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The **independent** student press of Virginia Commonwealth University

commonwealthtimes.com



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free

CNS briefs

What is Capital News Service?

STACEY HAMMAN
Copy Editor/Staff Writer

Even before the spring semester begins, VCU's Capital News Service hits the ground running.

Student reporters participating in CNS had their orientation into the program this past week during the dregs of holiday intersession classes.

Provided by the VCU School of Mass Communications, CNS allows enrolled students to participate in a high-pressure news environment.

This is the first year CNS has operated as two separately listed classes (MASC 475 and topics course MASC 491). The program is split into a copy-editing section and a reporting section.

Adjunct faculty member Mary Ann Owens directs the copy desk, and associate professor Jeff South directs the reporters. Student reporters will cover the legislative process of state government throughout the 2008 session of the Virginia General Assembly.

CNS accepted about 30 students this year, practically tripling its typical enrollment numbers. The first week of CNS resulted in a distribution of 28 stories.

"That was the most prolific start in CNS history," South stated in an e-mail.

According to the School of Mass Communications' Web site, CNS was established in 1994 as an opportunity for students to cover the General Assembly and "to give the state's weekly, twice-weekly and thrice-weekly (newspapers) better access to the Legislature."

Students also provide graphics and photos for clients of CNS. Images can be found at <http://www.pbases.com/vcucns>.

To the right is a taste of just some of the stories CNS reporters have written for the 2008 legislative session.

General Assembly wrap up

BILL LOOKS TO BAN SALVIA

Salvia, a powerful hallucinogenic, has recently become a favorite among other recreational drugs.

However, this species of the mint family causes anxiety, impaired speech, dizziness and discontent.

Delegate John O'Bannon is seeking to ban salvia, which is not regulated on the federal level, because of a possibility of misuse.

Information provided by Alexander Harris, CNS.

DMV SITE LAUNCHES SAFETY TOOLS

The Department of Motor Vehicles is now providing safety tips, traffic-crash information, and injury and fatality statistics on their Web site.

DMV also is listing the number of traffic-related deaths in Virginia, updating the statistics daily.

DMV's Web site provides several interactive features, including audio, video and other multimedia.

DMV's Web site can be found at www.dmvNOW.com.

Information provided by Bethany Emerson, CNS.

TAKING ACTION AGAINST UNDERAGE DRINKING

"Lights, Camera, Take Action: Stop Underage Drinking Now" is a campaign calling for younger drivers to be the solution to underage drinking.

Four teens were selected out of 70 initial applicants from the Richmond area as finalists for creating public-service announcements for the campaign. The four are competing to air during the Super Bowl.

Information provided by Julia Linden, CNS.

VIRGINIA'S STATE SONG TO BE REVAMPED

After 10 years without a tune, Virginia might have one once again.

A decade ago, the General Assembly retired "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia" as the state song because of its pro-slavery lyrics. James A. Bland wrote the song in 1878, describing an ex-slave's reminiscing about his old life as a slave. Delegate Ann Crockett-Stark is calling for a change of lyrics and a revamp of the song to create a feeling of unity.

Information provided by Eric Peters, CNS.

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cover photo by Rachel Larue

The Commonwealth Times strives to be accurate in gathering news. If you believe we have made an error, please call Executive Editor Gayland Hethcoat at 828-4770 or e-mail him at editor@commonwealthtimes.com. Corrections will appear on this page.



Proposed smoking ban prompts fresh debate

BETHANY EMERSON
Capital News Service

Richmond restaurants might have a mandatory change of atmosphere soon.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine proposed legislation this past Tuesday that would enforce a smoking ban on all restaurants, including private and public clubs, in the commonwealth.

Delegate John M. O'Bannon, R-Richmond, said the smoking ban is one of the most controversial issues up for debate during this year's General Assembly session, which convened Wednesday.

"I think it's one of the top four, five, six topics this year," O'Bannon said. "(It is) right up there with payday lending."

Some local business owners, such as Chip Zimmer-

"The scientific evidence on the health risks associated with exposure to secondhand smoke is clear and convincing ... Recognizing the negative health effects and high public costs of secondhand smoke, Virginia must act to protect the workers and consumers in its restaurants."

— Gov. Timothy M. Kaine

man, an owner of Richmond restaurant Mojo's, say the ban won't hurt sales.

Zimmerman said he is supportive of the legislation.

"In the end, I don't think it will affect sales," Zimmerman said. "People will still go out to eat and don't have to go home smelling like smoke."

Christopher Ripp, the proprietor and executive chef of Can Can, a French restaurant in Carytown, said he agreed. The ban won't hurt sales but instead will draw a new crowd, Ripp said.

"We think it will actually bring in more business," Ripp said. "More people will be willing to have dinner

photo illustration by Rachel Larue

SMOKING BAN continued to CT4

SMOKING BAN continued from CT3

(here). Those who are overly sensitive (to smoke) will ... come more often ... especially on the weekends when the bar gets overcrowded."

Shannon Hicks, marketing director for the Tobacco Company Restaurant in Shockoe Slip, said the staff has been leaning toward making their restaurant a smoke-free facility. Currently, diners are allowed to smoke at the bar or in private areas upon request, Hicks said.

"We will just cross that bridge when we come to it," Hicks said. "When it goes into law, we will all adjust and be in it together."

Barrett Hardiman, director of government relations for the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, said the association opposes Kaine's proposed legislation.

