



# The Commonwealth Times

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## GOING DANCING

VCU players celebrate with the Atlantic 10 trophy after winning the final game against the University of Dayton on Sunday, March 13. Photo by Alessandro Latour

### *VCU wins A-10 and advances to NCAA Tournament*

**ARRICK WILSON**  
Sports Editor

**T**HE VCU MEN'S BASKETBALL PROGRAM won the Atlantic 10 tournament at the Barclays Center in New York.

VCU head coach Mike Rhoades said he was proud of his team for bringing a championship to Richmond.

"I thought so many guys just made winning plays to win a championship," Rhoades said. "Talk about being tough in our program, and celebrating each other's success."

The black and gold are going into the "big dance," or NCAA tournament, ranked No. 12, playing St. Mary's College of California, which is ranked No. 5 in the tournament.

"We were five and four and everybody counted us out. How you like us now?" Rhoades said in a live television interview with CBS.

The black and gold are prepared to go against anyone, according to VCU junior guard Adrian "Ace" Baldwin Jr.

"We are a type of team that's going to make a run. We not scared of nobody," Baldwin said in a live television interview with CBS. "We prepared for anybody."

On Thursday, March 9, the quarterfinal game, the Rams faced off against the No. 8 ranked Davidson College Wildcats and won, 71-53.

VCU redshirt sophomore Jamir Watkins, Baldwin and senior forward David Shriver all led the Rams with 11 points.

Davidson junior guard Grant Huffman and redshirt junior David Skogman both led the Wildcats with 10 points.

This was a successful defensive game for VCU, having 10 blocked shots and holding the Wildcats to just 37% from the field.

Having the win was a great feeling for the team, and the black and gold were happy to advance to the next round of the tournament, Rhoades said.

"We were fortunate to win the game," Rhoades said. "We appreciate all our fans being out here, we're excited to move on."

Baldwin entered the tournament as the 2023 Atlantic 10 Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year, according to VCU Athletics. The black and gold just wanted to come out and win the first game, according to Baldwin.

"It felt great. The first game, we just wanted to make a statement," Baldwin said.

VCU shot a season-high of 57.4% from the field and never trailed in the game.

On Saturday, March 11, the semi-final game, the Rams faced off against the No. 4 ranked St. Louis University's Billikens and won, 90-78.

In this game, the black and gold dominated on both sides of the ball, while scoring 90 points for the first time since Dec. 17, according to VCU Athletics.

VCU sophomore guard Jayden Nunn led the black and gold with a game-high of 18 points and four other Rams scored in double-digits. Making the correct reads and plays was why multiple players scored in the game, Rhoades said.

"Five guys got double figures because everybody on the team was

passing the ball and making the right play," Rhoades said.

In the first half, St. Louis had momentum early with a 5-0 start, but this was abruptly ended when VCU caught fire. The black and gold would lead from that point on.

At the end of the first half, VCU led St. Louis, 44-39. The black and gold came out hot to start the second half, going on a 24-5 run. Leading this hot start was Nunn. Staying concentrated to be successful is something the team tries to do, Nunn said.

"We just gotta stay focused and play our best game, every team," Nunn said.

The win against St. Louis was impressive for the year, according to Rhoades.

"I thought we just did a really good job after the first four minutes of game playing with more pace," Rhoades said. "It was one of our better games for sure."

On Sunday, March 12, the final game, the Rams defeated the No. 2 ranked Dayton Flyers and won, 68-56.

Baldwin led the black

and gold with 16 points and seven assists, while sophomore forward Jalen DeLoach had 13 points and 10 rebounds.

Dayton sophomore forward DaRon Holmes II led all scorers with 28 points, 16 rebounds and five blocks.

At the end of the first half, Dayton led VCU, 36-30. Dayton had a good start to the game, while VCU struggled to score, shooting below 40% from the field.

The black and gold turned this start around, shooting nearly 60% from the field in the second half. The team puts a big emphasis on staying strong while down, Baldwin said.

"Coach always — he big on adversity and we just was fighting adversity," Baldwin said. "We ain't give in."

The black and gold went on a late 10-2 run to gain the lead and stayed in the driver seat for the rest of the game. Not only did the Rams hit their cues on offense, but defensively as the black and gold did not let the Flyers score a field goal for the remaining 10 minutes of game.

"The last 10 minutes of the game we went to try to win a championship," Rhoades said. "We made plays. We had aggressiveness. We had toughness — and our defense showed up."

The Rams will head to the MVP Arena in Albany, New York on Friday, March 18, to play against the St. Mary's College of California Gaels.

VCU players hold the Atlantic 10 trophy after winning the final game against the University of Dayton on Sunday, March 13. Photo by Alessandro Latour



## Stories of the week

**NATIONAL:** Ohio filed lawsuit against Norfolk Southern over derailment in East Palestine

**INTERNATIONAL:** Seven people dead after shooting at a Jehovah's Witness center in Germany

# RPS approves increasing school days for one school, two others pending

**NATALIE BARR**  
Staff Writer

**R**ICHMOND PUBLIC School 200, a proposal from the RPS school board to update the school calendar, increases the number of school days from 180 to 200.

The proposal would only affect three schools — Fairfield Court Elementary which has approved the plan last week and Overby-Sheppard Elementary and Cardinal Elementary if the two schools decide to pass the proposal; voting is required from teachers, faculty, staff senate and RPS school board members, according to fourth district school board member Jonathan Young.

If the plan is passed it would be in effect for the 2023-2024 school year and begin July 24, he said.

