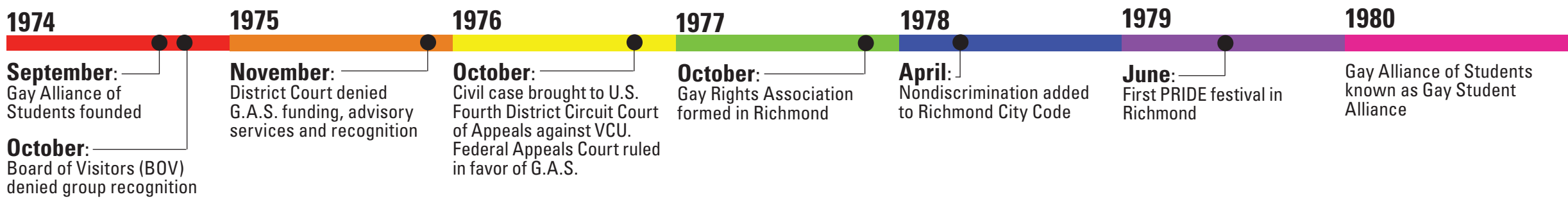




THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

Remembering students' civil rights fight 40 years later

 LGBT history month is observed during the month of October.



Jesse Jackson urges VCU to vote during surprise visit

The civil rights icon highlighted America's progress through the years and the change he hoped was yet to come.

FADEL ALLASSAN
News Editor

The Rev. Jesse Jackson made a surprise stop at VCU Thursday, where he urged students to vote in the Nov. 8 election.

Jackson, who came third for the Democratic Presidential Primary in 1984 and second in 1988, made clear who he supports in this year's presidential election.

"I'm here today because I made a choice. I challenge you to make a choice. I support Hillary Clinton. That's my choice, you may have another choice, if you're not clear," Jackson said from the steps of Cabell Library as the crowd laughed.

Jackson said that millennials should vote to protect causes they care about, as an audience of about 75 students and faculty initially gathered outside the library steps to hear the civil rights activist speak.

"You vote to protect the right to vote. You vote to reduce student loan debt. You vote for affordable

health care," Jackson said. "You vote to fight for justice. You vote for equal protection. You vote for gender equality and racial justice."

As Jackson highlighted America's progress through the years and the change he hoped would come in the future, the crowd grew larger as others who passed by joined the group to listen.

"This year we have a big election and big choices," Jackson said. "Your role as students will help change the course of our nation for the better. I cannot forget 1965, for the first time in 85 years African-Americans had the right to vote."

The Reverend said America has changed for the better since then, but there is still "tremendous unfinished business" today.

"Why should we vote? We vote to protect the right to vote," Jackson said. "The forces that denied us the right the vote are trying to encroach upon those rights and to make it less possible today."

Twenty-three pipeline protesters arrested outside McAuliffe's mansion

FADEL ALLASSAN
News Editor

Deborah Kushner, a Nelson County resident, was participating in a picket line downtown on Broad Street around noon last Wednesday.

About an hour later, she and 22 others were escorted away from the Governor's mansion toward a tent where their information would be recorded and their criminal records updated to reflect a trespassing arrest by police.

This is how Kushner and others who participated in the protest, organized by Maryland-based environmental advocacy group Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN), decided to send a message to Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

The group's idea was to urge McAuliffe to reject Dominion Power's proposals for two natural gas pipelines and permits allowing the energy giant to

continued on page 2



Nelson County resident Deborah Kushner was among the protesters who blocked the entrance to the Governor's mansion.

Sports

Final Four Star Returns to VCU

story on page 5



CRIME LOG

(All data obtained from the VCU PD daily incident log)

- 10/3/2016

Simple Assault - Domestic
800 S. Cathedral Pl.
Closed

Hit and Run
1000 W. Cary St.
Reported by Outside Agency

Theft From Building
Seigel Center 1200 W.
Broad St.
Pending

Hit and Run
1102 W. Grace St.
Reported by Outside Agency

All Other Larceny ACC
417 N. 11th St.
Pending
- 10/5/2016

Aggravated Assault
Cary St. Mini Mart 1317
W. Cary St.
Reported by Outside Agency

Extortion/Blackmail
505 W. Grace St.
Reported by Outside Agency

Kidnapping/Abduction/
Sexual Battery
B600 N. 8th St.
Pending

Theft From Building CCH
1213 E. Clay St.
Pending

Trespassing/City Code
Violation - Alcohol
Monroe Park 12 N. Belvi-
dere St.
Closed