"We are opposed to the smoking ban ... We think it should be a business' choice," Hardiman said. "We're concerned about it and will be working on it this session."

Hardiman said that the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association supports the current Virginia Indoor Clean Air Act that requires any restaurant that has 50 seats or more to provide a non-smoking section.

Hardiman said the association has

a number of members who own cigar bars. Members of his association will be speaking to each of the legislators about the issue to help represent those whose business would be hurt if the legislation is passed.

"(Smoking) ... is something they have built their businesses around," Hardiman said.

O'Bannon said he already has heard from lobbyists on the issue.

"Phillip Morris is in the middle of my district," O'Bannon said. "(I have already received) a tremendous amount of lobbying."

Yet, O'Bannon said he is conscious of Virginia's private businesses owners.

"I'm very sensitive to letting the marketplace work," he said.

Kaine's legislation was motivated by health concerns for restaurant staff and consumers.

"The scientific evidence on the health risks associated with exposure to secondhand smoke is clear and convincing," Kaine said Tuesday. "Recognizing the negative health effects and high public costs of secondhand smoke, Virginia must act to protect the workers and consumers in its restaurants."

According to the governor's Web site, the Virginia Department of Health says secondhand smoke is responsible for 1,700 deaths a year. The Commonwealth of Virginia spends \$124.9 million a year



photo illustration by Rachel Larue

on health-care expenditures related to secondhand smoke exposure, according to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

Erin Bryant, event coordinator and bartender for MoJo's, said she experiences secondhand smoke frequently at her job and supports the smoking ban.

"I lived in Connecticut when they passed the smoking ban there ... and it was almost nicer (after that passed the ban)," she said. "I'm not opposed to it at all."

Kaine's legislation has a better chance of passing this year than last year, O'Bannon said.

Last year, Kaine proposed legislation that passed the General Assembly. The legislation required restaurants with smoking sections to post a "Smoking Permitted" sign. Yet, after Kaine amended the bill to ban smoking in all Virginia restaurants, the bill was rejected by the House of Delegates with a 59-40 vote, and Kaine vetoed the bill.

"(The bill) probably has a better chance this year," O'Bannon said.

For more information or to comment on this legislation, visit www.governor.virginia.gov/SmokeFreeRestaurants/.

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



Rachel Larue photo

Senior Quanitra Hollingsworth picks up an offensive foul, charging over Georgia State's Monica Mann.

Rams rely on defense in win over Panthers

MATT DOYON
Associate Sports Editor

For the 12th time in 14 games, VCU held its opponent to under 60 points and ranks in the top 10 in the nation for scoring defense. The Rams' late defensive intensity stymied a Panthers rally and earned them a 63-48 win Sunday at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

Krystal Vaughn (Baltimore/Lake Clifton-Eastern) put on a clinic at the offensive end of the floor. The senior scored 15 of her game-high 18 points in the first half, occasionally following a missed shot with one of eight rebounds.

Aside from Vaughn, the Rams' lineup combined for just 14 points in the first half and led by only four at halftime. The team shot a lowly 32.4 percent from the floor in the first half, which went hand in hand with some early struggles at the other end.

"For whatever reason, in the first half, we were missing some shots and it was affecting us at the defensive end of the floor," coach Beth Cunningham said.

Quanitra Hollingsworth (Chesapeake/Great Bridge) picked up two early fouls and was forced to spend the first half's final 13 minutes on the bench.

"I thought about going back with (Hollingsworth), but we were able to get a little bit of a lead and felt like I could hold her to the second half," Cunningham said.

The lead changed hands on nearly every possession down the stretch in the first half. Despite the fast tempo, neither team opened up a significant lead. Georgia State didn't lead by more than two throughout the game. The Panthers crippled their chances of gaining the upper hand by being careless with the ball and trailed at the break for the 13th

time in 14 games.

Hollingsworth came alive in the second half to give the Rams the scoring they needed. The junior standout netted all 13 of her points in 16 second-half minutes and scored on an easy layup to give the Rams their largest lead of the game, 50-31.

"You start getting some stops and come down, knock some shots down and it certainly helps your defense too. You start picking up momentum, and I think that's what we were able to do when we stretched our lead," Cunningham said.

In addition to Vaughn and Hollingsworth, junior Radoslava Bachvarova (Varna, Bulgaria/Daytona Beach C.C.) and sophomore La'Tavia Rorie (Charlotte, N.C./Harding University H.S.) scored in double figures with 12 and 10, respectively.

Georgia State finished the game with 25 turnovers, made just 20 field goals and attempted only five free throws.

VCU stretches its best start in school history to 13-1 and has won all three of its CAA games. Georgia State falls to 3-11 and has dropped each of its three conference matchups. The Rams and Panthers will face one another in a rematch on Feb. 17 in Atlanta.

Next for VCU is a trip to Norfolk, where it will face No. 18, Old Dominion. The Monarchs got the best of the Rams in both contests last season, winning by an average of 16.5 points.

Inside the numbers

Georgia State (0-3 CAA, 3-11): C. Smith 0, McKeller 9, Rawls 10, Hollins 17, Haltiwanger 6, V. Smith 0, Harris 0, Mann 6, Young 0, Anderson 0. Totals: 20 3-5 48. 3-pointers: Hollins 1, Haltiwanger 2, Mann 2.

VCU (3-0 CAA, 13-1): Vaughn 18, Bachvarova 12, Hollingsworth 13, Jones 2, Rorie 10, Patterson 0, Waller 8, Taylor 0, Moss 0, Pinkney 0. Totals: 22 14-21 63. 3-pointers: Bachvarova 2, Rorie 2, Waller 1.