Young worked alongside RPS Superintendent Jason Kamras on RPS 200 to combat learning loss, seen prior to COVID-19, but worsened due to the pandemic, according to Young. Learning loss was seen in basic fundamentals needed for reading, writing and math, Young said.

"RPS was the last school division in the state to re-open in person, so our students' enrichment sustained a disproportionate share of harm relevant to active academic learning loss, but also social emotional support," Young said. "I'm really excited about the opportunity to reverse some of that with the 200 days."

Twelve elementary schools submitted an interest form regarding the proposal idea and each form was reviewed and narrowed down to four schools, according to Young. The four schools were chosen based on their student demographics and school leadership, who recognized additional learning was needed, Young said.

Westover Hills Elementary was the fourth school, but did not receive the required votes, leaving only three schools as the pilot schools, according to Young.

School board members voted 7-2 at the March 6 school board meeting and approved RPS 200 to be implemented for Fairfield Court Elementary; Young anticipates the two additional schools will be voted on at the next school board meeting on March 20, he said.

"The other two schools are presumably getting closer to knowing if their families approved it," Young said. "I'm very excited for it, but it's going to be a close vote on the school board. Some of my colleagues don't approve of it [RPS 200]."

The superintendent and Young do not want these additional 20 days to just be a "traditional school setting," but filled with more field trips, small group learning and



Richmond Public Schools wants to add 20 more days to the school year to tackle learning loss due to the pandemic.

Photo by Alessandro Latour

hands-on learning to make-up for what was missed during the pandemic, according to Young.

"It's pretty clear that it can't look like what school looks like right now," Young said. "My real motive is to try to use these four additional weeks to change what the other 180 days look like."

“

RPS was the last school division in the state to re-open in person, so our students' enrichment sustained a disproportionate share of harm relevant to active academic learning loss, but also social emotional support. I'm really excited about the opportunity to reverse some of that with the 200 days."

**Jonathan Young, fourth district school board member**

The additional days will not affect the schools' budget, according to Young.

"It's pretty nominal, relevant to all of our expenditures. We have money for it, Young said. "That won't be the challenge."

Young hopes if all works out, the results of three schools will be looked at to expand RPS 200 to all schools in the system, he said.

"Everybody's gonna be watching us. I'm very, very, very excited about it and understand the magnitude and the gravity of the situation," Young said.

Linda Jaeger, a math coach at Overby-Sheppard Elementary School, supports the school board's decision for this proposal, Jaeger said. She said she appreciates how this plan will help fill the education gap students lost during the pandemic.

Jaeger wishes the school board would have proposed this plan in August rather than in January, she said.

"I know families and teachers who plan out vacations well in advance. If somebody had made plans to go on vacation in July, now they're told they have to go back to work in July," Jaeger said.

As an educator, Jaeger experienced the learning loss of students and noted that school interventionists and data identified one-on-one tutoring and small group activities as successful in closing the gap, she said. Overby-Sheppard used these strategies and saw growth last year, according to Jaeger.

School leadership began discussions on what RPS 200 would look like for Overby-Sheppard, if the proposal is passed, but no concrete plans or lesson plans have been made yet, Jaeger said.

"It's based on the student data and what the students need the most," Jaeger said.

Overby-Sheppard's principal spoke with parents on multiple occasions to discuss the proposal, and the school knows without parent support, it will not be possible, Jaeger said. She hopes the additional days will not only help improve learning, but also bring back friendship and support found at school, she said.

"I appreciate that people are looking out for our students," Jaeger said. "That they're trying to come up with ways to help bring them up."

Tara FitzPatrick, a parent of two children at Linwood Holton Elementary, thinks RPS 200 will be beneficial for students at Fairfield Court; and even though her children are not at one of three pilot schools, FitzPatrick thinks RPS 200 would benefit schools across the district, she said.

"I think that there's a lot of reason why RPS 200 is a good thing. There are concerns, obviously, that I have. A lot of those just kind of revolve around logistical things," FitzPatrick said. "But, I think that they are things that can be overcome."

FitzPatrick has a background in education and knows the learning loss from the pandemic has caused a strain on the school system, parents and teachers, she said.

RPS closed schools on March 13, 2020, and did not return to virtual learning until Labor Day of 2020; each student had a different experience depending on resources they had access to at home, according to FitzPatrick.

"A lot of students were really struggling across the district to have their basic needs met throughout that year," FitzPatrick said. "Learning wasn't a high priority during the virtual year, maybe, for a good chunk of our students in the district."

Even though she was able to provide a space for her child, FitzPatrick's son still fell behind and his literacy struggles went unnoticed, she said.

"I think there is a need for that additional classroom time to really have those things sort of acknowledged by the teachers, and we still have a little bit to make-up for," FitzPatrick said.

FitzPatrick's son participated in the RPS summer school program in 2021, the first in-person classroom setting prior to the pandemic, she said. This was an opportunity for her son to get prepared to enter fourth grade and socialize with other kids, all aspects of school lost during COVID-19, according to FitzPatrick.

"I'm really grateful that the district had the opportunity to offer in-person summer school in that 2021 school year, because he received an additional 20 days that year of instruction. So, it was essentially the equivalent of RPS 200," FitzPatrick said.

FitzPatrick applauds Fairfield Court's principal for getting parents approval of the plan and bringing RPS 200 to their school, she said. She hopes this pilot program will show positive results for learning growth and act as a catalyst to expand beyond just these three schools, she said.

"I trust that the leadership are going to make solid and sound decisions knowing how to best serve our community," FitzPatrick said.



