



Protesters march on West Broad Street in support of Palestine. Photo by Bilan Osman.

RICHMOND COMMUNITY MEMBERS, STUDENTS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINE

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“From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” protesters shouted, as they marched from Monroe Park to the intersection of Broad Street and Allen Street.

American Muslims for Palestine organized the rally. AMP is a nonprofit organization which seeks to “educate the public about the just cause of Palestine and the rights of self-determination, liberty and justice,” according to its website.

Protesters chanted “We don’t want two states, we want 48,” referring to the 1948 partition of Palestine by United Nations resolution into two different states: one for Palestinian Arabs and the other for Jews. The resolution also internationalized the city of Jerusalem.

The Jewish state declared independence as Israel in 1948 and has since expanded its territory to include Jerusalem and parts of the Arab state, according to the U.N. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been happening since 1948 when Israel declared independence from the British two-state Mandate.

Adherents of Zionism, which Britannica defines as a Jewish nationalist movement to establish a homeland for the Jewish people, actively worked with the British government to establish the Mandate, according to the U.N. The Mandate did not take into account the indigenous people of Palestine, according to the U.N.

The tipping point of the present conflict came on Oct. 8 when the Palestinian fighter group, Hamas, launched an attack on Israel from the blockaded Gaza Strip, according

to the U.N.

Since then, the Israeli government has dropped 6,000 bombs on the Gaza Strip, an area with civilian neighborhoods, for six consecutive days, according to Al Jazeera.

Palestine does not have an official military, according to the Institute for Middle East Understanding. The Israeli Defence Force is Israel’s military force.



Sereen Haddad speaks at the protest.
Photo by Bilan Osman.

Israeli occupation forces have killed over 1,400 Palestinians and injured 6,000 Palestinians since Oct. 7, according to the U.N. The U.N. does not have an exact number on how many Israeli deaths there are.

Sereen Haddad, a speaker at the rally and VCU student, said her dad has been scanning WhatsApp each hour of the day to make sure their family in Gaza are

still alive.

Haddad said her father’s uncle was given five minutes from an automated call from the Israeli military to leave the family home before it gets destroyed.

“A house with 80 years of memories, you get five minutes to evacuate, five minutes to take everything you own your entire life, five generations, pack it in a box and go,” Haddad said.

“

When you’re surrounded by people who do understand you — like the protests, for example, on Sunday — I think that was one of the moments in my life where I felt the most empowered. I felt a really strong sense of community.”

Sereen Haddad, speaker at the protest and VCU student

Haddad said she and her siblings were told stories of their grandparents’ house in Gaza, lined with fig trees. Two days ago, the house was bombed by the Israeli military.

“My dad never got to take me or any of my siblings to go to this house. We haven’t had it in us to tell our grandparents that the house was leveled. They don’t know. Because I genuinely think it would break their hearts to know that,” Haddad said.

Haddad recalled a text her family

received from her relatives in Gaza, after Israel cut off water, food and electricity. It read: “We still have life but we don’t know for how long.”

“We are just heartbroken for every family in Gaza right now,” Haddad said. “They need help. Now more than ever, and they’ve always needed help. America’s silence is deafening.”

Haddad said being Palestinian in the United States can feel small but also empowering.

“When you’re surrounded by people who do understand you — like the protests, for example, on Sunday — I think that was one of the moments in my life where I felt the most empowered,” Haddad said. “I felt a really strong sense of community.”

Haddad said that people are now realizing how much of a struggle Palestinians go through and hopes that more people will in the future.

“It’s unfortunate because it really has been in front of everybody’s eyes this entire time, but the past ten days have definitely been a little bit more of an experience for people to be able to really understand,” Haddad said. “People have been more interested to know what’s going on.”

Haddad said that people should not be afraid to learn about, share and advocate for the Palestinian cause.

“Genuinely, I think the number one thing that helps us as Palestinian people is raising your voice, amplifying your voice, just really trying to end the Palestinian struggle once and for all,” Haddad said. “I think if we all really come together, this is what’s gonna help us reach our end goal, truly.”

Stories of the week

NATIONAL: Scholastic separates books that involve race, gender and sexuality at book fairs
INTERNATIONAL: Amazon rivers fall to lowest level amid drought



Protesters march on West Broad Street in support of Palestine.. Photo by Andrew Kerley.

PALESTINE

Continued from front page

The Israeli government ordered 1.1 million Gazans to leave northern Gaza within 24 hours last Friday, according to the U.N. The U.N. is calling for Israel to rescind the evacuation order and warns of “mass ethnic cleansing” of Palestinians.

The U.S. has provided Israel \$158 billion aid in total since 1946 in military assistance and missile defense funding, according to Congressional Research Service.

Zaid Mahdawi, president of the Richmond chapter of AMP and an organizer of the rally, said he advocates for Palestine because of his family’s history as Palestinian refugees.

“When living here and going through that as a generational refugee makes you kind of feel that you must stand against all forms of oppression, whether it’s for your own people, or for anybody else, but it does hit home more for your own people,” Mahdawi said.

Mahdawi said he first became involved in advocating for Palestine after visiting the country.

“I literally saw the apartheid with my own eyes. I came back and I felt obligated to stand up for what’s right, and I felt responsible and complicit for a little bit of it,” Mahdawi said.

With regards to the future of the movement, Mahdawi said he is certain people will come to understand Palestinians’ struggle.

“Do I have hope? I have something beyond hope — I have certainty, 100% certainty that whether it’s our generation or the next generation, the apartheid and occupation will stop,” Mahdawi said.

Nancy Wein, an at-large coordinator for Jewish Voice for Peace and grassroots organizer, said the situation in Palestine is at its worst since 1948.

“Do I have hope? I have something beyond hope — I have certainty, 100% certainty that whether it’s our generation or the next generation, the apartheid and occupation will stop.”

Zaid Mahdawi, president of the Richmond chapter of AMP and an organizer of the rally

“The only thing that was good about what came out today was we’re getting the word out and we’re forced to try to tell the truth about what’s happening,” Wein said.

Wein said that Israel’s actions and status as a “Jewish state” are not what Judaism is supposed to be about.

“I cannot tell you in strong enough terms how horrified I am that they are trying to use Judaism in a way that it shouldn’t be applied. This conflict is not religious,” Wein said.

Some names have been omitted due to instances of doxxing, a form of online harassment where individuals’ personal information is made public without their consent. Students supporting Palestine were doxxed at Harvard University last week, according to The Crimson.

Abel, a community organizer in Richmond who is also Jewish, said it is important that young Jewish people condemn Israel’s actions in Gaza.

“This is a crime on the level of something like apartheid in South Africa, and we have to strongly and politically condemn this if we’re going to have any sort of moral or ethical ability to advocate for the oppressed in this country,” he said.

He said that there is a clear aggressor in the current situation — the Israeli occupation — and that people need to speak out against it.

“We have to basically say that ‘we’re not going to cover for you,’ that we’re going to put pressure not only on the political institutions of this country, to forcefully come out against apartheid and genocide, but hit the streets so that we can express our own personal power as the people, as the masses,” Abel said.

VCU president Michael Rao sent an email to all students condemning Hamas’ attack and offering support to students.

“The savage, barbaric assaults committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians, including children, have no place in our world. These terrorist attacks have killed more than 1,000 people, including entire families who were murdered in their homes,” Rao stated.

The wording of the email has led to students speaking out against Rao’s statement. VCU and VCU Qatar community members created a petition in response to the email, accompanied by an open letter to Rao and the VCU community. The petition currently has 938 signatures by the time of this article’s publication.

“Your letter risks dividing the VCU community and alienates Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, Israeli, and Jewish voices for peace, among others. It stands against shared values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and threatens the integrity of the inclusive community we all strive to create,” the letter stated.

Rao met with student representatives from Muslim Student Association, Hillel at VCU, Palestinian Student Organization, Black Muslim Collective, and Jewish Life and issued a second statement.

“First, I reiterated what I have said many times this week: that it remains heartbreaking that innocent civilians - Israeli, Palestinian, American and many other nationalities - have been killed, injured and had their homes and communities destroyed,” Rao stated.

An anonymous Muslim protester said she is proud of the Richmond community for showing up in support of Palestine.

“This [protest] was very necessary especially after the malicious comments made by Michael Rao, calling Palestinians and Muslims ‘barbaric’. This was necessary for it to happen in his city and on his campus so he can know that people at VCU were deeply offended by his support for Israel and his blatant Zionism and Islamophobia,” the protester said.

While the protester does not have connections to Palestine, she said she stands with Palestinians because “it’s a Muslim country” and that is a Black and Brown issue as well.