Destruction of Property -
Private
300 N. Madison St.
Reported by Outside Agency
- 10/6/2016

Sexual Battery
B700 W. Franklin St.
Pending

Theft From Building
School of Engineering
601 W. Main St.
Pending

Destruction of Property -
State VTCC
515 N. 10th St.
Pending

Drunkenness
7-11 1003 W. Grace St.
Closed
- 10/7/2016

Simple Assault
1359 W. Broad St.
Pending

Reporting suspicious or
emergency situations to
the VCU Police Depart-
ment can help solve
crimes, provide emergency
assistance that may save a
life and help deter criminal
activity.

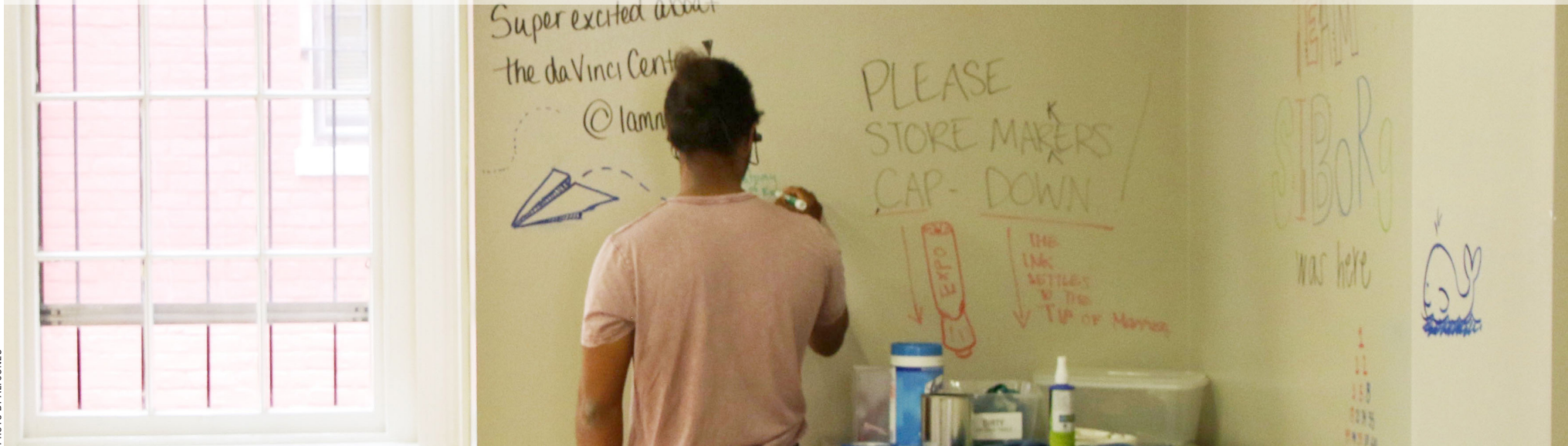
Download the VCU
LiveSafe mobile phone app
to report crimes anony-
mously.

To contact the VCU PD call
(804) 828-1196.

For an on-campus emer-
gency call (804) 828-1234.

For an off-campus emer-
gency call 911.

da Vinci Center joins Berkley, Stanford in European Innovation Academy partnership



The European Innovation Academy is a non-profit educational institution in France devoted to tech innovation.

FADEL ALLASSAN
News Editor

The da Vinci Center, VCU's cross-disciplinary program for innovation and entrepreneurship, recently partnered with the European Innovation Academy for an Italian-based summer program. VCU students will join more than 600 others from 82 nations next summer in Turin, Italy for the European Innovation Academy's 15-day program. Students will learn necessary skills to develop and pitch their ideas to venture capital firms. "We provide academic coursework to students as well as a growing offering of experiential opportunities for students around innovation and entrepreneurship," said da Vinci Center director Garret Westlake. The da Vinci Center program at VCU merges the Schools of the Arts, Business, Engineering and College of Humanities and Sciences to offer an undergraduate certificate program and the nation's first master's

degree in product innovation. The EIA, which is based in France and hosting the summer event, is a non-profit educational institution devoted to tech innovation. VCU joins the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University and other top schools in partnering with the Academy next summer.

I'm super impressed and amazed by the level of students VCU has.