# 2023 exceeds 100 mass shootings nationally, studies show mass shooters’ psychological tendencies

**FAITH REDD**  
Contributing Writer

**SELNA SHI**  
News Editor

Researchers found key psychological tendencies that are frequently displayed in mass shooters, according to a VCU study.

The research studying the behaviors of over 170 mass shooters was released in 2022, the same year over 640 mass shootings were recorded, according to the Gun Violence Archive. The United States has already recorded over 100 mass shootings this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Researchers Samuel West, assistant professor of psychology at Virginia State University, and Nicholas Thomson, forensic psychologist and director of research for the Injury and Violence Prevention Program at VCU, co-directed the study.

“Research on mass shootings is scarce, which limits our ability to develop targeted risk assessments and prevention strategies for mass shootings,” Thomson stated in an interview with VCU News.

The Centers for Disease Control funded part of the study, according to VCU News. Researchers also received a 2020 nationally awarded Prevention grant to explore ways to end gun violence.

“When we are isolated from our social circles, we lose that functional component of our loved ones being frank with us when our behavior might become inappropriate,” West stated in an interview with VCU News.

The investigation found 21 common behaviors between the research groups, the

leading behavior being social isolation. Social isolation is a lack of social connections, according to the CDC. It has been linked to about a 50% increased risk of dementia and other serious medical conditions.

West and Thomson relied on third party observation to conduct their research, the study stated. Using third party perception data allowed researchers to assess and gauge crises among mass shooters that third parties may “readily observe,” according to the study.

Results also suggest that other common indicators of a mass shooter are mood swings, paranoia and agitation. Of the other indicators listed in the study, social isolation can be noticed months to years before the attack, according to the study.

“Public policy may also be leveraged to address social isolation on a broader

societal level to not only improve social bonds within society, but to cast a wide enough net such that individuals who may have progressed along the path to mass violence will also be less isolated,” researchers stated in the study.

VCU has selected their new common book to be a novel about American loneliness, according to a previous Commonwealth Times article. The book is about “complex issues of loneliness and mental health,” the article stated.

Courtney Cronin, a junior psychology student, said the effects of social isolation depends on each individual person.

“Everyone is so different. Some people that are shooters might devolved from social isolation, but some people were socially isolated because they were horrible people,” Cronin said. “There were two mass shooters

were incredibly racist towards people, were violent all the time and people didn’t want to be around them.”

Cronin said social isolation often becomes the blame but not the perpetrators’ problematic behaviors.

Psychology student Joy Doosey said gun control is the solution to decrease mass shootings.

“

When we are isolated from our social circles, we lose that functional component of our loved ones being frank with us when our behavior might become inappropriate.

**Samuel West**, assistant professor of psychology at Virginia State University

“Australia banned semi-automatics weapons since the 1990s and since then, they have not had a single mass shooting,” Doosey said. “A gun itself on a table isn’t going to do anything to anybody, but mental health resources are not being provided and mental health is still really stigmatized.”

Trin Miller, a senior exercise science student, said VCU should encourage more students to use the mental health resources that are available at the university.


“It boils down to an access thing like access to health care and access to therapy. People who are incredibly depressed or anxious believe that no one can help them,” Miller said.

## 9 CRISIS INDICATORS MASS SHOOTERS EXHIBITED

- Inability to perform basic daily tasks
- Depressed mood
- Unusual calmness or happiness
- Increased agitation
- Abusive behavior towards others
- Paranoia
- Rapid mood swings
- Self-Isolation
- Breaks with reality

Information compiled by Selna Shi


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**Stat of the week**  
Adrian “Ace” Baldwin Jr. earned the 2023 Atlantic 10 Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year, according to VCU Athletics.

# VCU’S MEN’S GOLF TEAM IS READY TO COMPETE

**ANDREW MCGHAN**  
Contributing Writer

VCU’s men’s golf team was voted by the preseason polls to be runner ups in the Atlantic 10 conference championship, according to the A-10 website.

Last season VCU finished runner up to Davidson College, according to the A-10 website. VCU finished with 853 total strokes, and Davidson finished with 851 total strokes.

Head coach Andy Walker was not satisfied with how last season ended, he said. The team was leading for the majority of the tournament but towards the end, Davidson made a run to overtake VCU at the end.

“We played 53 really good holes,” Walker said. “Unfortunately, it’s a 54 hole tournament.”

The 2022 season was not a total loss because former senior golfer Adrian Vagberg won the A-10 conference individual championship, according to Walker. With the win at the A-10

conference individual championship, Vagberg was able to go to regionals and qualified for the national championship tournament.

“I wouldn’t say that all was lost in a year to have an individual get to a national championship,” Walker said. “There’s only a few schools in the country that get that opportunity.”

At the start of the season, the team tied for first place at the VCU Shootout, according to Golfstat. They tied with Charleston Southern University with 828 total strokes.

VCU golf tied for first place for the first term of the season in the fall, according to Walker. The team has learned alot from the fall, and they want to show fans they can win “every event.”

“I think the team has learned a lot from the fall knowing that we can compete with anybody at any time,” Walker said. “Now it’s about really executing and finishing off rounds, finishing alternative tournaments and making big runs on the back nine.”

VCU’s golf team has six new players and one returning player from the previous season, according to Walker.

One of the new players to the team is redshirt junior Mattias Varjun. Varjun said he came to VCU because of the culture of the team and what the team is trying to achieve.

“I could see the stuff [culture] and direction that we’re going into was kind of similar to what I was looking for,” Varjun said. “It was clear pretty quickly that this is the best place for me to get the most out of my golf game.”

