan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Transracial people exist, I know because I am one

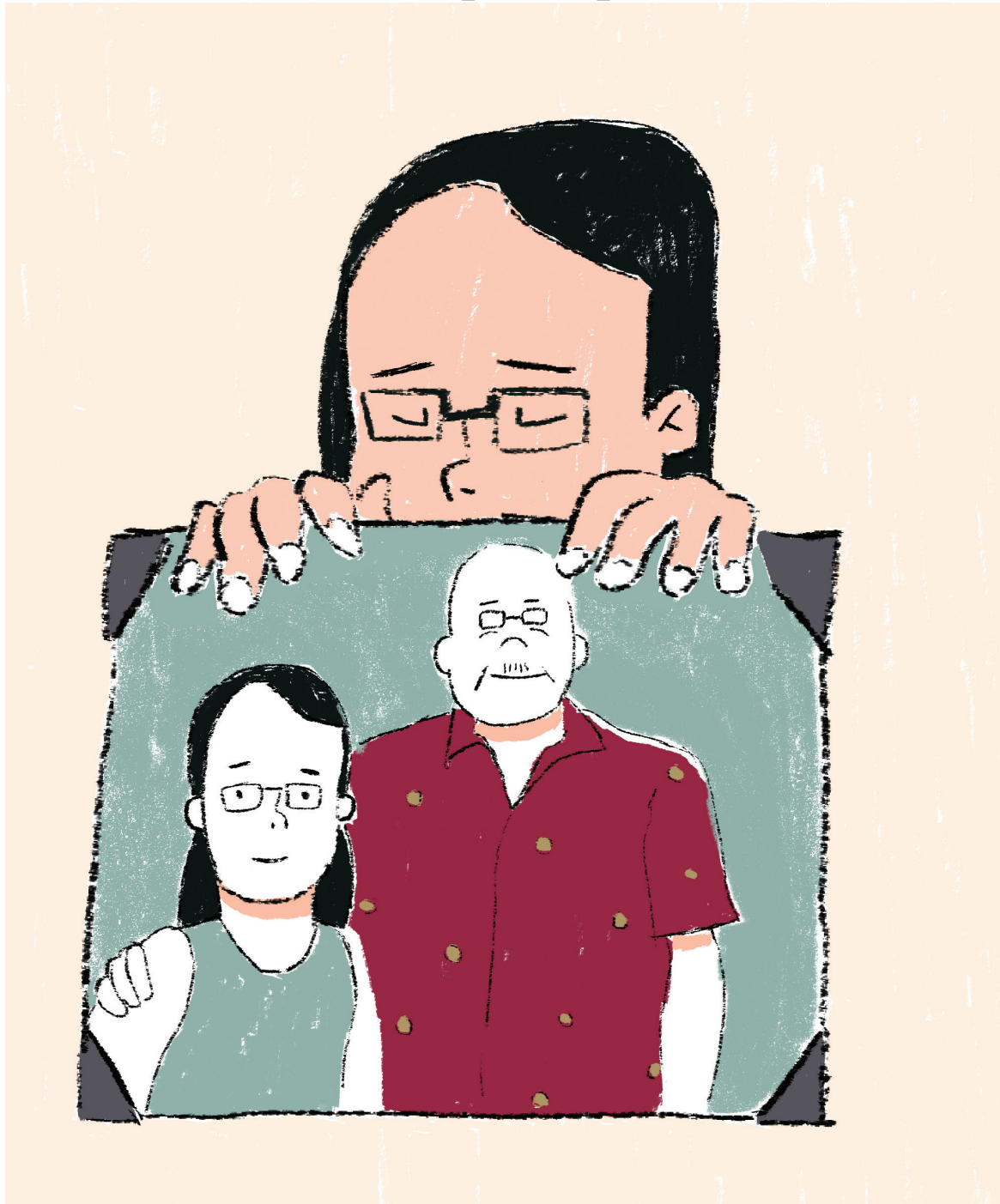


ILLUSTRATION BY JACQUE CHANDLER

To the Editor,

The term “transracial” came into debate in 2015 when Rachel Dolezal, a civil rights activist and former member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was exposed as a caucasian woman who benefited by claiming she was African-American. She later labeled herself “trans-black.” This sparked a conversation about the term “transracial” and if it was even a legitimate concept. I disagree with Dolezal’s life decisions to misrepresent herself in the African-American community. However, as a transracial adoptee who has struggled for years to come to terms with their own identity, I can argue that being transracial is a reality.