Anni Sinijarv
Co-founder and CEO, EIA

The EIA initiative will be a cornerstone of the Master of Product Innovation Program. Westlake said candidates for the degree will benefit from working alongside people from other top universities around the country and the world. "Any time you get to partner with Stanford and Berkely and other leading international universities thats a great partnership to have," Westlake said. "I think the implications are that VCU students will be able to demonstrate their talents and abilities on an international stage." Anni Sinijarv, the co-founder and CEO of the European Innovation Academy, said she is looking forward to having VCU students as a part of the program for the first time. "I'm super impressed and amazed by the level of students VCU has," Sinijarv said, "Garrett (Westlake) himself is a very inspiring leader in a way that I'm sure that as he will select the students, they will all be the best fit."

Westlake worked with the EIA previously during his time as Associate Dean Of Student Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University, and said he knows the program can be very beneficial to students who get the chance to attend. "Some of those experiences will look like forming well-developed startups that come to market and receive venture capital to advance," Westlake said. "But some students will benefit from forming a startup company that fails miserably very quickly and learning lessons about failure." Sinijarv said she hopes students will not only learn about themselves, but receive direction about how to make headway with their personal endeavors. "We want students to have the full education," Sinijarv said. "Full know-how of how to build a startup so once they graduate the program they can either start up with their own company, they can continue with the start up they already started with the academy or they just get this entrepreneurial sparkle."

Protesters demand climate action from McAuliffe Admin.

—continued from page 1
dump treated coal-ash into the James River. For Kushner, the issue is close to home — literally. She said one of the proposed pipelines, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, will pass through five miles from her home in Nelson County and could have negative affects on her community. "I know people whose land is in the direct path of this pipeline," Kushner said in a written statement. "We must stop our dependence on fossil fuels that are heating up our atmosphere, destroying our mountains, rising sea levels and clogging and polluting waterways. If it takes marching, picketing and getting arrested, so be it. We are fighting for our survival." The Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is a proposed 600-mile pipeline which would run from Harrison County, W.Va., and travel southeast through Virginia and into South Carolina. If approved, construction for the pipeline would begin in fall 2017. Like the ACP, the proposed 301-mile Mountain Valley Pipeline, (MVP) would begin in West



Protesters conducted a picket line on Broad Street before moving to the Governor's Mansion to block its entrance.

Virginia and pass through southern Virginia. If approved, the MVP would hypothetically begin construction in late 2018. "My wife and I draw our drinking water from a spring that could be disrupted or drained completely by the sort of trenching and blasting required by the Mountain Valley Pipeline," said Russell Chisholm, a Newport resident whose home is a few miles from the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline. Like Kushner, Chisholm was arrested in front of the Governor's

Mansion. Police escorted each of the 23 protesters one at a time on Wednesday, as other protesters chanted the names of those being arrested in support. "Governor McAuliffe and his administration have the power to protect our clean water. It's not a question of means but of the political will to do the right thing." Many at Wednesday's protest urged companies like Dominion to move away from natural gas, a notion which Dominion spokesperson Aaron Ruby said isn't feasible. "We respect everyone's right to

express their views, but we fundamentally disagree with anyone who says we can eliminate natural gas from our economy and still have electricity and home heating for all Virginians," Ruby said. "That's just totally unrealistic." Ruby said Virginians have plenty to gain from the construction of these two pipelines like cleaner electricity and affordable heating, lower energy costs and better paying jobs for thousands of Virginians. The governor's office is taking a similar stance, according to As-

sistant Communications Director for Governor Terry McAuliffe, Sam Coleman. Coleman said McAuliffe has to balance the basic economic reality with the "very real threat" of climate change. "I think the governor would be the first to say, 'we respect having differences of opinion on the matter,'" Coleman said. "But he's been very consistent on his support of the pipeline and what it's going to do for the economy of southwest Virginia (...) we feel that he's done a remarkable job."