The coaching staff creates an atmosphere where they believe in their players and gives them the tools to be successful, according to VCU redshirt sophomore Jayce Hargrave.

Hargrave is also new to the team and he feels that he is playing really good golf, he said.

“I feel like I’m playing some really good golf, and feel like I can put myself in positions to win either a golf tournament or multiple golf tournaments,”

Hargrave said. “So that’s something that I’d really like to accomplish before the season’s over.”

All players on the team will be stand-outs for the team, some notable players to look out for are Hargrave, Varjun, senior George Saunders, freshmen Ugo Malcor and Clemente Silva, according to Walker. They will be standout players for their team for their talents and their improvement from the fall campaign.

“The guys have really worked hard, everyone down the line has worked hard and so they’re all going to contribute in different ways,” Walker said. “I’m excited for the way they’re preparing and changing things and trying to get better, but I’m also excited to see that all that hard work come to light during competition.”

**VCU senior George Saunders measures his golf putt before attempting to score during a match.**  
Photo by Alessandro Latour

**BERSABEH KEMAW**  
Contributing Writer

CT Sports’

PICK OF THE WEEK

For this week’s pick, we’re heading to UFC 286 to cover a faceoff between Leon Edwards and Kamaru Usman at the O2 Arena, located in London, England on March 18.

This will be the third time these two have battled in the octagon, as they continue their fight for the Welterweight Championship.

The Welterweight division consists of individuals who are grouped between 150 to 170 pounds.

Edwards is the current Welterweight Champion, after winning the title in August of 2022. He defeated Usman for the title in 2022 after losing to him during their first fight back in 2015, according to Bleacher Report.

This will be a very interesting fight between these two for many reasons. Mainly, it’s important to consider the fact that they are both 1-1 against each other. Edwards will be coming in to defend his title, however, Usman will be coming back with the intent to reclaim his previous title.

Both fighters have a really good record. Edwards has a record of 20-3 and Usman has a record of 20-2 according to ESPN.

It’s safe to say that both fighters do not like to lose, but unfortunately one will have to walk away the champion, as the other walks away defeated.

With the history of both fighters, along with the rivalry between one another, I will say that I have a feeling Usman will be the winner of this fight. Considering his track record as a fighter, his techniques have developed a lot throughout his journey.

Since he did lose the last battle, I think he will have a slightly different approach and a whole lot more hunger to earn a win.

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# VCU loses to Dayton, 67-61, *in first round of A-10 playoffs*



**THAILON WILSON**  
Staff Writer

The Rams traveled up to Wilmington, Delaware to face off against the Dayton Flyers in the Atlantic 10 Women's Basketball tournament.

After a back and forth game, which entailed a comeback from VCU, the Rams fell short on the comeback against Dayton ending the black and gold's play-off run in the first round.

VCU redshirt senior Janika Griffith-Wallace said regardless of the result, the team has grown so much throughout the season.

"I feel as though we have grown a lot since the beginning of the season," Griffith-Wallace said. "It is unfortunate that we didn't get the result we wanted tonight but we are gonna keep sticking together."

The first quarter with neither team hardly making any leeway against each other and both traded buckets for the entire first quarter.

During the first quarter, VCU junior guard Sarah Te-Biasu, who had been out for nine games due to a foot injury, entered the game as a substitute.

Te-Biasu said that she was happy to be able to come back to the court and play with her teammates.

"Obviously we didn't have the result that we wanted, but I'm really proud of my teammates and coaches," Te-

Biasu said. "I was happy to be on the court."

VCU ended the first quarter with a 14-12 lead.

The Flyers came back in the second quarter and started off the quarter with a 22-2 run which gave the flyers a 34-16 lead with one minute left in the half.

The Flyers also only allowed the Rams to score five more points in the second quarter. This gave the Flyers a 34-21 lead going into the second half.

VCU head coach Beth O'Boyle said during the postgame conference that she talked to her players during halftime about how they had to keep fighting and try to minimize the Flyers' lead.

"It's a 14-point game, and we are going to battle this and our goal is to get them to call a timeout and get it[the lead] under 10 and then we'll play," O'Boyle said.

The Rams followed O'Boyle's advice straight-on by starting the third quarter on a 11-4 run, which narrowed down Dayton's lead to 38-32 with six minutes left in the third quarter.

The comeback effort was fully on for the black and gold as Dayton continued to try to add on to their lead, VCU would score

in bunches as well. By the end of the third quarter, the Rams were only down 44-41.

The Rams and Flyers started off the fourth quarter contested until VCU senior forward Chloe Bloom scored a hook shot layup to limit Dayton's lead to 49-47 with seven minutes left to play.

As Bloom was getting off the ground, she celebrated her basket and was called for her second technical foul of the game which led to her ejection to the bench.

The Flyers were awarded two technical free throws in which Dayton senior guard Sydney Freeman knocked both of them down.

Freeman then hit a three pointer after the free throws which would change the momentum of the game in Dayton's favor with a 54-47 point lead with six minutes left.

The Rams weren't able to reach the comeback before the final whistle was blown, and the game ended with the Flyers winning 67-61.

O'Boyle said regardless of the loss, she was happy with the growth that she saw in her players this season.

"I'm so proud of their heart and their effort," O'Boyle said. "I told them that they represent VCU the best way possible."

Looking back on the season, O'Boyle said the commitment the players showed was admirable even after suffering close losses.

"You watch how we played today and the results are happening, but the way we defended and took the lessons from previous losses to the next game," O'Boyle said. "It's a credit to our coaching staff and our players for staying committed."