Bilal Quraishi, Muslim Life Director at VCU, was not satisfied with Rao’s follow-up. He said himself and other Muslim community leaders will be meeting with the president for a second time on Tuesday to demand proper race sensitivity training for administrators.

“For someone at the level of president of a university to use language like that [savage, barbaric], it’s so miscalculated,” Quraishi said. “You feel dehumanized, like all this talk about diversity and inclusion and ‘we love our Muslim brothers and sisters, our community,’ it just feels like empty words.”

Quraishi said the Islamophobia currently being spread is the “worst it’s been since 9/11.”

“Being a Muslim in America is really tough,” Quraishi said. “We feel like we have a responsibility to help the oppressed people here, to build community and to spread peace and love. We get hampered by all these different things happening in the world and we have to prove ourselves, again and again, that we’re just normal humans.”



Boy waves flag at Belvidere and Franklin street. Photo by Bilan Osman.



Students walk outside the University Student Commons. Photo by Kaitlyn Fulmore.

VCU ANNOUNCES GUARANTEED ADMISSION FOR HIGH-PERFORMING STUDENTS

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Contributing Writer

VCU recently announced a guaranteed admissions policy for students near the top of their class, according to VCU Admissions.

High school students are guaranteed admission if they have a GPA of at least 3.5 or are among the top 10% of their class, according to VCU.

Students who are looking to apply for programs with their own major specific requirements like VCUarts and School of Engineering will not be included in this guaranteed admission program, according to VCU Admissions.

The school’s undergraduate acceptance rate is 91%, according to US News.

VCU saw its biggest freshman class to date this past fall, according to a previous article from The Commonwealth Times.

Michael Porter, associate vice president for VCU public relations, stated in an email the guaranteed admissions program is launched as a pilot.

“VCU expects an increase in admissions,” Porter stated.

With an expected increase in the student body, current students are wondering how this will impact faculty size, housing and classrooms.

Some students expressed concerns about housing situations for upcoming first-year students.

Katherine Nguyen, a musical theater

student, said the university doesn’t have room for students in the dorms.

“With the way VCU has already been over admitting students, this seems like a completely counterproductive choice,” Nguyen said.

“Hearing that the dorm I lived in last year now houses double the people it did before seems really bizarre. The fact that that tiny room was definitely only big enough for one person, now has two shoved into it doesn’t seem sustainable or functional.”

Katherine Nguyen, musical theater student

Nguyen said the overcrowding at VCU is evident in Gladding Residence Center III.

“Hearing that the dorm I lived in last year now houses double the people it did before seems really bizarre,” Nguyen said. “The fact that that tiny room was definitely only big enough for one person, now has

two shoved into it doesn’t seem sustainable or functional.”

Nguyen also said the decision to lower VCU’s selectivity in admission pushes VCU into a “less prestigious category.”

While guaranteed admission may mean a bigger undergraduate student body, students are questioning whether or not this means an influx in the specialized departments, like VCUarts.

VCU had to house 80 students in hotel rooms this year, because of a lack of space in its on campus accommodations.

Sattviki Chintaluri, a business student, said she thinks VCU is admitting people with higher GPAs to boost the university’s reputation.

“I think that this definitely doesn’t bring a good name to VCU, because it makes it seem like anyone can get in. It’s hard for this school to be taken seriously,” Chintaluri said.

Chintaluri said she is concerned VCU might not be able to give financial aid to students who need it because of the high volume of students.

Despite the increase this past year, VCU has seen its overall enrollment decline by 9% since 2018.

Guaranteed admissions have increased across the country following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in the summer. Universities are no longer allowed to use race-conscious affirmative action when it comes to accepting students.

VCU previously had a guaranteed admissions program in the past for transfer students from the Virginia Community College system who met certain requirements.

Stat of the week

VCU senior guard Joe Bamisile led the way in VCU men's basketball with 17 points in the Black and Gold scrimmage.

Ronald Acuña Jr. is 1st player to have 40/70 season

DAN ELSON
Contributing Writer

There have only been four players in MLB history to hit 40 home runs and steal 40 bases, according to MLB. Atlanta Braves superstar Ronald Acuña Jr. joined that historic club this season and created another one — a 40/70 campaign.

“

Sometimes players get their numbers retired and don't make the Hall of Fame. Acuña will be one of the greatest players to ever play for the Braves and of the best to ever play the game of baseball.”

Dan Elson, Contributing Writer

A 40/40 club is 40 home runs and 40 stolen bases in a season. José Canseco did it in 1988, Barry Bonds in 1996, Alex Rodriguez in 1998 and Alfonso Soriano in 2006, according to MLB.



Over 20,000 baseball players have played at least one game in the big leagues according to CBS Sports, and no one has hit 40 home runs and stole 70 bases in a season. Acuña is the first player to do so.

Hank Aaron, Chipper Jones, Greg Maddux and John Smoltz are former players that played for the Braves and all have their numbers retired. They were legends in the game, and Acuña is quickly becoming one.

Sometimes players get their numbers retired and don't make the Hall of Fame. Acuña will be one of the greatest players to ever play for the Braves and of the best to ever play the game of baseball.

The 25-year-old super-star had a year for the ages, as he finished the 2023 regular season with 41 home runs and 73 stolen bases, according to MLB.

He is the first player to swipe at least 70 bags in a campaign since Jacoby Ellsbury back in 2009 with the Boston Red Sox, according to Baseball Reference. Ellsbury stole 70 bases that year.

“It's one of those numbers that wasn't impossible but seemed impossible,” Acuña, a four-time all-star, said in a postgame interview.

Baseball is a game that a lot of people find boring. People think not much happens in the game or it takes too long. In the offseason, the league expanded the size of the bags from 15 inches to 18 to see more stolen bases. Acuña took full advantage of that.

There have been more than 3,000 stolen bases this year — the most recorded since 2012, according to MLB.

The night Acuña stole his 70th base, he said in a postgame interview that Truist Park “felt like a playoff atmosphere.”

After Acuña stole No. 70, he picked up the base and raised it over his head,

knowing what he had accomplished.

“I thought it was great the way he picked the bag up,” Braves manager Brian Snitker said in a postgame interview. “Fans had to love that. We all did because it was a special moment.”

The Braves finished 104-58 this season—the best campaign since 1998 when the squad went 106-56, according to Baseball Reference. Even though the Braves lost in four games to the Philadelphia Phillies, Acuña played a huge part in the Braves success this season.

Life couldn't be better for the super star right fielder right now, a recent marriage to his long-term girlfriend Maria Laborde Acuña and adding a potential MVP to his resume.

Hitting .300 in a season isn't easy to do in baseball. From 2000-2009, the MLB averaged 39.7 batters who hit .300 or higher. From 2010-2019, the MLB averaged 22.1

players hitting .300 or better. Last year, only 10 players had batting averages .300 or higher according to the Washington Post.

Acuña hit .337 this year which is the first time ever in his six-year career that he hit over .300 according to Baseball Reference. He finished second in the league behind Miami Marlins second baseman Luis Arraez's .354 batting average according to MLB.

The Venezuelan native led the league with 217 hits on the season — the first time ever in his career he reached the 200-hit mark, according to Baseball Reference.

A common question is “Who is the best player in the league?” A lot of baseball fans like to say Aaron Judge or Shohei Ohtani. Both players are superstars that crush home runs at a historic pace, hit for high averages, drive in runs and rack up the hits.

Judge plays a great outfield and Ohtani is the game's first two-way player since Babe Ruth. He can dial it up to 100 mph on the mound and strike batters out.

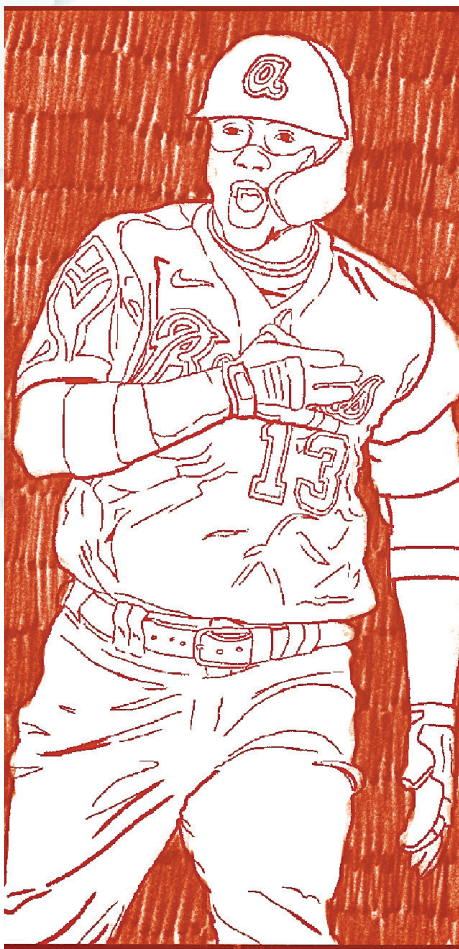
Even though both Ohtani and Judge spent time on the injured list, none of them have had a 200-hit season in their career according to Baseball Reference.