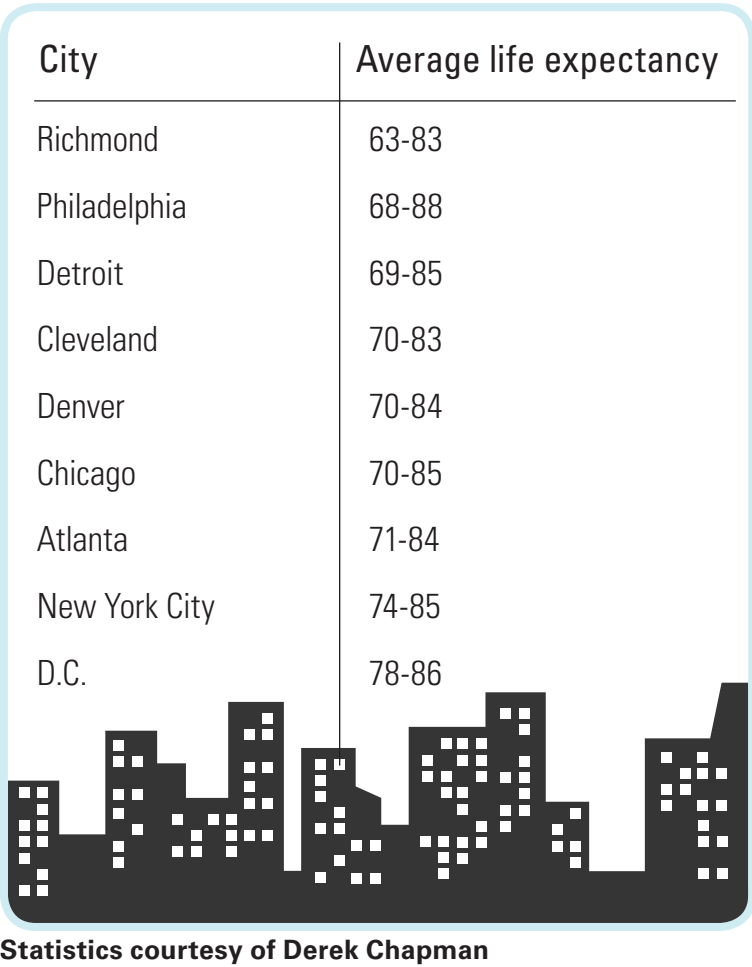
Research says residency can reduce life expectancy

SARAROSE MARTIN
Contributing Writer

According to a researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University, the average life expectancy of Richmond residents varies between 63 and 83 years of age, depending on which portion of the city a person resides. Derek Chapman, associate director for research at the VCU Center for Society and Health, the nation's largest center devoted solely to improving the health of all Americans, created 21 maps across the country to estimate life expectancies in different areas using U.S. Census population data. "People have been shocked at the magnitude of health gaps — up to a 20 year difference in life expectancy in some areas for persons living just a few miles apart," Chapman said. Chapman said the maps have prompted conversation about health gaps in neighborhoods and the role all parts of society can have in diminishing the inequities. "These maps are meant to serve as a conversation starter to raise awareness that gaps in health by neigh-

borhood exist," Chapman said. "The next step is for local policymakers and change agents to continue this dialogue by having a broad range of players at the table, including multiple government agencies." During the course of the data collection process, the researchers also worked with local health officials and key stakeholders in different communities to ensure the maps were accurate and locally relevant. "A map is a compelling communications tool because people recognize the areas on the map and can and immediately see striking differences in health across small distances," Chapman said. According to Chapman, health differences between neighborhoods are rarely due to a single cause. Opportunities for education and jobs, safe and affordable housing, availability of nutritious food and places for physical activity, clean air, and access to health care, child care and social services all play a role, he said. "When it comes to health, the choices we make depend on the choices available to us," Chapman said. "Many urban and rural areas have experienced generations of iso-

lation from opportunity. America cannot be healthy if we are leaving behind whole communities." James Marks, executive vice president of the country's largest health-oriented philanthropy, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, agreed Chapman's findings are indicative of a larger issue across the country. "The maps highlighted what turned out to be very large differences in life expectancy," Marks said. "So it's a simple description of serious disparities or inequities in our society." Chapman said the maps did not just correlate lower life expectancy to lower income areas, however. In some cases, people with shorter lifespans lived next to some of the best hospitals. "We see a whole range of life expectancy values across the areas we mapped. We see a gradient of health which shows that we all stand to gain from improved conditions for health, not just persons living in poverty," Chapman said. "Neighborhood factors affect everyone in the community and interact with policies and individual behaviors to influence health."



Statistics courtesy of Derek Chapman

The fight for equality

—continued from page 1
you. What the hell are we doing here then?”

According to Godbeer, the BOV believed they were acting in the best interest of the student body by denying the organization’s registration, claiming the group could cause “borderline” people to “become homosexual.”