**1. VCU graduate guard Janika Griffith-Wallace looks to score during the game against Dayton University on March 1.**  
Photo by Atlantic 10/Mitchell Leff



## GAME RESULTS

### MARCH 8

**MEN'S BASEBALL - AT JAMES MADISON**  
**WON 19-5**

### MARCH 9

**WOMEN'S TENNIS - AT NORTH FLORIDA**  
**WON 18-9**

**MEN'S BASKETBALL - VS. DAVIDSON**  
**WON 71-53**  
*Atlantic 10 Conference  
Quartfinal Round  
Brooklyn, New York*

### MARCH 10

**WOMEN'S TENNIS - VS. SOUTH FLORIDA**  
**LOST 6-1**

**MEN'S BASEBALL - VS. CORNELL**  
**WON 14-9**

### MARCH 11

**MEN'S BASKETBALL - VS. SAINT LOUIS**  
**WON 90-78**  
*Atlantic 10 Conference  
Semi-Final Round  
Brooklyn, New York*

**WOMEN'S LACROSSE - VS. ST. BONAVENTURE**  
**LOST 15-13**

**MEN'S BASEBALL - VS. CORNELL**  
**WON 10-5**

### MARCH 12

**MEN'S BASKETBALL - VS. DAYTON**  
**WON 68-56**  
*Atlantic 10 Conference Final Round  
Brooklyn, New York*

**WOMEN'S TENNIS - AT FLORIDA ATLANTIC**  
**LOST 6-1**

**MEN'S TENNIS - AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**  
**LOSS 4-2**

**MEN'S BASEBALL - VS. CORNELL**  
**WON 9-3**

**2. VCU redshirt senior forward Samantha Robinson throws up a shot during the game against Dayton University on March 1.**  
Photo by Atlantic 10/Mitchell Leff



**On this day**  
Justin Timberlake released his third studio album “The 20/20 Experience,” which won Billboard Music Awards Album of the Year.

# Musicians on Call club bridges gap between music and medicine

**KATIE FARTHING**  
Staff Writer

Music students have revived the Musicians on Call program which sends students to perform at the VCU Main Hospital on the Medical College of Virginia campus and other areas, like at food drives, according to Ammar Jawad, a senior music major and club president.

Jawad wanted to align both his interests of becoming a doctor and a musician, according to Jawad.

“Musicians on Call is basically a way to bridge the gap between the ideas of music and medicine,” Jawad said. “I feel like a lot of people listen to music, but I feel like a lot of people don’t really consider music to be a healing thing.”

The club aims to sing at VCU Health and other underserved areas of our community, like food drives and elderly homes, on the first and third Friday of every month, according to Jawad.

“Music conveys to everybody. It’s like a universal language, anybody can speak any kind of music”

**Ammar Jawad**  
senior music major  
and club president

The club is open to any student and hopes to have its first performance in late March or early April, according to Jawad.

“We’re hoping to get more people on board and really just get as many people involved,” Jawad said. “I feel like a lot of people are scared to be involved in something like this because it’s super tailored towards musicians.”

Jawad said music has helped him through tough times and has become a large part of his life.

“I know that for people who are going through really difficult periods of their life, they’re at the hospital, maybe a couple of songs would make a difference for them,” Jawad said.

While the science behind the music is important, the emotional aspect is the largest focus, Jawad said.

“Music conveys to everybody. It’s like a universal language, anybody can speak any kind of music,” Jawad said.

It doesn’t matter where the club performs in the hospital or how many people pay attention, because it’s all about creating an uplifting environment, according to Jawad.

Musicians on Call is part of Arts in Healthcare in which they “use art in the healing process,” according to Muzi Branch, director of Arts in Healthcare and Musicians on Call.

“We know that when people heal, it takes not only the doctors’ medicine, but sometimes it takes the person’s mental state, their spiritual state and their emotional state,” Branch said.

Musicians will play for patients in the waiting areas and sometimes at patients’ bedsides. Being in the hospital can be an anxious time, and music can help ease them, according to Branch.

“That music sometimes will give them [patients] a sense of calmness,” Branch said. “We know that music is vibration. Its sound is vibration and those vibrations do have an effect on our body.”

Musicians on Call previously existed at VCU in 2006 but didn’t last in the long term due to student schedules, according to Branch.

The most rewarding aspect of the club is seeing how music can help those struggling with mental or physical illness and how people can help others, according to Branch.

“They are using their talent in the service of helping someone else,” Branch said. “It just makes it even more rewarding.”

Musicians on Call therapeutically utilizes music, but it is not music therapy, according to Branch.

Melissa Owens, a board-certified music therapist at VCU Health, stated in an email why music therapy is different from Musicians on Call.

“Music therapy is a clinical discipline that can only be provided by a board-certified music therapist,” Owens stated.

The goals of music therapy can include stress or pain reduction and presenting a channel for self-expression, according to Owens.

Music therapy can help lower blood pressure, improve sleep and mood and reduce pain, according to Owens.

“Our patients have reported decreased levels of stress, anxiety and feelings of hopelessness,” Owens stated. “Even those with dementia, Alzheimer’s disease and traumatic brain injuries can access musical memory and engage in meaningful music making.”

**1-3: Members of Musicians on Call perform for hospital patients.** Photo courtesy of Muzi Branch





# Visiting artist lectures, hopes to provoke or reaffirm perspectives

**PEGGY STANSBERRY**  
Staff Writer

Artist Beth Lipman said her voice and way of making things is just another in the “big pool of makers.”

The VCUarts department of craft/material studies hosted Lipman for an artist lecture on March 13 at the Institute for Contemporary Art.