I was adopted from Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Vietnam at nine months old into a loving, Caucasian, all-American household. My first acknowledgment of race as a societal notion was in kindergarten when I was teased for my slanted eyes. I have lived my whole life in primarily White neighborhoods and school districts, so I was usually one of the maybe two other Asians in the class. This led me to hate looking in the mirror because I wasn’t white like my parents or any others who were in my life.

I didn’t feel like I belonged anywhere, especially among my peers. In the Asian community, I was labelled as “white-washed” but in the white community I was seen as Asian. When meeting people, there was always an expectation or

question about my ethnicity and parents which would lead to me revealing my adoption — sometimes leaving me feeling even more vulnerable than I did before. This internal cultural identity struggle continued throughout my life, resulting in severe disorientation, depression and anxiety.

It wasn’t until I came to college that I came to the conclusion that I had to deal with the weight I’ve been carrying. For my UNIV 200 research paper, I chose to look into the topic of transracial adoption. I found loads of transracial adoptee psychology articles, including transracial adoption parenting methods. According to professors at the Royal University of London and Western Carolina University, transcultural adoptees can experience a loss of identity if they’re not raised with birth cultural influences because of the physical and internal disparities. This research paper changed my entire perspective on my situation. I was able to put a word to my circumstances and also feel validated about the feeling of alienation and loss of belonging I’ve felt.

I decided the year after writing my research paper I wanted to study abroad in my birth city of Saigon. My parents were beyond supportive of my ambition to return. After a ton of paperwork, study abroad coordinator meetings and preparation, I finally found my way back to my birth country.

I’m currently in my final semester of college before I graduate and I sincerely couldn’t have possibly spent it better any other

way. I was able to return to my orphanage that lived I in for the first months of my life as well as experience the culture I was born into. Additionally, I’ve been able to give back by volunteering at a children with disabilities orphanage. This journey so far has left me with a sense of fulfillment and closure.

To answer some commonly, curious inquires I get: I do not feel the need to find my birth parents. I already know who raised me into the person I am today. I do not speak Vietnamese, but I have acquired essential phrases during my time here.

I’d also like to address transracial adoptees who have struggle with finding their cultural identity. You don’t need to return to your birth country to feel a sense of wholeness. It just takes the initiative of researching into not just your birth culture but transracial research articles. It’s a matter of acknowledgement and validation that you’re not alone in this battle. There are others here, like myself, who have experienced the same feeling of denial and disorientation. There is a place in the world for us. We belong.

If you would like to follow me on my journey and see my return to my orphanage, you can find them at not-your lawn on YouTube.

Godspeed,

Mai-Lan Spiegel

Why copyright is so important when it comes to fashion

AMNA KAYANI
Contributing Writer

H&M has withdrawn its recent lawsuit against graffiti artist Jason ‘Revok’ Williams. H&M filed the lawsuit when Revok tried to gain compensation for his artwork, which H&M used in an advertisement without his permission. H&M argued that because the artwork was created illegally, he had no rights to it. After much outrage by both consumers and artists, H&M retracted the lawsuit.

“H&M respects the creativity and uniqueness of artists, no matter what the medium,” read a tweet on the company’s account.



It’s time for the US to take a stance on copyright laws in the fashion industry, one that protects the ideas of creators and benefits society as well.

Amina Kayani

H&M claims they “respect” artists, but that just isn’t true. They, and other retail giants, blatantly disrespect creators and their rights repeatedly.

Forever 21 is a prime example of this. According to Jezebel, Forever 21 has been sued more than 50 times for copyright infringement but has never lost a case in court. These companies steal ideas and art repeatedly because they are able to get away with it. Instead of li-