THIS WEEK

Men's Basketball

Wed., Jan. 16, vs. Delaware, Siegel Center, 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 19, @ Old Dominion, Norfolk, 4 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Thu., Jan. 17, @ Old Dominion, Norfolk, 7 p.m.

Sun., Jan. 20, vs. James Madison, Harrisonburg, 2 p.m.

Men's Tennis

Fri., Jan. 18, vs. Drexel and James Madison in 4X1 Invitational, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Sun., Jan. 20, vs. Richmond and

Longwood in 4X1 Invitational, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Men's Track and Field

Jan. 18-19, @ East Tennessee State, Johnson City, Tenn., all day

Women's Track and Field

Sat., Jan. 19, @ Maryland Invitational, Landover, Md., all day

VCU sporting events are free to students with a valid student ID. For more information, visit vcuathletics.com or call the VCU Sports Line at 828-3440.

Men's basketball team gets defensive against William & Mary

JONATHAN HOWARD
Sports Editor

Senior shooting guard Jamal Shuler (Jacksonville, N.C./Jacksonville) had his hands full with Georgia State's Leonard Mendez, the third-best scorer in the CAA, last Thursday. On Saturday, Shuler had the task of guarding the CAA's leading scorer, Hofstra's Antoine Agudio.

Shuler held Agudio to 14 points, 10 below his average, on only 11 shots to lead VCU to a 59-49 victory at the Stuart

C. Siegel Center.

"I just wanted to not let him get going from the three-point line," Shuler said of his defensive effort.

Shuler added he would rather have had Agudio get to the rim for layups and shooting 15-foot jump shots.

"He's not going to beat us that way," he said.

Without Agudio's scoring, Hofstra couldn't get anything going on offense. The Pride shot just 38.6 percent from the field. VCU also forced 17 turnovers.

"Our focus was on the defensive end," VCU head coach Anthony Grant said. "Where we struggled tonight was offensively."

Grant's comments alluded to the number of turnovers and lack of scoring. For the second consecutive game the Rams were held under 60 points and also committed 17 turnovers.

"A lot of it was our guys forcing things that weren't there. Anytime you can consistently defend the way we defend, you are putting yourself in a position to win," Grant said. "What I told our guys is stop negating that with the way we are playing offense."

The Rams shot only 25.9 percent in the first half and 36.5 percent for the game. However, Hofstra was unable to get any closer than four in the final five minutes of the game.

VCU held a 27-22 lead at halftime, but looked to be comfortably ahead just

five minutes into the second half when a 12-4 run put the Rams up 39-26. VCU held leads between eight and 12 points before Hofstra was able to knock the lead down to four at 49-45 with 4:36 to play. However, the Rams finished out the game on a 10-4 run, which included six points from point guard Eric Maynor (Raeford, N.C./Westover).

Maynor finished with a game-high 18 points to go along with three assists. Shuler and senior forward Wil Fameni (Douala, Cameroon/Amelia Academy) finished with 10 points each.

Freshman point guard Joey Rodriguez (Oviedo, Fla./Lake Howell) and sophomore forward Kirill Pishchalnikov (Makop, Russia/MGGTK AGU) both made their first career start in the victory.

The Rams are back in action on Wednesday night against conference-leading Delaware.

MEN'S BASKETBALL STANDINGS

team	conference	overall	games back	streak
Delaware	5-0	8-7	-	W4
VCU	4-1	11-4	1	W3
George Mason	3-2	11-5	2	W1
James Madison	3-2	10-5	2	W1
Old Dominion	3-2	8-9	2	L1
William & Mary	3-2	7-8	2	W3
UNC Wilmington	2-3	9-8	3	L1
Northeastern	2-3	6-9	3	L1
Towson	2-3	6-9	3	W1
Drexel	1-4	8-9	4	L3
Georgia State	1-4	4-11	4	L3
Hofstra	1-4	3-11	4	L2

Inside the numbers

Hofstra (1-4 CAA, 3-11): Townes 8, D. Johnson 7, Agudio 14, G. Johnson 0, Jenkins 9, Lester 6, Sestokas 2, Cherilus 0, Washington 0, Davis-Sabb 3. Totals: 17 15-23 49.

VCU (4-1 CAA, 11-4): Fameni 10, Pishchalnikov 4, Maynor 18, Rodriguez 5, Shuler 10, Sanders 6, Rozzell 0, Anderson 4, Kearse 0, Nixon. Totals: 19 18-22 59. 3-pointers: Maynor 2, Rodriguez.

The CT sports editor sounds off

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

North Carolina is proving they truly deserve to be the top team in the nation. Forget about the fact that the Tar Heels were sluggish in a victory over UNC, Asheville. UNC proved it is a better team than last year by overcoming Clemson on the road, despite playing from behind for most of the game and whipping rival N.C. State at home. Last year's Elite Eight team was close – but this year's team has the maturity and the willpower to get to the title game.

I've never liked Memphis – but the Tigers also are proving that they belong on top of the polls. Head coach John Calipari took a risk by scheduling home games with Georgetown and Arizona and road games with Oklahoma and Connecticut,

but the Tigers have responded and are 15-0. Conference USA is not strong this year, so it is possible that Calipari's squad could go undefeated. The only road block is a Feb. 23 match-up with No. 9 Tennessee.