“This is just one person’s journey,” Lipman said. “It could be something to push up against and reject or something to embrace, but it’s just more information, more knowledge that could help facilitate where they’re at in their journey as an emerging artist.”

She hoped the community felt inspired by her lecture and that aspects of what she said either reaffirmed a pathway for people or provoked them into a different way of thinking, she said.

Lipman creates sculptures and two-dimensional works with an interest in “things that are tangible,” and the presence they hold in a space, even if they are not meant to be touched, she said. The space that sculpture holds in relation to the human body “really interests” her.

“I think it’s less easy to objectify sculpture than it is two-dimensional work on some level,” Lipman said. “Defining it in space, and your relationship with your own body to the work, is very different than engaging and looking at painting or drawing, which

I also deeply enjoy.”

Lipman works with a variety of materials but is best known for her work in glass, she said.

Most of her work deals with aspects of material culture through the lens of the still life genre, Lipman said.

Two consistent threads happen in Lipman’s work; the first involves investigating the age of the anthropocene, deep time – the concept of geological time – and our relationship to deep time. The other genre of work revolves around activating space or a history through an interpretation of individual or communal history and belief systems, Lipman said.

“I don’t have direction behind the work in terms of what I’m hoping to communicate,” Lipman said. “I believe that engaging in visual art is its own language. So different people are going to get different things from these compositions.”

People can engage in different levels of discourse around her work, whether their interest is in the materiality or the story of the sculpture, Lipman said. She is interested in how her work provokes someone.

Lipman said she felt excited to come to VCU to witness the program, learn about the student’s interests and reconnect with some of her peers that teach at VCUarts.

“I get a lot out of visiting because I feel like it’s really an honor to be given access to other people’s studio practices and what informs them and what they’re thinking about,” Lipman said.

Lipman shared her practice, what motivates her, how she uses research and some of her upcoming projects during her lecture. She touched upon the genesis of her practice and how it has evolved over time and how her research is generated by books, spaces and oral histories.

“A 45-minute selected hits of things that really have shaped my practice that hopefully made my perspective clear for people that are interested in why I say what I say,” Lipman said.

The artist lectures provide VCUarts students with the opportunity to see a range of perspectives, experiences, techniques and approaches to art making, said Cynthia Myron, the department chair in craft/material Studies.

The craft/material studies department invites between five and six distinguished visiting artists to campus each academic year, according to Myron.

“It’s really an attempt to expose students and the VCU community to a broader range of creative work,” Myron said. “Along with that comes a broader range of opinions and perspectives and voices.”

The department invited Lipman because her work “transcends several disciplines” and “her visibility in the field” as a glass artist, sculptor and contemporary artist, Myron said.

“She’s a full-time studio artist, and it’s important for our students to see that even

if it might not be their goal,” Myron said.

Since Lipman’s work is sculptural but also historical, exploring connections between objects from the past and the contemporary world, students from across the entire university can learn from her work, Myron said.

“Bringing Beth to visit VCU and engage with our community relates to how we want to be diverse in culture and thought and really expose students to innovation in all facets of research, not just in the arts,” Myron said.


VCUarts student and lecture attendee Ivy Walbert grew up going to the North Carolina Museum of Art, which has one of Lipman’s pieces in it, she said.

“I’ve grown up seeing that piece every time I’m at that museum, and I really love it,” Walbert said. “I saw that she was going to come here, and I really wanted to come see her work and hear about more of her process.”

Walbert felt “fascinated” by Lipman’s discussion during the lecture about incorporating history into her work, she said.

“I hadn’t really thought of that as something to put into work and think about with art,” Walbert said. “That’s going to spark something. I’m going to think about that for a while.”

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# Opinions

## Quote of the week

"Fast fashion is not free. Someone, somewhere is paying the price."— **Lucy Siegle**, British journalist

# Doomsday capitalism forces us TO REANALYZE FAST FASHION ETHICS

**ARIELLE ANDREWS**  
Contributing Writer

*"None of this will matter when the world my friend said quietly one evening.*

It was after I had brought up a tweet I saw criticizing the impact of fast fashion on climate change. Fast fashion is the rapid production and marketing of large volumes of clothing to keep up with current trends and increase profit. It usually results in poorly made clothing that ends up in landfills and contributes huge amounts of fossil fuels to the atmosphere.

"The problem is actually people like Elon Musk," she continued somberly, "the billionaires will kill us, and I can't actually afford to resist."

Unfortunately for us, this pessimism about impending doomsday is repeated frequently with many pointing out capitalism as the reason for their dismay. 2022 was the sixth warmest year on record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA. If the deposition of fossil fuels into the atmosphere doesn't cease, it's only going to get warmer and lead to a disastrous climate response.

Like my friend Alyssa, most believe that major corporations like Amazon or Shein are owed much of the ethical responsibility but, really, the problem of climate change is more complicated than that.

We know the negative effects of overconsumption on the environment but still choose to shop at fast-fashion sites like Shein. Founded in 2008, Shein rose to prominence during the pandemic after millions lost their jobs. The retailer was known for their cheap prices and even cheaper quality.

“

Are you looking for the perfect sweatshirt to go with your new blue jeans? Don't worry, the Depop girlies found it first, and they're willing to sell it to you for 10 times the thrift store price. Aren't you lucky?"

**Arielle Andrews**  
Contributing Writer

Despite the ethical concerns about labor, racism and environmental impact, Shein was named the most popular brand of 2022. What did shoppers say when they were called out for shopping at Shein? "We can't afford anything else."

This is true.