Acuña, who won the National League Rookie of the Year in 2018, according to Baseball Reference, is definitely making a case that he is the best player offensively in the league at this moment.

Acuña has several years left in his prime before he starts to decline. It'll be exciting to see the type of numbers he'll put up at the plate in his prime years. Acuña is great for the game and someone that younger baseball players try to idolize.



Illustrations by Arly Cardozo.



“

Acuña has several years left in his prime before he starts to decline. It’ll be exciting to see the type of numbers he’ll put up at the plate in his prime years. Acuña is great for the game and someone that younger baseball players try to idolize. ”

Dan Elson, Contributing Writer

Scouting Report: VCU vs. Mars Hill

VCU men’s basketball will face Mars Hill University in their season opener at the Siegel Center on Saturday, Oct. 28. The CT Sports staff chose their notable players for this upcoming matchup.

VCU

VIOLET VELASQUEZ
Contributing Writer

Zeb Jackson - Coming out of Montverde Academy, Jackson was a 4-Star Prospect and ranked in ESPN’s Top 100 for the class of 2020, according to VCU Athletics. Jackson saw action in all 35 games last season while averaging 17.3 minutes per night, according to VCU. Jackson was no stranger to free throws, making 54 out of 70 attempts averaging .771% from the line, according to VCU Athletics. Fast forward to now, Jackson has been chosen as a team captain for the VCU Rams for the 2023-24 season.

BERSABEH KEMAW
Staff Writer

Sean Bairstow - Graduate guard and forward Sean Bairstow is a new member of the VCU men’s basketball team. He played at Utah State University under coach Ryan Odom, where he started in all 35 games his senior year, according to VCU Athletics. He averaged 10.3 points, 5.2 rebounds and 2.6 assists, while also shooting .473 from the field, according to VCU Athletics. Bairstow had multiple double-doubles last season, and also had his career-high-tying 20 points, according to VCU Athletics. Though Bairstow is new to the team, his skills on the court earned him the role as one of three team captains for the Rams for the 2023-24 season.



Illustration by Killian Goodale-Porter.

Mars Hill

NATHANIEL SEMUNEGUS
Contributing Writer

Kory Davis - The guard and forward is currently in his second year at Mars Hill. Last season as a freshman, he averaged 15.7 points per game, 3.2 assists per game and 2.9 rebounds per game, according to Mars Hill Athletics. His play awarded him the South Atlantic Conference Freshman of the year, according to Official SAC website. He was also selected to the All-Freshman team and was an All-SAC Third Team selection. He was ranked fourth in the league in scoring, scoring in double figures 22 times with a career-high of 28 points and ranked top-10 in steals, according to Mars Hill Athletics.

THAILON WILSON
Sports Editor

Bryson Felder - The sophomore guard is transferring from his former school, Southern Wesleyan University, to play for Mars Hill. During his time at Southern Wesleyan, Felder averaged 12.5 points per game and started in 15 of the 28 Warriors games last season as a freshman, according to SWU Athletics. He had a career-high 29 points and played 43 minutes in a game as a freshman, according to SWU Athletics.

DEION SANDERS HAS A PRIME EFFECT ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL

KYLER GILLIAM
Contributing Writer

Deion Sanders, also known as Coach Prime, and the Colorado Buffaloes have been the center of the sports world for the past two months.

Sanders has led an unprecedented turnaround of the University of Colorado's football program as the team's head coach.

Sanders' popularity and polarity has brought intense media attention to college football. College football has always been in the background compared to the National Football League.

He has brought new life into college football and his impact on the sport cannot be overstated. More people are paying attention to college football simply because of Sanders, and the college football world should appreciate that.

Sanders' work in Boulder has been amazing, but he still has his critics.

After a hall of fame career in the NFL and career in television, Sanders picked up coaching in Texas in 2015, coaching his sons' high school football team.

He moved onto Jackson State University, a historically Black university, or HBCU, in 2020, according to BetMGM.

Sanders brought a spotlight to HBCU football that has not been seen before.

Shows like "College Gameday" and "60 Minutes" were on location in Jackson, Mississippi to cover Sanders and his team.

After three seasons at Jackson State and a 27-6 overall record, Sanders accepted a job at the Power Five level at Colorado in December 2022, according to CBS Sports.

When he accepted the job, Colorado was ranked the worst team in the country, according to ESPN. There was little national attention on Colorado, but Sanders changed that quickly.

A video surfaced of the first team meeting after Sanders was hired saying that he was bringing his own "luggage," meaning he already had players in mind to bring onto Colorado's roster for the 2023 season.

His idea was to overturn the roster through the transfer portal, bringing in players across the country who already had college football experience, according to the video.

Sanders did just that, intaking 51 total transfers in the 2023 cycle, which was the most in the country by a fair amount and was only ranked No.1 in the nation, according to 247 Sports.

He also took in 17 incoming freshmen, 57 players transferred out of Colorado, leaving only 10 total

scholarship players from the previous season, according to USA Today.

Sanders essentially created a new team for the 2023 season. The college football world has never seen the amount of roster turnover that Colorado and Sanders have done.

It left a large amount of intrigue for their upcoming season. Their first test came with the national champion runner-up No. 17 Texas Christian University.

The Horned Frogs were a 20.5 point favorite at home against the Buffaloes, according to Fox Sports. Colorado then shocked the world with a 45-42 victory on the road, according to ESPN.

That victory was the second most watched game of opening week, only behind Louisiana State and Florida State, averaging 7.6 million viewers, according to Sports Media Watch.

The Buffaloes were the featured game on FOX with Big Noon Kickoff in attendance, which is the marquee college football show for the network.

Colorado would then gain more attention with a game against Nebraska, which they won handily 36-14, according to ESPN.

That game would average 8.73 million viewers and was the most watched Pacific-12 regular season game on Fox ever, according to USA Today.

Those two victories pushed the hype of Colorado and Sanders through the roof. Every show was covering them. The next game on the Buffaloes' schedule was a rivalry game against Colorado State.

In a media interview, CSU's head coach Jay Norvell talked about how he sees the tendency of Coach Prime wearing glasses and hats in interviews as disrespectful,

inferring that he was raised right and Sanders was not, according to ESPN.

Shows such as First Take, The Pat McAfee Show, Undisputed and ESPN College Gameday were in Boulder to cover Sanders.

The game was a double overtime thriller which saw the Buffaloes edge the Rams 43-35, according to ESPN.

The game averaged 9.3 million viewers and was the fifth most watched regular season college game for ESPN. It was the second largest viewership for a late night sports broadcast since 2019, according to Sports Media Watch.

The hype continued to rise for the Buffaloes, entering Pac-12 conference play against Oregon; it measured up to be their toughest obstacle so far. The outside noise of national media got to head coach of Oregon Dan Lanning.

During the game, Lanning's pregame speech was put onto ESPN's broadcast claiming that Colorado and Sanders were playing for clicks and the Ducks were playing for wins and the Ducks would then beat Colorado 42-6.

This game would still break records, it was the highest watched college game of the season averaging 10.03 million viewers, according to Yahoo Sports.

Win, lose, or draw, Sanders is everywhere, because he is simply undeniable. His energy is unquantifiable, whether he is wearing sunglasses and cowboy hats on the sideline or is in nearly every commercial on ESPN's network, he is going to grab everyone's attention.