NBA

The fact that Atlanta and Miami have to replay the last minute of a game later on in the year is ludicrous. How competent do you have to be to count fouls? The referee motions toward the scorer's table and clearly points out who commits a foul. So how did the good folks in Atlanta manage to miscount and disqualify Shaq when he only had five fouls? In my opinion, forget about it. Forget the last minute of the game. It's not like the game is doing anything to affect the Heat's season. They

aren't good no matter what. Fine the guys who were supposed to be able to do basic second-grade math and move on with the season.

NFL

To my dismay, the Patriots are still moving after a 31-20 victory over Jacksonville on Saturday night. If any team was going to stop the Patriots, it was the Jags. David Garrard was efficient enough and the Jacksonville defense was good enough to slow down the New England attack – but the team was unable to accomplish the task. Neither San Diego nor Indianapolis has a solid enough combination of offense and defense to get the job done. It will be up to an NFC team to stop the Patriots' run at the title.



JONATHAN SAYS

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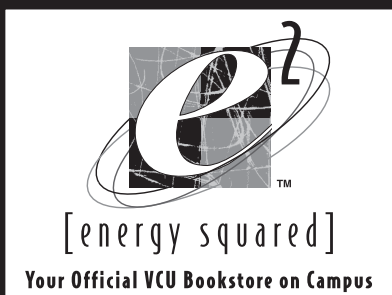
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SPORTS BRIEFS

While many students went on vacation during break, VCU athletic teams remained in action. Here is some of the action you might have missed.

BASEBALL

Junior first baseman/outfielder Jared Bolden (Lynchburg/E.C. Glass) was named to the Brooks Wallace Player of the Year Award watch list and was named third-team All-PING! by PING! baseball.com.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Rams won six of seven games over the break, including victories over cross-town rival Richmond and conference foes UNC Wilmington and Georgia State. The lone loss came at the hands of James Madison in Harrisonburg, where the Dukes took a 62-61 victory thanks to a layup by Juwann James as time expired.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Just like the men's team, the women's basketball team won six of seven games over the break, including victories over Richmond and conference rivals Northeastern and William and Mary. The Rams also took home wins in the VCU SportsCenter Holiday Classic over Morgan State and Boston University. The Rams suffered their first loss of the season in a December road game against Georgetown.

MEN'S SOCCER

Many Rams were honored over the break for their solid play. Gerson Dos Santos (Sao Paulo, Brazil/E.E. Ruth Cabral Troncarelli) was named first-team all-state, while Jorit Loehr (Bremen, Germany), Dirk Dittrich

(Stuttgart, Germany) and Sven Meusch (Cologne, Germany) were all named to the second team. Dos Santos and Dittrich also were named to the National Soccer Coaches Association of America All-South Atlantic region team.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Junior midfielder Megan Flanagan (Franktown, Colo./Ponderosa) was named third team All-Mid Atlantic region by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Sophomore defenseman Myriam Bouchard (Quebec, Canada/Cardinal Roy) was invited to train with the Canadian U-20 team. Bouchard accumulated 4 goals and two assists for a total of 10 points this season.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

The Rams posted four victories and 23 top-five finishes in the Navy quad meet in Annapolis, Md. Sophomore Jason Gallo (Rochester, N.Y./Eastridge) won the 55-meter dash with a time of 6.52 seconds; Guy Alton (New Kent/New Kent) won the 3,000-meter run with a time of 8:39.18; Mike Garel (Stafford/Brooke Point) won the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7.7 seconds; and Allen Moody (Woodbridge/Garfield) used a 6'4.25 jump to take first in the high jump.

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

The Rams participated in the CNU Holiday Open over the break and placed best in the 3,000-meter run in which Reagan Merriam (Fredericksburg/Massaponax) and Genova Washington (Woodbridge/Garfield) placed third and fourth.

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REVIEW

Richards hits mark with musical magic

ROBERTO CURTIS

Spectrum Editor

The Landmark Theater brought in world-class arranger and VCU Jazz Studies founder Doug Richards Saturday for an evening of jazz none will soon forget.

A packed crowd was in attendance to witness Richards' sparse-yet-inspirational appearance as conductor for the evening.

Richards brought together on one stage the Richmond Symphony, the Richmond Children's Choir and Richards' own jazz orchestra, the Great American Music Ensemble.

Featuring some of the most solid jazz musicians ever to grace Richmond, the 15-piece ensemble dominated Saturday evening with impeccable expression and masterful interpretation of the swinging charts.

Musical heavies sharing the title of "Most Burning Solo" included Rex Richardson and John D'earth on trumpet, Luis Hernandez on tenor saxophone and Harold Summey on drums.

Embellishing the harmonies beautifully throughout the evening were the string players of the Richmond Symphony. They lent their expertise to Richards' exquisite palette of sound with either stunning or subtle results, especially in Ann Ronell's lush "Willow Weep for Me" and Duke Ellington's foreboding shuffle, "Night Creature."

The conductor's creativity also shone through in Vernon Duke's "April in Paris." Richards' arrangement encompassed several French melodies, including the "Can-Can" and Claude Debussy's "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune."

Richards called out the mellifluous Sharon Clark to use her wonderful voice in several songs during the performance. These



Roberto Curtis photo

included Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady," Harry Brooks and Thomas "Fats" Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin'" and Ray Henderson's "Bye Bye Blackbird."

Also performing during the evening was the Greater Richmond Children's Choir. The choir's musical ability was beyond their years, partially because of Richards' well-honed teaching skills.