“The thing that frightened me the most was that in order to stand up for other people, you apparently had to be one of them,” said Sharon Talarico, a GAS member at the time. “And that still happens.”

The BOV’s decision led to GAS filing a lawsuit against the university – the Gay Alliance for Students v. Matthews – under the claim that VCU was violating their First Amendment rights.

Finding an attorney who was willing to put his or her career on the line by taking the case proved to be a difficult challenge. In the end, Richmond attorney John McCarthy represented GAS.

“It was brave on his part for stepping up,” said Brenda Kriegel, a founding member of GAS, who believes McCarthy received negative feedback from his colleagues for taking on their case.

District Court Judge D. Dortch Warriner ruled GAS was permitted many of the privileges of a registered student organization — with the exception of funding, advisory services and recognition “per se” by VCU, a year later in November 1975.

“When we were denied recognition by the university and the court, it was demoralizing to the group,” Kriegel said. “The reason we wanted to meet is because we were demeaned by society. So, it was like being told that we must hide and not be equally recognized.”

According to Kriegel, the decision heavily impacted group attendance.

“Speaking for myself, it was pretty clear that people wanted us to keep quiet, and not be seen or heard, which certainly impacted our self-esteem,” she said.

The same month as the District Court decision, GAS penned another letter to the BOV stating the group fully expected to “win this case.”

Two years later, in October 1976, a civil case was brought to the U.S. Fourth District Circuit Court of Appeals against VCU regarding full funding and space allocations for the group.

The Federal Appeals Court ruled in favor

of GAS and effectively changed existing law in 10 southern states, including South Carolina and West Virginia, on Oct. 28, 1976.

“The university was told, “No, you have to recognize this group and you have to give them the same rights and privileges as any other group,”” Foery said.

By the 1980s, the Gay Alliance of Students was known as the VCU Gay Student Alliance.

As of 2010, there were two gay student organizations at VCU: the Sexual Minority Student Alliance and Queer Action.

“None of us were aware that we might be making history or changing the world,” Foery said. “We were just pissed off.”

HUMANITIES RESEARCH CENTER SPEAKER SERIES

Rather than just hearing about the court case, the event last week hosted by the Humanities Research Center aimed to share personal stories from former GAS members who personally remember the court case 40 years ago.

“These are, after all, stories about flesh and blood human beings,” Godbeer said.

A narrative of the court case and GAS’s battle with the university was presented by Godbeer, Dorothy Fillmore from the Department of Psychology, Paris Prince from Equity and Access Services and graduate students Michael Means and Jacob Ulmschneider.

Following the narrative of the case was a Q&A with VCU alumni and members of GAS, including Foery, Talarico, Kriegel and Frances Stewart. All four panelists agreed the fight for establishing GAS as a student organization went further than strengthening the LGBTQ community; it was a matter of human rights.

“This is about social justice and the right of people to form and meet and congregate,” Talarico said. “The board was just so fundamentally wrong.”

While Godbeer acknowledged how far VCU has come regarding inclusion since 1976, he said there’s “still much that needs to be done.”

“I applaud you all for your courage and determination to make a difference in your university,” Godbeer said. “We’re working towards a society that protects everyone from harm. But, despite recent gains, there is still no room for complacency.”



How millennials could benefit from changing demographics

FADEL ALLASSAN
News Editor

As I aimlessly strolled through Carytown, the overwhelming number of man buns, thrift shop tees and birkenstocks were impossible to ignore.

“All of these people seem really ... young,” I thought to myself.

I stopped to do a double take. Good news and sure enough, no individual older than 40 could be found in the sea of Richmond locals — which even for a plaza as vibrant and modish as Carytown, was strange.

“This can’t be right,” I thought to myself. “Maybe I just don’t see old people.”

Turns out I was being ridiculous and I don’t have an age filter in my retina, there just weren’t any old people in my vicinity.

My experience may have seemed like some utopian apparition, but some interesting data supports the reality of what I saw that day.

A young professional scene, craft beer and hipster coffee shops have brought the River City an influx of young people and its average age down to a mere 32. Richmond isn’t alone in its so called “youthification.” Turns out there just happens to be a lot of us ev-

erywhere. You may not be surprised to find out that, millennials — ages 18 to 34 — are now the largest living generation in America, according to the Pew Research Center.

What may surprise you (and be of interest to a political junkie like me) are the socio-political implications of that fact.

Because of our unique vantage point of the world around us, our approach to issues and maybe even just the world around us is quite different from other generations.