GAME RESULTS

OCTOBER 13

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY AT LOCK HAVEN
WON 5-0

OCTOBER 14

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY AT ECU PIRATE INVITATIONAL
PLACED 2ND OUT OF 7

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL AT RHODE ISLAND
WON 3-0

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY AT ECU PIRATE INVITATIONAL
PLACED 3RD OUT OF 10

MEN'S BASKETBALL- BLACK AND GOLD GAME
BLACK WINS 58-56

MEN'S SOCCER AT RHODE ISLAND
WON 3-1

OCTOBER 15

WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY VS. WILLIAM & MARY
LOSS 1-0

WOMEN'S SOCCER AT SAINT BONAVENTURE
WON 1-0

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL AT RHODE ISLAND
WON 3-2

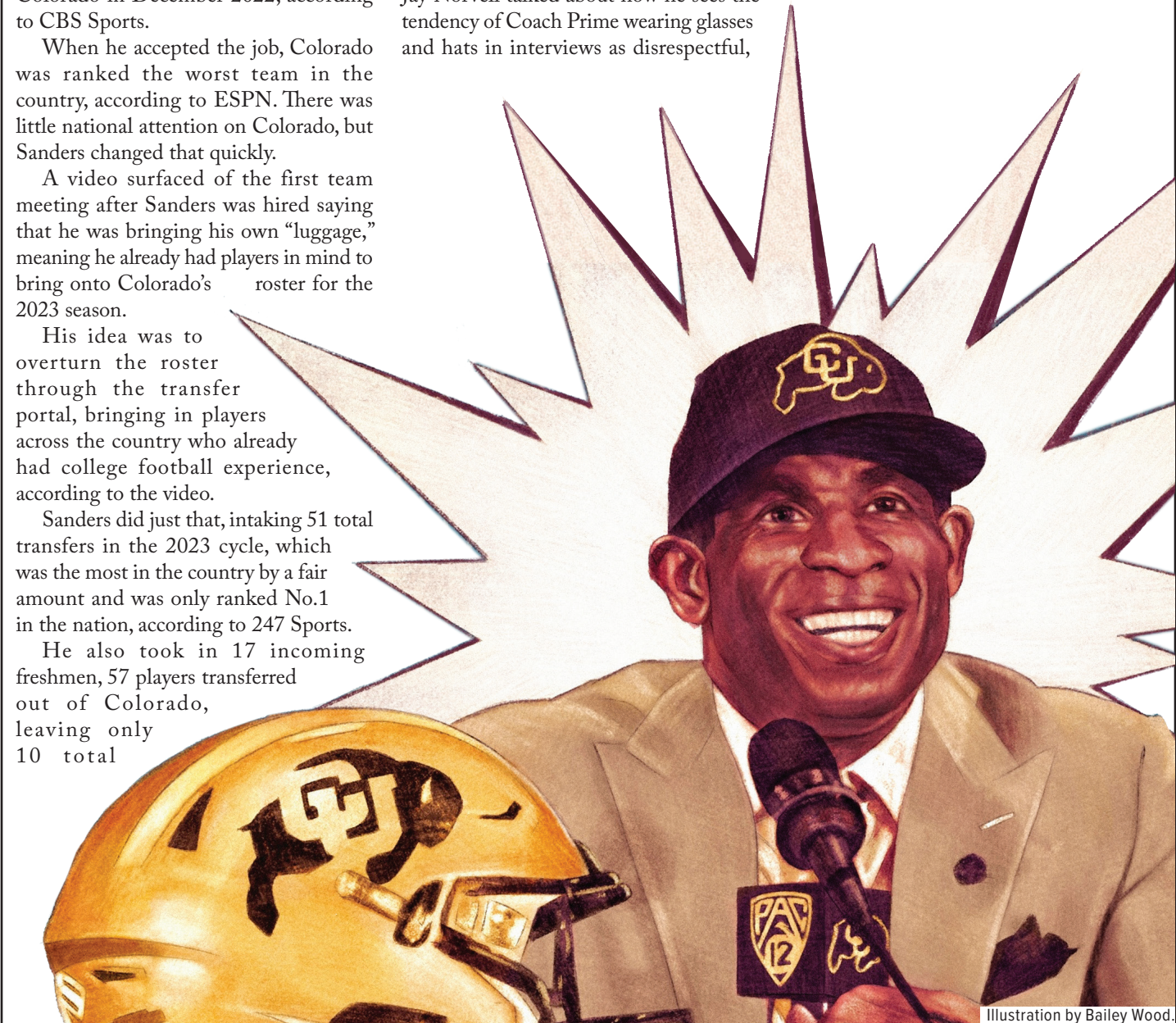


Illustration by Bailey Wood.



Photo by Arrick Wilson.

VCU MEN’S BASKETBALL MAKES FIRST SEASON APPEARANCE AT THE BLACK AND GOLD GAME

Fans filled the Stuart C. Siegel Center on Oct. 14 to watch the Black and Gold game. This was the first appearance of the men’s basketball team this season with a new head coach and players.

The Black and Gold game is a scrimmage held right before the season starts. The men’s basketball team was divided into two teams, Team Black vs. Team White, based on their jersey colors.

Basketball season starts Oct. 28, and VCU fans got a sneak peek of what to expect for this upcoming season. The Peppas, Rodney the Ram and cheerleaders were all in attendance.

“We love it here,” said men’s basketball coach Ryan Odom. “Our fans were awesome today.”

Former head coach Mike Rhoades transferred to Penn State this year. Rhoades took contributing players like guard Adrian “Ace” Baldwin Jr. and guard Nick Kern Jr. to play for him, according to All Penn State Fan Nation.

Other players who have transferred include forward Jalen DeLoach, who plays for the University of Georgia, guard Jayden Nunn, who is at Baylor University, and forward Jamir Watkins, who is now at Florida State University.

Saturday evening, the men’s basketball team played an intrasquad scrimmage with four quarters of six minutes each.

The basketball team this season only has 12 players with few subs, which intentionally makes the game difficult to play, according to Odom.

The Black team had all newcomers like sophomore guard Jason Nelson, graduate guard and forward Sean Bairstow and senior guard Joe Bamisile.

The newcomers showed out with 41 points combined and won the game 58-56.

Bamisile, who is a transfer from the University of Oklahoma, was a leader on the court with 17 points, three rebounds and four assists.

He showed his dominance throughout the game by constantly shooting behind the arc.

“Joe can score, that’s one of the reasons he’s here right?” Odom said. “We’ve seen it in practice, you know, a bunch already.”

Nelson is also a guard and made his appearance with 11 points, one rebound and two assists. He took charge of the ball by making tough shots.

Nelson was ranked fifth among Atlantic 10 freshmen in points per game and assists per game last season with the University of Richmond, according to University of Richmond Athletics.

“Jay Nel really handled the ball great,” Odom said. “He did an awesome job.”

Another key player who stood out during the game was Bairstow with 13 points, one rebound and five assists. Bairstow is a transfer from Utah State University.

He averaged 10.3 points, 5.2 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game last season, according to Utah athletics. Bairstow is 6 feet, 8 inches tall and brings height with the ability to rebound.

Length and height are things Odom always emphasizes. VCU has certain guys

who are considered crash guys, and other guys who are tasked with hitting offensive glass and back guys who protect the basket, according to Odom.

Senior guard Max Shugla played with Bairstow at Utah State, according to Odom. Shugla played for Team White during the game and had 15 points, three rebounds and four assists.

“Max and Sean, you know, they’re used to playing together all the time,” Odom said during a press conference. “They’re both good players.”

Odom was impressed with the team’s willingness to learn, listen and give all they have for their teammates, he said.

“I feel like everybody’s done a great job of working well with one another and getting to know one another,” Odom said.

Odom said he was also pleased with his team’s performance even though it was a scrimmage.

“I was really proud of all the guys, you know, they were competitive,” Odom said. “This wasn’t an all-star game, they were trying to win.”

VCU will make their debut and face off Mars Hill at the Siegel Center Oct. 28 at 7 p.m.



Photo by Arrick Wilson.



Spectrum

On this day

In 1851, "Moby Dick" by Herman Melville was first published as "The Whale" in London.

Grammy-nominated band to perform new album portraying humanity in Richmond

SOFIA HUSSAIN
Contributing Writer

Grammy-nominated band Hiss Golden Messenger will perform their new album "Jump For Joy" at Richmond Music Hall at Capital Ale House on Oct. 19 with guest music group Sylvie, according to their website.

"Jump For Joy" has similar themes to their previous albums; it portrays what it means to be human, the obligations to one another and allowing vulnerability, according to MC Taylor, the lead singer and songwriter for HGM.

The album is inspired by his life as a musician along with the costs and rewards resulting from his dedication to doing something he loves, Taylor said.

"I have been traveling around the world playing music and writing songs for almost 30 years," Taylor said. "If I was going to keep making records for Hiss Golden Messenger, I needed to revive my relationship with joy, among other positive emotions."

Taylor hopes people can see his record as a vessel for emotional vulnerability, he said.

"It's okay to feel things and not totally understand how to solve things you might be struggling with," Taylor said. "I hope seeing someone like me, who is relatively public about trying to be more positive, can inspire others."

Sylvie will be touring the east coast alongside HGM. They will be performing their songs "Stealing time," "Falls on me" and "Further Down the Road," according to Ben Schwab, Sylvie's band leader.

"Falls on me" and "Further Down the Road" are breakup songs, according to Schwab. "Stealing time" revolves around Schwab's experiences living in LA and the city's hectic nature.