The bulk of the event featured compositions by Ellington and George Gershwin. But the gems of the evening were the original compositions and arrangements of Richards himself.

"Good" is a song Richards said "had the chord changes to a Gershwin tune with the word 'good' in it." The song featured four-part harmony lines throughout the trumpets, trombones and saxophones, resulting in amazing rushes of color.

Richards' "Expansions on 'A Mare Encheu'" and W.C. Handy's "Aunt Hagar's Blues" closed out the evening and nearly shook the Landmark to its foundation.

Some might remember the North American segment of the "Intercontinental Concerto for Trumpet and Jazz Orchestra" from last spring's national premier at the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts. The piece was pleasantly snuck onto the program to the delight of many.

"Expansions" had its premiere Saturday with all three ensembles showing tight cohesion. Based on an old Brazilian folk poem, the piece featured a booming entrance with diabolical and dreamy passages, lovely Brazilian percussion and the only drum solo of the night. The musical content of the work and the performance were on a level nearly unheard of in this day and age.

LEFT: Doug Richards, guest conductor and professor of jazz arranging

'In Rainbows' delivers simplicity, style and sensuality



ROBERTO CURTIS

Spectrum Editor

Radiohead's seventh studio album, "In Rainbows," is finally available in stores, and like a fine red wine, the band only seems to be getting better with age.

Harder and reminiscent of their younger days are songs like "Bodysnatchers" and "Jigsaw Falling Into Place" (think: The Bends).

The constantly driving sound of Phil Selway's drum beats lends itself to minimalism, electronica and modern rock and perfectly complements the soothing synth and guitar sounds throughout.

Particularly indicative of the direction Radiohead is going is the song "Weird Fishes/Arpeggi." With chorus, strings and reverb layered on top of one another, the song is an epic story in itself, complete

RAINBOWS continued to CT11

CD
review

Hell's Kitchen residents reenact 'Weekend at Bernie's'

Police said two men from New York's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood were arrested Tuesday after attempting to wheel a corpse into a store to cash the dead man's social security check, the Associated Press reports.

When Virgilio Cintron, 66, died with a \$355 social security check in his possession, his roommate and a friend decided to make the most of the untimely passing.

The roommate, James P. O'Hare, and his accomplice, David P. Dalaia, are both 65 and unemployed. They placed the body in an office chair and wheeled it out of Cintron's apartment at 436 W. 52nd St., around the corner and down Ninth Avenue on Tuesday afternoon.

The two men attempted to wheel the chair into the building after being told Cintron would have to cash the check himself. By then, a crowd had started to form, startled by the sight of a floppy body being propped up by two men.

Police and medics arrived as the two men were trying to maneuver the chair and the corpse into the store.

The men were taken into custody and

questioned. A coroner's exam revealed that Cintron had died of natural causes.

Whalers and Greens collide on the high seas

In an alleged attempt to revive the commercial whaling industry, a Japanese fleet has animal rights groups hot on their heels.

With instructions to kill about 1,000 whales for research purposes, the fleet has begun the largest hunt in decades, according to the Associated Press.

Greenpeace International and a militant offshoot, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, are both chasing the whaling fleet – the latter resorting to violent methods and their ship, Steve Irwin

Greenpeace has refused to cooperate with the Australian radicals because of an incident that resulted in a Sea Shepherd ship ramming a Japanese vessel.

The Japanese fleet is able to stay well ahead of the activists because of their faster ships. However, Sea Shepherd sources inside Greenpeace will most likely be leaking the fleet's coordinates to the radicals, resulting in a three-way confrontation that could result in more than whales being harmed.

Critics of the clause that allows this killing say it is merely a front to keep the industry alive until the Japanese can overturn the 1986 ban on the killing of whales for commercial purposes.

Sugar-free gum linked to diarrhea

Consuming too much sorbitol, an artificial sweetener used in sugar-free chewing gum, might cause bowel problems, states a study released by German doctors.

According to Associated Press reports, the study was written after two patients, a man and a woman, both suffered from chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain and dramatic weight loss. Sorbitol was the common ingredient in their diets.

After kicking the 15 to 20 stick-a-day habit, both regained their normal bowel functions.

Known as E420, sorbitol has been found to have laxative properties and is poorly absorbed by the small intestine.

Doctors at the University of Berlin said many consumers might not link the gastrointestinal problems with the artificial sweetener.

RAINBOWS continued from CT10

with a less-than-positive message of hitting the bottom and escaping.

The album opens with an odd-metered song in five-four called "15 Step." Gorgeous effects include the dry tightness of the snare, sensual phasers, key modulation, cheering children and one bad bass line.

"Reckoner" is a song dedicated to all human beings and features startlingly beautiful vocal and orchestral harmonies. Simplicity wins out and teaches a valuable lesson to the timbre-happy producers of the music industry.

The overall feel of the album is

very dark and pensive, typical of the band and what the fans have come to love and respect. The sophistication of the group emerges throughout the music with the use of strings, electronic elements, odd meters and the always inspiringly melancholy sound of Thom Yorke's voice.

"In Rainbows" is another album that will keep Radiohead elevated to their superstar status, which is exactly what the fans want.