Wages increased the most in 2021, according to the Peterson Institute for National Economics, but inflation led to dramatic price increases, making wages lower than pre-pandemic. Economists predict that the US will be in a recession later this year.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reports that despite the fact that the top 1% earnings have increased by 226% since 1980, earnings of the middle class have only increased by about 47%. The middle class is shrinking faster than we can keep up.

The federal minimum wage is still only \$7.25 an hour despite CBS News report-

ing that it should be closer to \$26 if it kept up with the economy's productivity gains. Impoverished Americans aren't lying when they say they can't afford to shop ethically.

An emerging solution to decreased wages and climate change is thrifting or buying second-hand clothing. Purchasing clothes that already exist within the ecosystem cuts down on waste and disrupts the amount of energy production, aka fossil fuels, we inject into the environment. The bonus is it's more affordable for low-income families.

The problem with this, as is usually the root of any modern-day problem, is capitalism. Once thrifting became popularized, people recognized they could capitalize on it. Thrift stores increased their baseline prices, ecstatic to make a few extra bucks and the landlords of Generation Z, those born in mid-to-late 1990's to the early 2010's, made their grand entrance.

Enter Depop, the clothing resale site where users can buy and sell second-hand clothing. Most popular in 2021, Depop fostered a rather dangerous idea. Depop sellers would buy out all of the "good" clothes from thrift stores and resell them for exorbitant prices. They would cite the labor costs of "finding" these pieces of clothing as factoring into the price.

Are you looking for the perfect sweatshirt to go with your new blue jeans? Don't worry, the Depop girlies found it first, and they're willing to sell it to you for 10 times the thrift store price. Aren't you lucky?

Ultimately, it would be counterproductive of me to blame young people on Depop trying to make a living for the state of fast fashion. Just as it would be equally useless for me to criticize poor people for shopping at Shein. The obvious enemy is a systemic

structure and ideology that prioritizes profit over people.

People under extreme duress, like poverty or income inequality, should not be criticized for unethical purchasing behavior. When a child is hungry and steals food to eat, we should criticize the systems in place that let a child go without, rather than the child's "questionable ethics."

It is unethical to pay people \$7.25 an hour for work which leads to billions of dollars in the company's pocket and then turn around and reprimand the customer. It is unethical for corporations to cut corners and emit fossil fuels and blame the individual for "choosing" to shop there. It's been said that there is no ethical consumption under capitalism.

What is true is that we cannot expect people to make ethical purchasing decisions when we don't give them the option to. We need to pay people more and provide them with affordable businesses engaging in ethical behaviors.

Unfortunately, this is near impossible under capitalism, which boosts profit over people. Capitalism needs to be exploitative in order to function the way it is intended.

So what is the ethical responsibility of the consumer when it comes to fast fashion?

The consumer should demand a radical transformation. While it is true that wealth is power, so is the power of many. We have to remember there are more of us than there are of them. We have to demand better wages, better working conditions and more sustainable corporate practices.

When it is possible to do so, speak with our labor, our dollars and our political voice. These are our power and contrary to popular belief, we can afford to resist.



Illustration by Liv Weatherford



# CT Comics

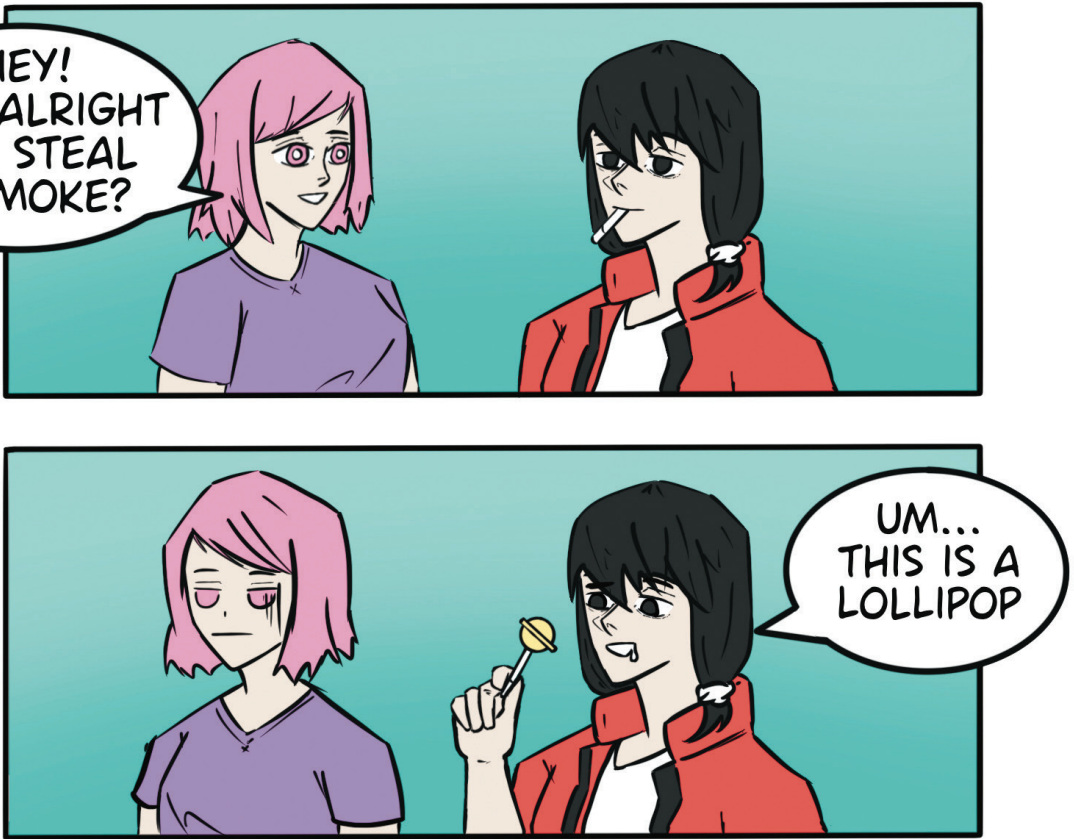
## SWAMPED by Clare Wislar



## Adulting by Lois Heden



## Common Vices Anthony Duong



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### CORRECTION

In the March 1 comic “Spring Break Struggles,” Arly Cardozo’s name was misspelled.