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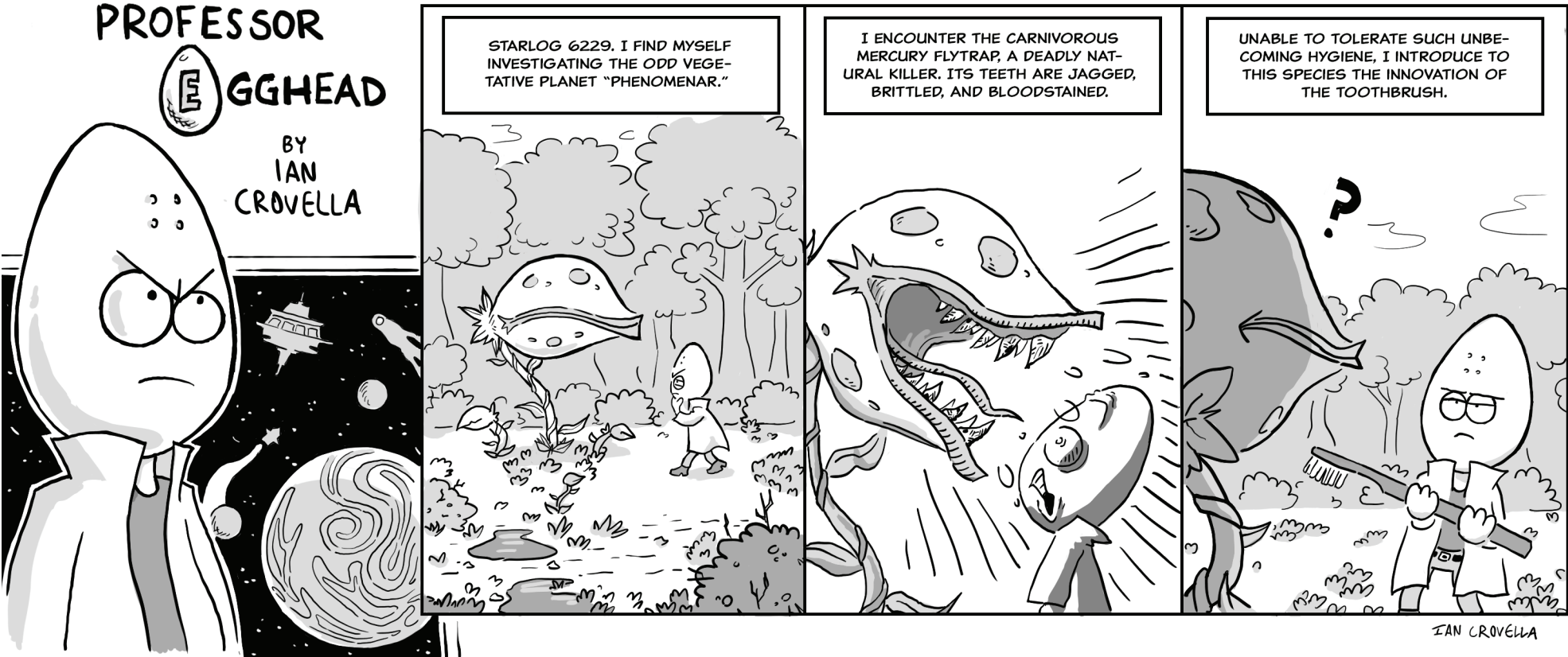
censing art in the first place, major companies pay settlements in court only when they’re caught. Urban Outfitters Inc. was subject to this just last year when they willfully used a copyright fabric design from a local company. They were challenged in court and lost the battle, which \$530,000 fine.

Unless we vocalize and protest against these major fashion companies for stealing work and disregarding artists, they won’t stop. The copyright infringement stacked up against human rights violations and environmental damage these fashion companies commit may seem irrelevant, but they are important. Intellectual property is necessary for innovation and creativity and it’s time we extend it to the fashion industry.

Law experts will argue such legislation is not required because the fashion industry works well today. They claim that by creating copyright laws in the fashion industry, it will drive up the prices of trendy clothes so only rich people will be able to buy them. However, this may not be the case. Susan Scafidi, head of the Fashion Law Institute at Fordham University, says if a law of this nature were created, it would act as a deterrence for major fashion companies to hire more designers and invest in new material instead of copying work. This ultimately benefits designers, artists and subsequently consumers too. With more original products in the market, there would be more choices and variety resulting in lower costs.

It may seem daunting to go up against these major fashion companies, but it is possible. In the European Union, there is a legal framework for design protection. In France, fashion has full copyright protection. The fashion industry is enormous and continues to grow quickly alongside globalization. It’s time for the U.S to take a stance on copyright laws in the fashion industry, one that protects the ideas of creators and benefits society as well.