Grade: A+

Download (don't steal): "Bodysnatchers" by Radiohead

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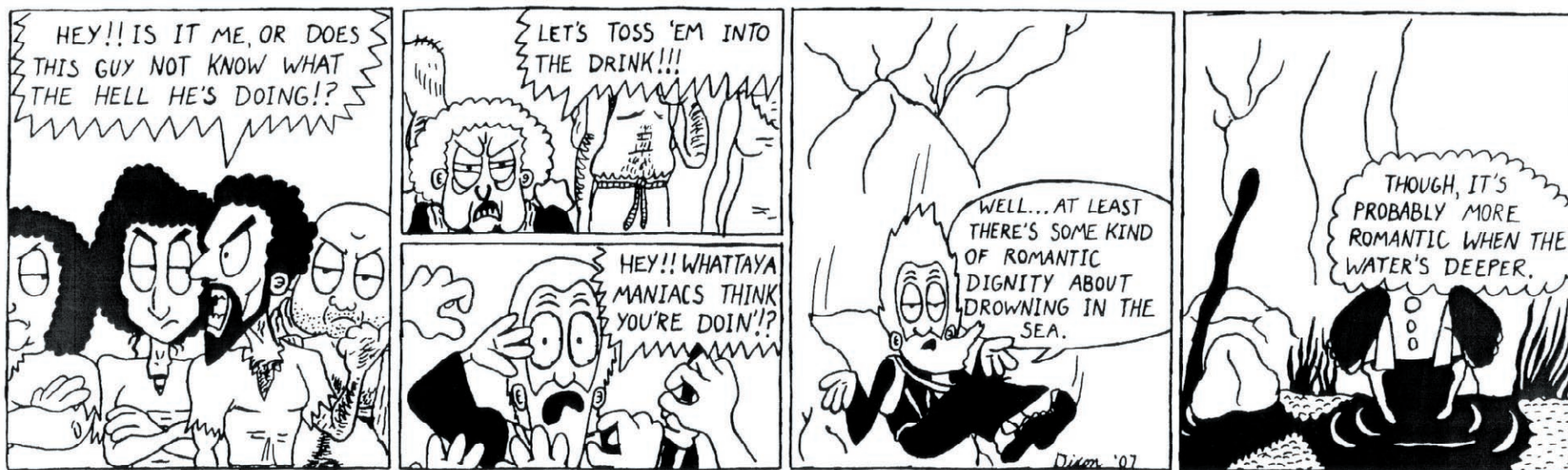
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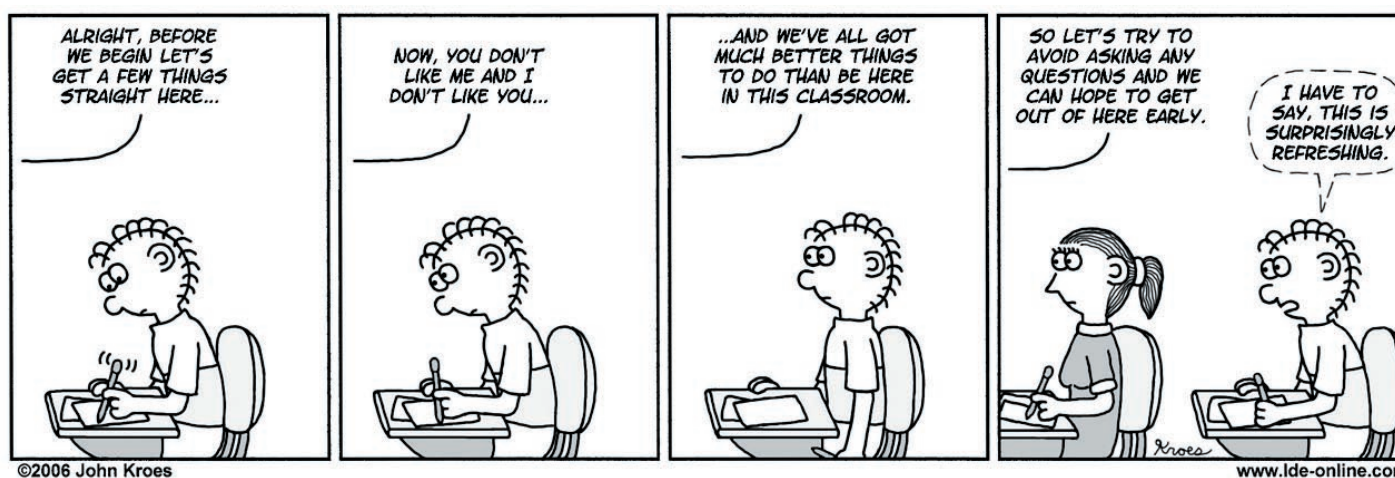
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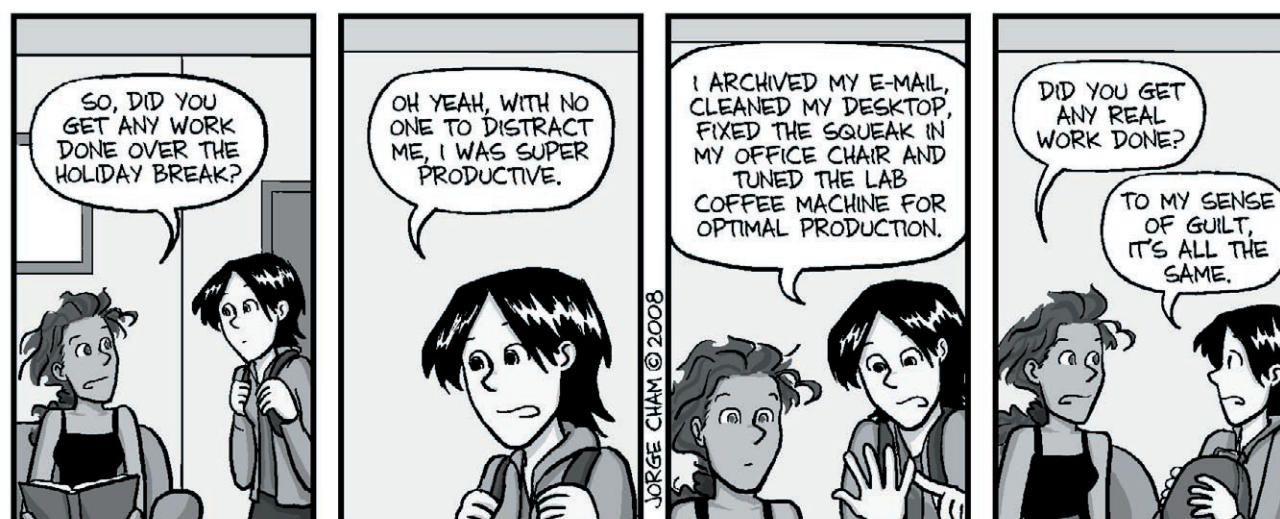
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opinion