"I would visit Big Bear Lake, which is about two hours outside of the city, to clear my mind and steal back the time I lost from the chaos of LA," Schwab said.

Sylvie will be touring with HGM and on the East Coast for the first time, according to Schwab.

"HGM has a different audience compared to ours, so I'm excited to play in front of a new crowd," Schwab said.

More information about this upcoming show and tickets can be found at The Broadberry Entertainment Group's website.

Hiss Golden Messenger performs at Haw River Ballroom in North Carolina.
Photos by Alex Cox.

“

It's okay to feel things and not totally understand how to solve things you might be struggling with. I hope seeing someone like me, who is relatively public about trying to be more positive, can inspire others.”

MC Taylor
lead singer and songwriter for HGM



Levis Reading Prize introduces students to broad range of work, gets recognition beyond VCU

EMILY MCCAULEY
Contributing Writer

The Levis Reading Prize has a spectacular history and recognizes many influential poets in the American literary scene, according to Gregory Donovan, director of the Levis Reading Prize.

Larry Levis was a poet with valuable work and a faculty member at VCU, according to Donovan. When he died unexpectedly in 1996, his colleagues and family wanted to find a way to keep his work in public view.

Levis's name must be associated with VCU because many students in VCU's Masters of

Fine Arts in creative writing program apply to the program because of him, according to Donovan.

The first Levis Reading prize was awarded in 1998 to a neonatal nurse named Belle

Waring who wrote powerful poems about her career, Donovan said.

The Levis reading prize is important for the MFA in creative writing students because they get a say in something that gets recognition beyond Richmond and VCU, Didato said.

"The prize is to both honor Larry's memory but also to celebrate a debut book of poetry or a second book of poetry that has been published in the previous year," according to David Wojahn, one of the three Levis Reading Prize judges and VCU English professor.

The whole process gets the students to make discernment about what makes a book good, Wojahn said.

Van Landingham's book fuses something that is personal as well as political, Wojahn said.

"Love Letter to Who Owns the Heavens" is a meditation of violence and the tradition of violence as

well as a negotiation through our contemporary world where everything is strange, according to Wojahn.

"There are two frames going side by side in the book — one is about a long distance love affair and one is about drones and drone violence," Wojahn said.

"Love Letter to Who Owns the Heavens" focuses on distance through many different lenses such as political, aesthetic, emotional, temporal and geographical, according to Van Landingham, the 2023 winner of the Levis Reading Prize.

Winning this prize has been a huge honor, Van Landingham said.

"It's also quite meaningful to know that poets I admire so much — Gregory Donovan, Kathleen Graber, David Wojahn— read, and found some merit in my work," Van Landingham said.

Van Landingham feels the prize will drive her forward with more energy into her next book while allowing her to be kinder to her past poems and her past selves who wrote them, she said.

"This prize is monumental in the poetry world, and so is Larry Levis," Van Landingham said.

Van Landingham will receive an award of \$5,000 and will read from her work on Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. in the James Branch Cabell Library Lecture Hall, Room 303, according to VCU News.

The 2023 prize winner is Corey Van Landingham, recognized for her poetry collection "Love Letter to Who Owns the Heavens," according to Donovan.

Individuals who have won the award early in their writing careers have gone on to remarkable achievements and teaching careers, according to Donovan.

"The students in our program who hope to become publishing authors and faculty members in creative writing programs get exposed to a broad range of work, which is very stimulating — It gives them more ideas about their own work," Donovan said.

The VCU students in the MFA in creative writing program read over the submissions for the Levis Reading Prize, according to Donovan.

Submissions come in waves throughout the year and the students read nearly every submission, according to Thom Didato, graduate programs advisor at VCU.

"This is not just something the students get to judge — they are all part of the process — it is a year-long thing," Didato said.

Each year there are about 150 to 250 submissions for the prize, according to Didato.

The Levis fellow is a graduate teaching position assigned to a student in the MFA in creative writing program; this year's fellow is Paul Brennan, according to Didato.

Illustration by Zora Weir-Gertzog.



PEGGY STANSBERY
Spectrum Editor

The Richmond Folk Festival has transformed the downtown experience by engaging locals and drawing in visitors through a unifying event, said Jack Berry, president and CEO of Richmond Region Tourism.

The Richmond Folk Festival returned to downtown Richmond’s riverfront for its 19th year from Oct. 13 to 15, according to Erika Gay, Venture Richmond’s director of marketing and communications. The festival hosted various performances, food vendors and a craft marketplace all surrounding the celebration of the roots, richness and variety of American culture.

“

I think it’s a great thing that’s just going to help continue to perpetuate business in the area and help raise awareness of the shops here. I think it’s doing a great job for that.”

Josh Hryciak
manager of Trail Hut

The Richmond Folk Festival draws around 200,000 people to downtown Richmond, bringing large masses to the area who visit its restaurants and hotels, according to Berry.

Richmond was just coming on the scene as a tourist destination when the Folk Festival first came to Richmond in 2005, Berry said.

Downtown Richmond and the entire region has become a popular tourist destination since then; hotels are now experiencing record occupancy, and more people are coming to the destination than ever before, Berry said. The Folk Festival acted as a “springboard” in getting Richmond where it is today.

“We have never looked back and absolutely we have exploded ever since then,” Berry said.

Mama J’s, a soul food restaurant located in the heart of Jackson Ward in the downtown area, has participated in the Folk Festival as a food vendor for

the last few years, according to Lester Johnson, Mama J’s owner and president. Participating in the festival is another way for Mama J’s to be part of the community.

“It’s just a great opportunity for the vendors as well as for the community just to come together and have a great time listening to music, eating food,” Johnson said.

The Folk Festival has helped expose more people to Mama J’s who might not come on their own, as the festival may be their first experience with the restaurant, Johnson said.

“It’s a good way to kind of get out outside the restaurant and possibly meet customers and turn them into regulars,” Johnson said.

Since the festival is such a big event, it draws people in from surrounding counties and even further, according to Johnson.

The festival has brought people who may not come downtown into the area and highlighted the activities there, such as the various art galleries, theaters and restaurants, Johnson said.

“It’s just a good way of just bringing people into the area so that they can see that there are things for them to do,” Johnson said.

Josh Hryciak, manager of Trail Hut, an outdoor consignment store located downtown, also feels that the festival has brought more people downtown and helped them recognize the businesses there, he said.

“It’s helped our business as far as getting new folks into the area who maybe wouldn’t have come downtown and an opportunity for them to see some of the thriving businesses that are happening here and how the downtown area is really starting to grow,” Hryciak said.

The festival’s inclusivity brings in many different people, providing an opportunity to show additional people there’s more to do downtown than they thought, Hryciak said.

People exploring the downtown area will see unique businesses; there’s an outdoor store and then a record store around the corner — it’s interesting, Hryciak said.

“I think it’s a great thing that’s just going to help continue to perpetuate business in the area and help raise awareness of the shops here,” Hryciak said. “I think it’s doing a great job for that.”

Richmond Folk Festival

continues to draw people downtown, help businesses in area



Large crowds gather in downtown Richmond for the Folk Festival.
Photos by Julia Garrett.



Eli Owens speaking at Grimalkin Festival.
Photo by Maggie Root.

MACKENZIE MELESKI
Contributing Writer

Crescent Collective and Studio Two Three became a stage, a catwalk and a costume party as people gathered in celebration of Queer Joy for the Grimalkin Festival, according to Grimalkin Records’ website.

Grimalkin Festival returned to Richmond for its second year on Oct. 14 and 15, with a remaining date on Oct. 21, according to Grim Kells, the founder of the festival and Grimalkin Records. Grimalkin Records is a nonprofit record label that supports queer and trans artists and hosts benefit concerts throughout Richmond, according to Kells.

Crescent Collective hosted the event on Oct. 14 while Studio Two Three hosted on Oct. 15. There will be online performances on Oct. 21.

This year hosts not only a wide array of artists from all over the country but many changes, according to Kells. The festival took a leap from one day to three days and now features more than 15 musical performers.

The first Grimalkin Festival took place in August 2022 at Fallout, according to Kells. Attendees experienced a day full of music and community with performances by queer and trans artists.

Although the event was small, it was important because it provided a space for queer expression and celebration, Kells said.

“We wanted to create an event for our community where we can celebrate what we’ve accomplished and done together,” Kells said.

Kells also wanted to create a festival that emphasized fair pay and opportunities for all, they said. Grimalkin Festival pays its performers and crew in addition to utilizing volunteers and interns. The festival used a “pay what you can” model for ticket sales.