According to a poll of millennials by the Harvard Institute of Politics from this summer, a majority do not support capitalism, about half believe that the “American Dream is dead” and that our justice system is unfair and more than 4-in-5 say significant reform in Washington is needed.

In Virginia, a December 2015 by Christopher Newport University indicated that while millennials tend to distance themselves from the two major political parties, just as our older counterparts do, the dissociation from the Republican Party among young people is much more pronounced than with the Democratic Party. 37 percent of Virginia millennials identified as Democrats while 24 percent said they were

Republicans.

A 2015 study by Pew found that 40 percent of millennials in the U.S. support government restrictions of speech offensive to minority groups. Donald Trump’s campaign built around the destruction of political correctness may not resonate well with younger crowds -- and that’s when we’re looking at polls conducted well prior to his recent “grab them by the pussy” debacle.

Hillary Clinton’s solid lead in Virginia, which has been fueled by the millennials may be a testament to millennials’ newly discovered political capacity.

Clinton leads Trump in the commonwealth 42-35 in a recent CNU poll. Among millennials, she received 42 percent of the vote to 24 percent for Trump and 24 percent for Johnson.

But, as everyone knows, polling data does not equal votes. Will millennials vote is the age-old question that can only be answered after ballots are cast and counted.

One thing is for sure -- If millennials do show up at the polls this time around, we have a chance to exert our will on the outcome of this election.



Show tomorrow who’s boss.
Learn SAS® Analytics – MONEY’s No. 1 job skill – for free.

Did you know that analytics skills are in high demand? That’s 1.5 million data science jobs available by 2018.

So why not learn SAS Analytics – the No. 1 job skill for kicking off your career with a higher starting salary – for free?

1. Download SAS® University Edition for free.
2. Access free resources and an online community of experts.
3. Land the job of your dreams.
4. Go from your parents’ basement to a sweet place of your own.

sas.com/freeanalytics



ELECTION 2016

Nation’s eyes land on Farmville for Vice Presidential debate

JIM THOMMA
Contributing Writer

Newcomers to Farmville, Virginia joined locals, Longwood students, faculty and staff around a Jumbotron on Stubbs Mall to watch a live broadcast of the Vice Presidential debate on Oct. 4.

The debate pitted Hillary Clinton running-mate Tim Kaine, against Donald Trump pick and Indiana governor Mike Pence, who earned six-point lead over Kaine in a post-op CNN-ORC poll released later that night.

Kaine and Pence sparred over national security, immigration, and criminal justice and policing reform as they were cast split-screen against a backdrop displaying the Declaration of Independence.

Denissa De Leos, a Longwood student volunteer said she hoped the debate would put the university's name out there. De Leos also said, many Longwood student volunteers intentionally stayed on campus throughout their fall break out of school pride.

"Your school's a part of this huge thing," said De Leos. "Obviously you want to be a part of it as well. I don't just want to sit back and watch the show, I want to be a part of the show."

Josh Wilcoxson, political director of the Libertarian Party of Virginia, said they were present to advocate for the inclusion of Libertarian vice-presidential candidate Bill Weld in the debate, and running-mate Gary Johnson in the two upcoming presidential debates.

Parked next to the bleachers on the Longwood campus mall was a group waving signs reading "JOHNSON-WELD 2016," and "OPEN THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES."

"We think some other parties and some other voices should be there," Wilcoxson said, "we've heard (Clinton and Trump) sling insults at each other for a year now. We know they've been best friends



As the Vice Presidential candidates debated inside, many watched from a jumbotron outside.

before that. So for a decision this big, it shouldn't just be entertainment. It should be real issues."

To participate in the televised debates organized by the Commission on Presidential Debates, candidates must gain a 15 percent popularity from an average of five national polls.

Wilcoxson questioned the validity of the 15 percent threshold, as well as the sampling criteria.

"If you have two people who've been in the news," said Wilcoxson, "and made billions of dollars in earned advertisement, 15 percent is not a whole lot left."

The next presidential debate will be the first of its kind to accept debate questions submitted and chosen by average voters via the Internet, according to the Open Debate Coalition (ODC), which lobbied for use of the new method.

The Commission on Presidential Debates isn't obligated to choose the most popular questions; the 30 questions on the ODC's website with the highest number of votes will merely be "considered."

The 25th-most popular question on the day of the vice presidential debate was

"Do you support allowing Gary Johnson to participate in the final debate?"