Al Dente by Ian Crovella

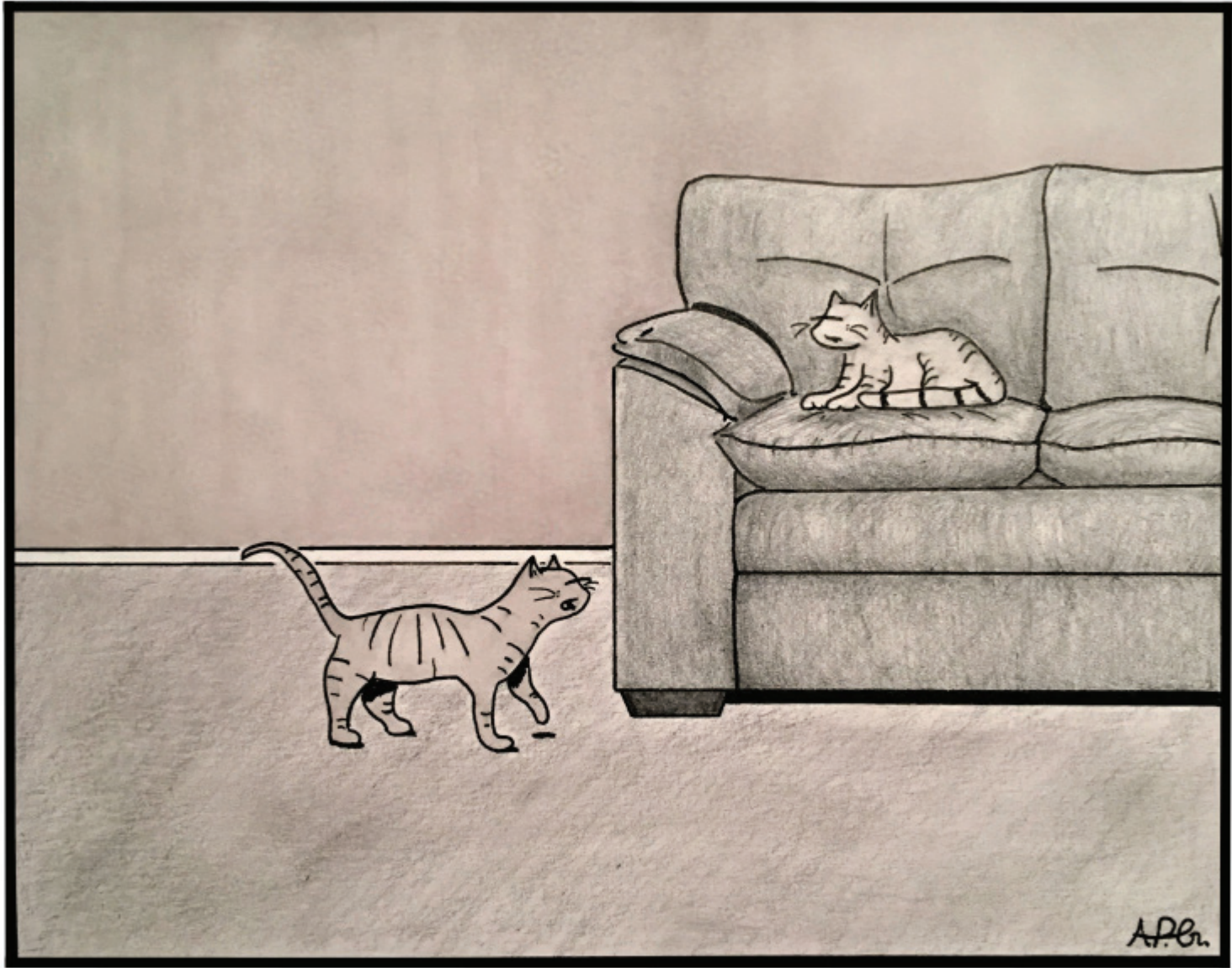


Questions by Iain Duffus



Cats by Adam Goodman

VERY LITTLE PULP



"HEY, I'M PRETTY BORED, DO YOU WANNA BE A**HOLES TODAY?"

THE CT STAFF

Executive Editor
Sophia Belletti
bellettsr@commonwealthtimes.org

Managing Editor
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
wetzlerjg@vcu.edu

Staff Photographers
Ali Jones
jonesa@commonwealthtimes.org

Casey Cole
colec15@vcu.edu

Staff Columnists
Shaun Jackson
jacksonsk@commonwealthtimes.org

Staff Illustrators
Steck Von
huangw2@vcu.edu

Yewei Wang
wangy52@vcu.edu

Allison Verjinski
verjinskiatf@vcu.edu

Outreach and Marketing Intern
Dina Alemu
alemudd@commonwealthtimes.org

Social Media Specialist
Phoebe Lake

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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 Velazquez
advertising@vcustudentmedia.com
804-828-6629

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