“We’re creating opportunities for people to just share their skills, their art and music and get paid for it fairly — that just directly fits in with our mission,” Kells said.

The event featured various vendors, artists and community partners such as Health Brigade, River City Harm Redux and Virginia Anti-Violence Project, who presented information and resources at tables scattered around Crescent Collective and Studio Two Three, according to Kells.

Grimalkin Festival had volunteers and interns to assist with organization and set-up, including interns from VCUarts Kinetic Imaging department, according to Kells. This was a change

from last year, where Kells and a few other Grimalkin Records employees organized and operated the entire festival, Kells said.

The day of online performances on Oct. 21 was created to foster inclusion, Kells said. The performances will be streamed on Grimalkin Records’ YouTube channel and feature 15 minute sets by participating artists.

“We thought, this year, we’ll just have a third day where folks that are either unable to play live or because of distance or health or disability could then still be part of our festival,” Kells said.

Eli Owens, who releases music under the name (Eli)zabeth Owens, performed at the festival on Sunday. Owens has been a longtime contributor to Grimalkin Records.

Owens studied photography and film at VCU and has been “making music their whole life,” they said. Although they can sing and play piano and guitar, their primary instrument is the harp.

“I would say my stuff is folk pop or artsy pop,” they said.

Owens performed original music at the festival, utilizing their harp and electronic sound, they said.

Owens is a longtime friend of Grim Kells and joined Grimalkin Records in 2018. They were interested in the organization because of their love for music and non-profit work in Richmond, they said. In addition to producing music and performing at the festival, Owens runs the website, social media and advertising.

“Our vision for Grimalkin fest is that it’s just a celebration of queerness and diversity,” Owens said, “It’s a place for us all to celebrate our accomplishments, no matter how small they feel. And for everyone to just be themselves and feel supported.”

Cin the Ciege performed on Saturday, Oct. 14, featuring songs from his collection, “The Gaytrix.” Cin the Ciege’s self-produced music is a “hip-hop alternative with some R&B, pop and soul in there,” he said. Cin the Ciege uses music as a method of expression.

“I want to let people know who I am and what I stand for and that I’m not backing down,” Cin the Ciege said.

This event marked the first time Cin the Ciege had performed at Grimalkin Festival, he said. He saw the performance as a “celebration of the collective community.

“They really made me feel at home,” Cin the Ciege said, “I have really never felt more comfortable in my life.”

Grimalkin Festival expands for its second year, empowers queer, trans community through music

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MODESTY CULTURE IS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION

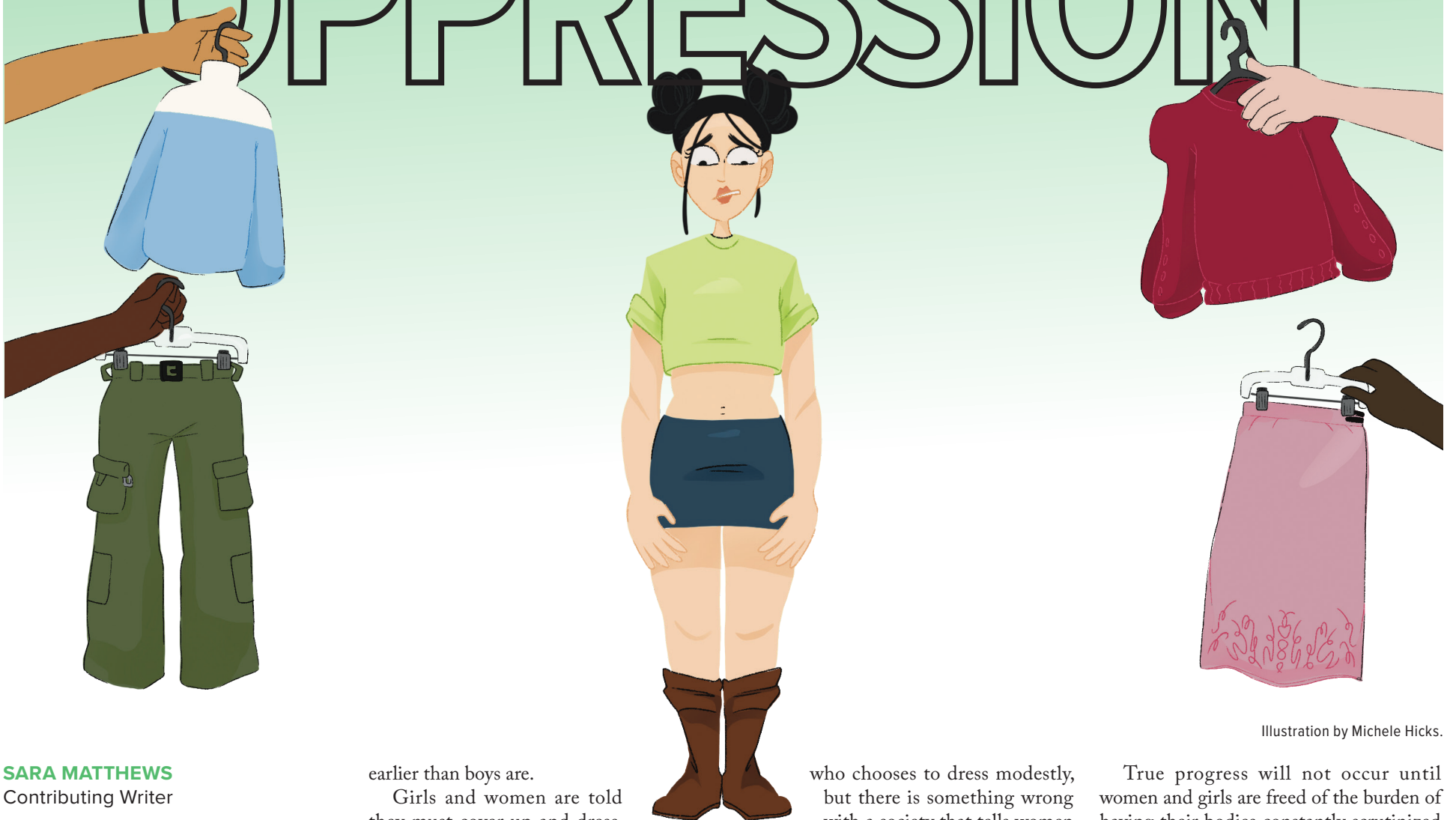


Illustration by Michele Hicks.

SARA MATTHEWS
Contributing Writer

“Girls shouldn’t have scars on their knees,” my dad said when I came home from playing soccer.

I hadn’t even noticed the gash until he pointed it out. That sentence confused me when I was 12 years old and continues to confuse me today.

Nobody cared about how vigorously the boys around me played. They could run and slip and fall until their knees were bloody and their clothes were torn. They never had to worry about what their bodies looked like in the aftermath.

The bliss that comes with being carefree about your appearance is one of the greatest things about childhood. As children, time should be spent playing and having fun, not worrying about what you look like. So why are there so many young girls who spend extensive amounts of time worrying about their bodies and appearances?

The answer comes from a culture in which the female body is seen as inherently sexual. A culture in which a woman’s body isn’t truly her own. This culture is frequently referred to as purity or modesty culture.

It has created a world where girls are forced to be aware of their bodies much

earlier than boys are.

Girls and women are told they must cover up and dress modestly for their safety and the preservation of their self-respect. But does covering up really save them from being viewed sexually?

Studies have shown that women who cover up are in fact equally as prone to sexual violence and assault.

Egypt, for instance, is a country where the vast majority of women dress very modestly. “As many as 90 percent of women” wear the hijab, or Islamic head covering, according to the New York Times. The percentage of women in Egypt who report experiencing some form of sexual harassment is at 90%, according to a report from The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

The excuse of protection is a blatant lie. It is clear that women are sexualized by men no matter what they wear.

When women are told that whether they are assaulted or not is dependent on what they choose to wear, it puts everything on their shoulders and absolves men of all the blame. This victim-blaming mentality has always been used as a way to silence women and erase their suffering.

There is nothing wrong with a woman

who chooses to dress modestly, but there is something wrong with a society that tells women they must be punished for not doing so.

Historically, women’s bodies have not only been seen as possessions of men but also possessions of the cultures and societies they come from.

Women have carried the brunt of men’s violence for centuries. During times of war, it has primarily been women who were captured. Even today, it is women who are the primary victims of sex trafficking and sex crimes in general. Ninety-six percent of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation were female, according to a 2017 study by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons.

Women are conditioned to believe that their worth comes from their purity and desirability, but why isn’t the same effort put into telling women that their bodies should be treated with respect?