Johnson supporter, Ashleigh Stein held up a big sign displaying Johnson's head. Stein said she wanted viewers to see Johnson's eyes behind the panelists on the channel's live broadcast.

Stein was also holding a petition signed by more than 200 students to get Longwood University President W. Taylor Reveley IV to either ask the CPD to include Weld and Green Party vice-presidential candidate Ajamu Baraka, or hold an independent debate with all four candidates.

"The president hid," Stein said. "He did not answer. He did not respond."

Johnson supporters weren't the only ones demonstrating on campus before the debate, though. Supporters tout-ing anti-Trump signs appeared in waves from the Clinton camp on Griffin Blvd.

Lauren Mitchell, a high school senior who volunteers for the Democratic Party in Chester, Va., said her party organizer sent her down to Farmville to help show support for Kaine. Her secondary goal was to "overpower Trump supporters — just swarm them with Hillary Clinton,"

Mitchell said.

As the sun began to set, the Clinton camp took a bus to the intersection of Main St. and Griffin Blvd. roughly a mile off-campus to cheer as Kaine's motorcade made an entrance.

On the other side of the street, Trump supporter Derek Brown was packing up a table of plush dolls in the likeness of Hillary Clinton. At \$24.95 apiece, the dolls are programmed to emit various Clinton statements of "questionable truthfulness" whenever squeezed.

"We call them '18 different tall tales,'" Brown said, laughing. "We want to be politically correct."

Brown said he and his family designed the "Lyn' Hilary Doll" with help from a Chinese firm. An advert posted to YouTube has secured nearly 200,000 views. Brown said he's sold roughly 6,000 dolls, mostly through online sales.

This was only Brown's second time doing in-person sales. He said he drove up from Charlotte, N.C., mainly just to get a better sense of the political atmosphere.

"I feel like it's my due diligence to go on the frontline, and at least check it out and see what it's like."

Green Party’s Ajamu Baraka speaks at VCU before VP debate

ZACHARY JOACHIM
Sports Editor

Green Party vice presidential candidate Ajamu Baraka spoke at VCU's Harris Hall auditorium last Monday, one day before the scheduled VP debate at Longwood University.

Baraka's visit was an impromptu decision by the campaign to counter excitement surrounding the next day's debate, from which he was excluded from participating in. Baraka spoke for 30 minutes before taking questions from the audience.

"One of the reasons we are here in Richmond is the debate about an hour away tomorrow — a debate I will not be attending because the Green Party has been excluded from that process," Baraka said.

Exclusion from the debate was a significant portion of Baraka's speech; his running mate, Jill Stein, has also been barred from participation in the presidential debate.

Candidates must have a 15 percent popularity rating from an average of five national polls to participate in the Commission on Presidential Debates' televised debates. Stein and Baraka had 2 percent of the vote, according to Sept. 28 - Oct. 2 poll by CNN.

"What we have in this country that they call democracy is something that we've got to look at critically," Baraka said. "We have to seriously question why we have a commission on presidential debates that has the power to determine who the American people are exposed to."

Baraka argued for an overhaul of the debate process and requested that his supporters demand change.

"We are excluded from the popular process in this country," Baraka said. "It's difficult when you are unable to penetrate the corporate media in order to bring your message to the American people. We need demands from the people."

Baraka's speech also focused on voters'

mindsets. He urged the electorate not to base their decision on opposition, but to rather stand behind whichever candidate they believe in personally.

"The American people have been sufficiently fear-mongered into believing that it is more important to vote against something than for something," Baraka said. "They want to vote against fear and the threat of neo-fascism as opposed to for their own principles and the future."

Baraka has a long history of human rights activism. From 2004 to 2011, he served as the founding executive director of the U.S. Human Rights Network, which consists of over 300 national organizations.

Baraka has also served on the boards of several human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, the Center for Constitutional Rights and Africa Action. This is his first political campaign.

Erin Walter, president of VCU's student Green Party organization, the Young Greens, said she and other organizers were relieved the event went well on such short notice.

"(The campaign) contacted us on Wednesday, and I'm honestly surprised it came together like it did," Walter said. "VCU was really excited to have somebody so big come here so they were very supportive."

Baraka expressed appreciation for the Young Greens and VCU for providing him with a forum to reach the community in light of his exclusion from the vice presidential debate the next day.