STRAIGHT OUTTA HELL BLOCK

The Communist Digesto

RICH GRISET
Opinion Editor

I had to have my stomach pumped yesterday. It was not from too much alcohol or from accidentally ingested poison. It was because I had eaten at Shafer Dining Center.

After class, my “friend” Brittany invited me to eat with her at Shafer, so that we could have a long discussion about relationships, our future and all the other ways that I was a complete screwup. Brittany and I grabbed some food, then sat down.

The broccoli had absolutely no flavor. Neither did the barbeque. When I bit into the apple I knew something had to be wrong. Shafer had sucked all of the flavor out of the fruit. I put down the apple in disgust.

Brittany and I got into a heated argument about exactly how



Karen Sagun
illustration

DIGESTO continued to CT15

Greetings from Zanzibar

RICH GRISET
Opinion Editor

Greetings kids and kittens. Have no fear, for I am here – your saving literary grace. Faster than a speeding bullet. Scarier than Stephen King on crack. I have come to rescue you from the ordinary, the mundane and the normal.

Whoever decided to dub me the editorial master must have a screw loose, but for whatever reason (probably no one else applied), I am the new opinion editor at the CT. If this relationship between writer and reader is to go beyond two dates and a clumsy drunken one-night stand, I should probably tell you a little about myself.

I was born on the island of Zanzibar among the Zanzibarbarians. I came straight out of the womb with a shovel and went to the mine. I loaded 16 tons of number-nine coal, but that’s another story for another time.

I eventually left Zanzibar after seeing a broadcast of Carson Daly on Total Request Live for the first time and realizing my true calling – I would become a professional tool. I found myself on the streets of Los Angeles without the vaguest idea of how to break in. I had stints on a few sitcoms, befriended some adult film “actresses” and took a day job selling doors door-to-door.

All was well until I was kidnapped by a group of women while walking down the street. I had made the

Note from the Editorial Board

The CT would like to introduce “Straight Outta Hell Block,” (above) a satirical, irreverent, farcical column written by our new Opinion Editor Rich Griset. Think Hunter S. Thompson minus the firearms. Enjoy the ride.



mistake of spraying an entire can of Axe body spray on my person, and they had made a business of bottling my sweat in a sauna and selling it on the black market. Eventually the Axe wore out, and I woke up one morning inside a trash bag in a ditch.

That would have been fine with me, but the ditch also happened to be in Richmond, which explains how and why I am here.

And it’s also why Pluto should still be a planet...

the
ct

REBECCA
LANDAU
Executive Editor

RICH
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Letters must be sent from a valid VCU e-mail address or signed with daytime and evening telephone contact. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, style and space.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear VCU Student Body,

On behalf of my running mates Gonzalo Aida and Joshua Ronk, I am writing to declare my candidacy in the March elections for VCU Monroe Park Campus student body president.

Elected officials should be accountable to the people, and accordingly, we will be the humble servants you deserve, protecting you from excessive government.

Spending is out of control. As your student body president, I will cut costs by hiring only staff members absolutely essential to executive operations. We can set a good example to the university by being frugal with our own money.

Secondly, Richmond has been good to us and I think it is time that we be good to Richmond—a city in which 18.5 percent of its inhabitants live below the poverty line. I am very sympathetic to the needs of the working poor—many of whom serve us daily. Being student body president is an hourly, paid position, and as president, I will donate all of my earnings over minimum wage to the Richmond Food Bank to show my solidarity with VCU employees who are not capable of earning a living wage. Gonzalo and Joshua join me in

this promise. Our sacrifice can be a symbol.

I am a second-term student body senator and am the former chairman of the Senate's Legislative Affairs Committee.

Gonzalo Aida is a third-year political science student and a person who prides himself on being up to date on all current events. As your student body vice president, we can expect him to be the fair moderator of the Student Senate.

As a floor rep. to the hall council in Brandt Hall, Joshua Ronk is used to bringing people together. As our SGA executive director, we can expect nothing less. Joshua knows that we can do great things when we put our heads together.