Modesty culture fails because it has never been and will never be in favor of women. It has no scientific or moral basis, existing only to encourage the belief that there is something shameful to be found in the natural body of a woman and forever absolving men of blame.

True progress will not occur until women and girls are freed of the burden of having their bodies constantly scrutinized and violated.

Apologists of modesty culture often justify misogynistic values and practices under the excuse that women and men are “fundamentally different.” They claim that modesty culture is the natural result of biological differences.

In a patriarchal system where they have nothing to lose, of course, this is the conclusion that many men come to. But no amount of differences can justify the amount of suffering and blame that women endure. No biological variance could ever be an excuse for human oppression. A trait that all humans share is empathy, and it only takes a little bit of it to see where this mentality is wrong.

Women and girls don’t inherently owe men anything. We don’t owe anyone a desirable body, much less our shame and virtue. Little girls especially must be liberated from the oppressive ideals of modesty culture which begin affecting them at such a young age. Unscarred knees will never be more valuable than a happy childhood.

IRL with Arielle:

TIKTOK SHOP IS THE NEXT STEP IN SOCIAL COMMERCIALIZATION

ARIELLE ANDREWS
Staff Writer

TikTok. The doomed app once designated for cringey dances and vine-reminiscent humor is now set to rival Amazon. Open the app and you will quickly realize that everyone is trying to sell you something.

If you have been on the internet at all during the last two months, you have probably heard of TikTok Shop. The seller incentive program was introduced a few months ago and allows creators to earn commissions off the products they boost and businesses to earn more

exposure and income.

Since its release, TikTok Shop has burst in popularity and has likely taken over your For You page. As capitalism blossoms for the girlies and the gays, everyone raves about the same 10 products and begs you to try them.

It makes you wonder, is the infomercial back in style? And is it creeping into our social circles?

One of the many appeals of buying something off TikTok Shop is the instant research or endorsement for a particular product. Most TikTok sellers use a quiet

“infomercial” style, testing out the products as your friendly, neighborhood girlfriend letting you in on her secrets.

She starts out either skeptical or overly excited, overall curious to test out the latest trend or let you in on a new find. She will give you all the details surrounding the product, show you how it works, and in the end, offer her enthusiastic endorsement.

You will trust her because she is just like you — or who you would like to be.

Jim McGuigan, a scholar and former professor of cultural analysis at Loughborough University, wrote about the concept of “Cool Capitalism,” which can somewhat explain the phenomenon of TikTok Shop.

Cool Capitalism essentially takes things that are antithetical to capitalism and repackages them for profit and pleasure, according to McGuigan’s book of the same title. Essentially destroying its very nature.

Everyone knows that word-of-mouth is the most effective marketing tool. One of the most human things about us is we love to talk about the things we love. This wholesome, natural interaction stands against capitalism’s strict car salesman, multi-level-marketing girly, grind culture mindset.

TikTok sellers capitalize on this by pretending to be your friend, building a relationship and using the faux trust built to sell you something. Now, instead of talking about Chamoy pickles because you genuinely love them and want other people to experience the joy, you are talking about it to get that sweet commission, internet clout and the fragile satisfaction that, for one moment in time, you existed and were valued.

I cannot be the only one who can no longer trust the perfectly quaffed girlies I see on my For You page. But strangely enough, I can no longer trust my friends either.

Concepts like TikTok Shop, personal branding and hustle culture have everyone acting like an influencer. Everyone is trying to sell you something — even if it’s themselves.

I call this social commercialization. Capitalism is creeping into our social circles and enabling everyone to repackage and sell themselves, their lives and their

hobbies for consumption.

In past years, humans simply existed. Now, in an age where capitalism abounds, productivity is our main purpose, and everything is a product. And I do mean everything. People have become accustomed to proving the value of their existence.

“

Concepts like TikTok Shop, personal branding and hustle culture have everyone acting like an influencer. Everyone is trying to sell you something — even if it’s themselves.”

Arielle Andrews, Staff Writer

Online or in person, we are constantly “selling” ourselves to various audiences.

Previously, we sold ourselves, rather authentically, to our small circle of friends and family and maybe the people at work.

Increasingly, however, we are feeling more pressured to package all that we are into a neat little commercially viable product and sell it for all to see. With the awareness that everyone is a product, we now expect people to come perfectly packaged. “Please be palatable to me,” we say. “Please make commercial sense.”

This is what social commercialization does. It turns our everyday lives into infomercials. Every interaction is a transaction.

The false friendly nature of TikTok Shop is not some rare phenomenon, it reflects the exact condition brewing in real life.

I open my app to see some girl selling me glueless wigs and promising me well-spent coin. I close the app to talk to my friend who’s selling me her cool girl, bimbo aesthetic and promising me she’s worth the friendship.

I could not tell you which one is actually worth it. Probably because neither of them is real.



Illustration by Killian Goodale-Porter.

OPEN LETTER TO VCU



Our story:

We are Green Action, a student-led environmental advocacy and climate justice organization on campus. We have been pushing for VCU to take definitive action on climate and environmental issues impacting our community, as well as to take accountability for their own environmental impact within the city of Richmond and beyond. Additionally, we are calling for acknowledgement of the extremity of the ecological crisis we are living in, and the vital importance of not only recognizing this, but taking concrete action to address it.

Over the past two years, we have circulated a petition for VCU to declare a climate emergency and to implement specific demands to make VCU a more sustainable institution (our protest related to this petition was previously covered in the Commonwealth Times and the Richmond Times Dispatch).

Over the summer, some of our club officers, along with faculty members, gathered to update our petition, and several new pieces of information came to light. We discovered the 2010 Climate Action Plan, which is no longer available online, but one of the faculty members had a copy of it saved from several years ago. As we paged through it, we saw that it was an extremely comprehensive and specific document that VCU could have implemented to decrease emissions. However, no annual reports on the 2010 CAP are available, and the emissions reduction targets of 3,000 to 4,000 metric tons of CO₂ per year from 2010 to 2025 will most likely not be met. The failure to implement this comprehensive plan is extremely concerning, so we are requesting that a definite timeline and robust funding be established and allocated for the implementation of the ONE VCU Sustainability Plan, which has a timeline published for its development but not its implementation.

Furthermore, VCU went through an arduous process of selecting and hiring a consulting company to develop the One VCU Sustainability Plan, and committed \$500,000 to it (for scale, VCU just wasted 73 million on a tanked building project).

There were some concerns about hiring an outside consultant when there were professors who had expertise in house. However, we think that the administration pulled out of the contract not out of a desire to meaningfully involve faculty in the plan, but out of a lack of financial and ideological commitment to real sustainability. Now, the plan is still in early development stages by faculty volunteers on committees, who are not being compensated for their time and might not have the specific expertise or bandwidth needed to design the highly technical elements of the plan. Thus, we want to see VCU make a public commitment to spend at least \$500,000 on early implementation of the plan, and possibly hire an ethical consultant back on board.

We sent out a statement detailing our demands to the VCU Administration Thursday, October 12th and received a response the following day. The administration made no commitment to integrating these demands, or acknowledging the action needed to be taken to address the climate crisis. Their response shows not only an unwillingness to acknowledge the climate crisis, but to take the concerns of the student body, faculty, and community seriously. In response to this, we are planning another student demonstration on Friday, November 10th, from 12-1 PM on VCU Monroe Park Campus.

Letter sent to VCU administration:
Subject line: Green Action Student Demands

To the VCU Administrative Cabinet and the Board of Visitors,

Firstly, we want to thank you for the willingness to meet with Green Action board members, previously and in the future.

Over the summer, several faculty and students met to revise the Climate Emergency Declaration Petition, and we are calling attention to these changes about what the students expect from the One VCU Sustainability Plan. Young

people like us will have to bear the brunt of the life-altering impacts of the climate crisis - the wildfires ruining the air we breathe, the ocean acidification killing the ecosystems we rely on, and the extreme weather threatening the crops we eat and our own survival. We must act now to preserve a liveable future for ourselves and our children.

1. We believe that VCU needs to acknowledge that we are facing a climate emergency (point 1 on the Climate Emergency Petition). The acknowledgement of a climate emergency is an important first step towards necessary change to protect students, staff, and the broader city and community that VCU is a part of from the climate crisis.

2. We have witnessed movement towards sustainability with the advancement of initiatives such as the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment, LEED certified buildings, and the release of VCU's Greenhouse gas emissions dashboard (points 3 and 4). These are all great measures towards creating a more sustainable future for VCU. However, there have been shortcomings such as the lack of follow through on the 2010 Climate Action Plan, the slow pacing of the ONE VCU Sustainability Plan, and lack of fossil fuel divestment initiatives. Our futures depend on concrete action, not empty promises. Improving on these initiatives by incorporating meaningful student and faculty feedback is essential as VCU moves forward.