The full version of the story is available online at [commonwealthtimes.org](https://commonwealthtimes.org).





# Los Angeles Times Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Jorts fabric  
6 North Africa's \_\_\_ Mountains  
11 Cranberry sites  
15 TV ads for good causes  
19 One who may live by the Strait of Hormuz  
20 Go  
21 Old Testament twin  
22 Actress Wilson of "His Dark Materials"  
23 "I always wanted to be a ballerina, but I ..."  
27 Specimen for a volcanologist  
28 Gown  
29 Long Beach's location, informally  
30 "I \_\_\_": Election Day sticker  
31 North Carolina university  
32 Uniform accessory  
33 Ambulance wailers  
34 "I always wanted to be a baker, but I ..."  
40 \_\_\_ bar  
41 German article  
42 Northeastern octet  
43 Show clearly  
46 Small tastes  
48 Vega, e.g.  
49 Phony  
53 "I always wanted to be a Gregorian monk, but I ..."  
57 Undefeated boxer Laila  
58 Means of access  
59 Goatee spot  
60 Key of Beethoven's "Eroica"  
62 Soy-based frozen dessert brand  
65 Think of, as a solution

DOWN

- 67 "\_\_\_ Place": 1990s TV drama  
69 Classic Windows catchphrase  
70 Bygone Dodge subcompact  
71 Messy scuffle  
72 Customizable Wii Sports avatar  
73 "I always wanted to be a perfumer, but I ..."  
81 French infinitive  
83 Give more than a darn?  
84 Midday  
85 On the clock  
86 Setting for many Stephen King novels  
88 After the whistle  
90 Wallpaper hanger's calculation  
91 "I always wanted to be a gardener, but I ..."  
98 Sugar shack surrounds  
99 Actress Mireille  
100 MLB stat  
101 Massive old computer  
102 Amazon crime series based on Michael Connelly novels  
104 Fanny pack's spot  
106 Needle a bit  
109 "I always wanted to be a wedding officiant, but I ..."  
113 Not aweather  
114 Canine pal of Nermal and Garfield  
115 British elevators  
116 Pie feature  
117 Young 67-Down  
118 Batik artist  
119 Sherwin-Williams product  
120 Toast opener

DOWN

- 1 "Say So" singer \_\_\_ Cat  
2 Some Down Under sprinters  
3 Graham in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame  
4 QB misfire  
5 \_\_\_-of-the-road  
6 Pasta specification  
7 Till stack  
8 Muscles near delts  
9 Batting stat  
10 Vacillate  
11 "You \_\_\_!": "Yep!"  
12 Dept. of Labor arm  
13 Fine \_\_\_: Irish political party  
14 Dine by candlelight, maybe  
15 "The Canterbury Tales" character  
16 Beverage brewed with solar energy  
17 Go to  
18 Gets rid of  
24 Appliance in some hotel room closets  
25 Reggae pioneer Peter  
26 Like a ram or a lamb  
31 Balanced  
32 Curry of the NBA's "Splash Brothers"  
33 Bypass  
34 Home with cells  
35 Tel \_\_\_, Israel  
36 Main points  
37 Taking action  
38 Captain of industry  
39 Novelist Turgenev  
40 Family room  
44 Pants part  
45 Award quartet for John Legend, for short  
47 Grapefruit wedge  
48 \_\_\_ guard  
50 Lighting effect  
51 "Poor, pitiful me!"

- 52 Puny parasite  
54 "... \_\_\_ quit!"  
55 Sulu player John  
56 Choose  
61 Routes without tolls  
62 Person of the Year designator  
63 Skip over  
64 So-so  
65 Some med. plans  
66 Company abbr.  
67 Guys  
68 "Frozen" sister  
70 Advent  
71 Ramadan, e.g.  
74 Essential fatty \_\_\_  
75 Brooks's country music partner  
76 Gets into shape?  
77 Castle trench  
78 Standard  
79 Koala hangout  
80 Genre of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones  
82 Tries to live up to  
87 Smart \_\_\_  
89 Most uncanny  
91 Cooking oil option  
92 Weighed in  
93 "The Addams Family" uncle  
94 Foot part  
95 Totally worthless  
96 Recipe amt.  
97 Built for NASA, say  
98 Athlete's award  
102 Soul mate?  
103 Scrape covered with a Paw Patrol bandage, e.g.  
104 Library convenience  
105 Memo abbr.  
106 Cowpoke's poker  
107 "Will there be anything \_\_\_?"  
108 Dampens  
110 Drift off  
111 Fjord kin  
112 One of five principal resources in the game Catan

Excuses, Excuses by Ribin Stears

	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13	14		15	16	17	18
19						20						21					22			
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# Sudoku

By The Mephram Group

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

- 1 2 3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column, and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk)

		5				6		
7			6		9		1	
1								4
		7	2		4			
			8					
	2		9		1	8		
4								3
	8		1		3			9
6		1				2		

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