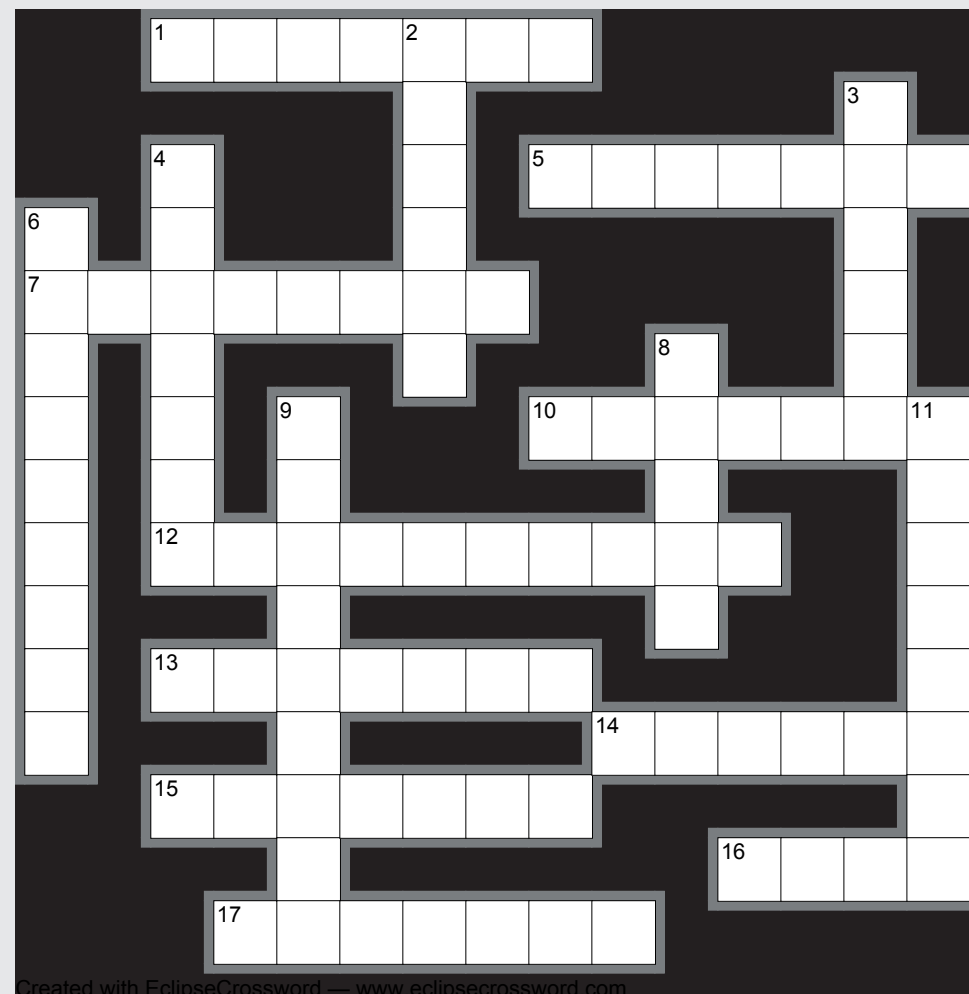
I wish you a positive, productive semester! And I look forward to seeing you along the trail ahead.

Respectfully yours,

Steven C. Latimer
SGA Senator
Monroe Park Campus

Editor's Note – According to the 2006 census, 20.8 percent live below the poverty line, which only further proves Mr. Latimer's point.

Movie trivia



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Across

1. "Donnie Darko" teacher played by Drew Barrymore.
5. Bart Simpson nemesis.
7. Sensei of the Ninja Turtles.
10. "Saved by the Bell" principal.
12. Headmaster of Hogwarts.
13. Tina Fey in "Mean Girls."
14. "Friday Night Lights" coach.
15. Doug Funny's junior high school teacher.
16. Jack Black play rock and roll teacher Dewey ____ in "School of Rock."
17. Michelle Pfeiffer plays Louanne ____ in "Dangerous Minds."

Down

2. Principal ____ attempts to track down Ferris Bueller.
3. "Breakfast Club" principal Richard ____.
4. Richard Dreyfuss stars in "Mr. ____'s Opus."
6. Jaime ____ is a math teacher in "Stand and Deliver."
8. Morgan Freeman in "Lean on Me."
9. Stressed history teacher from "Daria."
11. "South Park" teacher.

DIGESTO continued from CT14

many other "friends" I had encountered since the two of us began to be "friends." Her count was twenty-three, mine was 38. We might have embellished a little bit, but all's fair in love and friendship.

A sudden dizziness overtook me. The room started spinning like I was on a demented merry-go-round. Brittany said I was just trying to avoid the issue of my friendship infidelity, but I swore to her that I wasn't. My stomach cried out in pain and I fell to the floor.

She took me to the VCU Office of Health Promotion next to the Stuart C. Siegel Center where they rushed me in, handed me an emergency Z-pack and sent me on my way. It seems to be the only medication they ever prescribe.

A half-hour later I collapsed again and was rushed to MCV Hospital. After they found out that I had a slew of overdue library books at Cabell, I received the same treatment as Patch Adams when they kicked him out of the building 30 years ago. After witnessing the Michael Moore documentary "Sicko," I knew there was only one thing to do. I flew to Cuba.

Once in Cuba, I had the time of my life sightseeing, meeting Fidel Castro and even encountering some Afghani goat herders who had recently escaped from Gitmo. I received first-class treatment and flew back to VCU this morning with an empty stomach, some red ideals, and the opinion that eating at Shafer is close to being suicidal.

www.commonwealthtimes.com

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