3. At the rate at which VCU is enacting changes, we cannot become carbon neutral by 2050 given the meager 1% decrease in scope 1 (direct sources) and scope 2 (indirect sources) of greenhouse gas emissions from 2008-2021. It is absolutely imperative that we see quick and effective emissions reduction (point 2).

4. VCU's current assets totaling \$6.985 billion, and VCU's investments, are controlled by the Board of Visitors.

Investments made using student dollars and VCU's endowment of \$2.72 billion dollars should be made public for the student body to easily read and interpret. We should have a choice in how our money is affecting the consumption of fossil fuels, as stated in point 6 of the petition.

5. A Community Advisory Committee, including members from different neighborhood associations, was recently organized to work on the creation of VCU's Sustainability Plan. However, it is vital that communities who are disproportionately affected by climate change, including residents of Black, lower income, and other minority communities are well-represented in the Committee (point 5). What are the specific community organizations that are involved and their roles in the development of the Sustainability Plan?

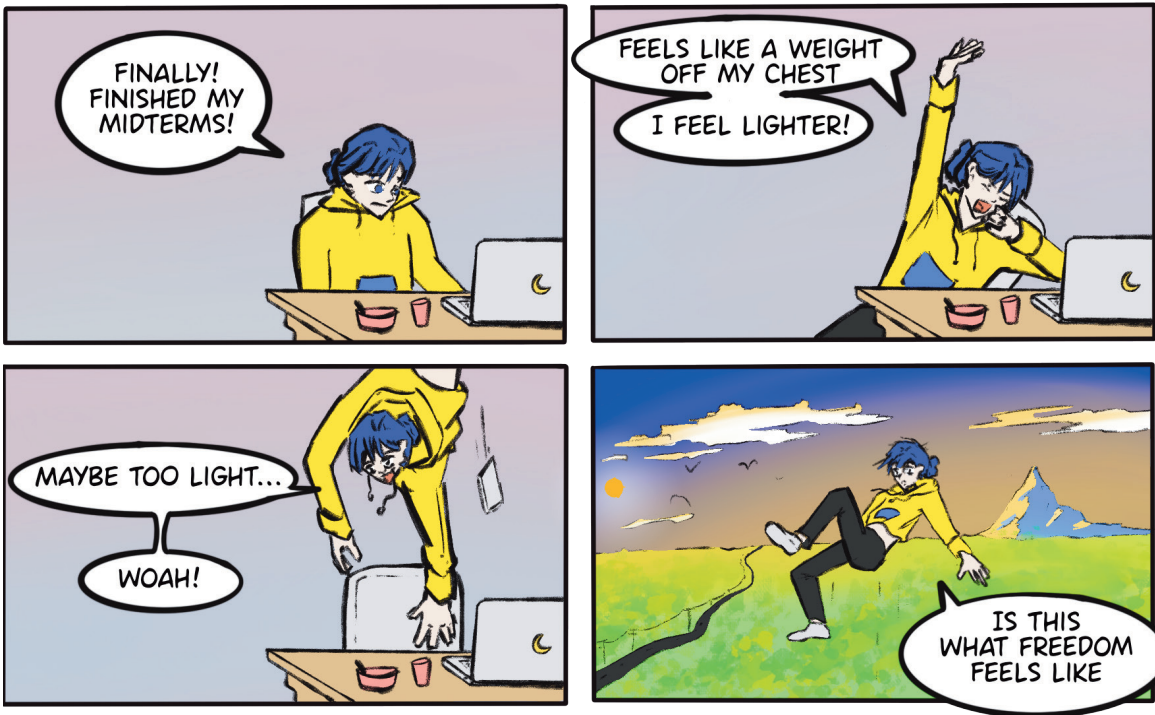
6. In light of the termination of the \$500,000 contract with the consulting company originally hired to build the Sustainability Plan, VCU should commit to funding at least \$500,000 to the One VCU Sustainability Plan's development and implementation. Lastly, we emphasize the importance of committing to a timeline of implementation for the One VCU Sustainability Plan to avoid the fate of the 2010 Climate Action Plan. When Green Action members have previously spoken with administration, it was implied that the measures suggested in the plan would be prioritized and then implemented based on the budget available that fiscal year. VCU should instead commit to a timeline of implementation that achieves the 50% reduction by 2030 that the latest IPCC report indicates is necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change, regardless of effects on profit.

We thank you for your time, and look forward to your response.

VCU Green Action

And all 2,000+ students, as well as faculty, who have signed our petition to date

Weighed Down by Midterms by Anthony Duong



Quick Break From Midterms by Killian Goodale-Porter



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CT

Puzzles

Los Angeles Times

Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

- ACROSS**
1 Native Nebraskans
6 Relishes
12 Speck
15 First word for some babies
19 Spare place
20 Footnote notation
21 French article
22 Grows old
23 Editing scenes from a Wesley Snipes vampire film?
25 Sleep stage
26 New Rochelle school with an award-winning pipe band
27 Nth, for one
28 Putting the final touches on an Ed Asner Pixar film?
31 Least risky
33 “Fire away”
36 Dump
37 Big letters in home security
38 On top of everything
41 Four score and ten
43 Fireplace piece
47 Going on a promotional tour for a Sigourney Weaver family film?
51 Faced
52 Wedding dress option
53 Chocolatey cereal brand
54 Like some conclusions
56 Withdrawing
58 Colorful tee
60 Came out on top
61 Hearth residue
62 Welcomes
63 Hungers
64 Showing the final cut of a Jennifer Lawrence sci-fi film?
- 71 Winter coaster
72 Deodorant brand
73 Hosp. areas
74 No-goodnik
75 Chuck who broke the sound barrier
76 Many a night owl
82 Gilbert and Sullivan work
84 Envelope
86 Skin care brand
88 Tribal emblems
89 Hiring actors for a Shailene Woodley survival-at-sea film?
91 Govt. security
92 Singer/actress Kazan
94 Word in the names of two MLB teams
95 Island chain?
96 Dig
98 College major that may involve many museum trips
100 Bring in
103 Composing the music for a Tom Hanks fantasy film?
107 Radioactive element named for a planet
110 Facility
111 Santa ___ winds
112 Acquiring the rights for a Sandra Bullock action film?
117 Adroit
118 Jump the ___
119 Costello partner
120 Outback canine
121 Herd noises
122 Place with a trough
123 Dictate
124 Kaitlin of “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia”
DOWN
1 Like aspirin, briefly
- 2 ___TV: reality show channel
3 At the wrong time
4 Between, in French
5 Loses control on the ice
6 Communicate with one’s hands
7 “Fernando” singers
8 Country estate
9 “Ghost” psychic ___ Mae Brown
10 Primary color
11 Small duck
12 Two-time NBA Finals MVP Kevin
13 Like cheap toilet paper
14 Beat
15 Downtown street
16 Eager
17 Drop-down list
18 PDQ
24 Capone cohort
29 Wishes undone
30 “Ditto”
31 Enervates
32 1950s politico Stevenson
34 Haughty one
35 Drug bust unit
39 ___ about: circa
40 Brute
42 Drink brand with a green leaf logo
44 Declarer
45 Mortise inserts
46 Paradieses
48 Poet ___ Manley Hopkins
49 Down source
50 “Isn’t ___ bit like you and me?”: Beatles lyric
51 Actor Yul
54 Come clean, with “up”
55 Cartoon canine
57 Queens team
59 “___ only money”
- 62 ICU worker
63 Formal agreement
64 Apply haphazardly
65 Officially give
66 In apple-pie order
67 Swenson of “Benson”
68 U-turn from SSW
69 Liechtenstein’s language
70 Coffee machine setting
71 “Sicko Mode” rapper Travis ___
75 Omani neighbor
76 Carafe size
77 Frazier opponent
78 Canadian bank notes featuring civil rights activist Viola Desmond
79 Thus
80 Dark signs
81 Allude (to)
83 Pension beneficiaries
85 Bhutan locale
87 In a quarrel
89 Big name in banking
90 Chopping down
92 Wheel securer
93 Hudson River capital
97 Hose woes
99 Architectural style
101 Botch
102 Trainee
103 Clothing line
104 Baja resort, familiarly
105 Nobel Institute city
106 Elated
108 Solemn ceremony
109 Poker stake
113 Simpsons grandfather
114 Peacock network
115 ___ trip
116 Get into

HOLLYWOOD ENDINGS by Gary Larson

1	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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117						118				119							120			
121						122				123							124			

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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

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

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