"We asked them to do something very difficult, to pull something together for us just a few days ago, and we are very appreciative," Baraka said.

Walter said she and other organizers were ecstatic after Baraka's speech.

"The process was relatively painless and it was amazing to hear him speak," Walter said. "I'm still a little star-struck."



The Green Party vice presidential nominee spoke to students at VCU Monday.

Times-Dispatch editor maps VA’s course through turbulent election

JIM THOMMA
Contributing Writer

The morning of the Vice Presidential Debate in Farmville, Va. on Oct. 4, Politics Editor at the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Andrew Cain, outlined the warpath for the winner of Virginia's presidential electoral college votes.

Cain discussed Virginia's new reputation as a presidential election battleground state, and how its evolution — both in terms of changing demographics and the redrawing of old political lines — has continued through, and been partly shaped by, the current election cycle.

"What we wanted to do this year was just open it up," said Robertson School professor Marcus Messner, who invited Cain as part of a speaker series, "because there's so much interest in the election."

The series, focused on the role of media in the election called "Tweets from the Trail: The Media and the 2016 Presidential Campaign," is hosted by Messner and his wife and fellow professor, Vivian Medina-Messner, as a part of their capstone iPad-Journals course.

"It's important that our students not only cover different events and different stories," Medina-Messner said. "It's also important to get that perspective on the field from professionals who are doing what they at one point aspired to do."

A few students in the capstone course travelled to Farmville after Cain's presentation to report on the vice presidential debate. Students joined countless other media outlets, including four photographers and four reporters from the Times-Dispatch at the debate.

Cain said at the debate one reporter would cover the event, while another, columnist Jeff Schapiro, would write instant analysis for the Times-Dispatch.

"And a couple others are going to be writing what we call the 'color story,'" Cain said. "The hubbub on campus, the political strum. One will focus on students and faculty, volunteers and the like — the general excitement. And the other will talk about the political media aspect of it."

Cain stressed that Virginia would be a vital step towards getting Trump above the 270 electoral-voter mark necessary to win the presidency in a country that's already tilting toward the Clinton coalition.

"After the political conventions, there were several polls that gave Secretary Clinton a double-digit lead in Virginia," Cain said, "and it appeared that Virginia might be off the table."

This theory was compounded by the fact Clinton chose Virginia's well-liked junior senator and former governor and mayor Tim Kaine, to be her running-mate.

"(Virginia's) 13 electoral votes might not actually be in play as they had been in President Obama's last two campaigns," Cain said.

But then the polls started tightening again, during what Cain described as Clinton's "worst week of the campaign," when she declared half of all Trump supporters a "basket of deplorables" before collapsing at a Sept. 11, 2001 memorial service in New York.

Clinton's "worst week ever" aside, Trump still has to overcome challenges presented by his unique campaign operation and bad polling numbers among women, according to Cain.

"We traditionally see a presidential candidate in Virginia has a ground-game that is doing phone banks, and holding organizing events, and making calls and knocking on doors," Cain said.

The Trump campaign operation in Virginia has, aside from utilizing some of the state's existing Republican Party offices, largely foregone the traditional grassroots approach for a more media-driven campaign focused on securing free advertising.

"The cable networks always show his appearances," Cain said. "Why? Because he's what we call 'good copy.' He's a dramatic politician."

But Trump's controversial remarks regarding women's weight and appearance probably won't do him any favors among Virginia women, Cain said. Clinton leads Trump among Virginia women by 18 points, according to a Christopher Newport University poll released Oct. 3.

Furthermore, Cain said, Trump's recent feud with former Miss Universe Alicia Machado was especially damaging; instead of leaving that alone and focusing on the economy Trump then "doubled down" during a 3 a.m. "tweetstorm" where he encouraged people to go watch an alleged sextape of Machado.

"I've never seen a major party nominee for president urging people to go see a sextape of a former Miss Universe," Cain said. "It's a different year."

The third event in the Messners' speaker series will feature correspondents of Chinese broadcaster CCTV Wang Guan and Nathan King. Guan and King will join the class virtually from the CCTV Washington D.C. bureau on Oct. 11 to offer the Chinese perspective on the U.S. presidential race.

Ryan Nobles, CNN reporter and former political reporter at NBC12, joined the class virtually from Hofstra University the morning after the first presidential debate on Sept. 26.

Go to

elections.

virginia.gov

for registration

and polling

information

28

Days Until Election Day

AT THE POLLS

Clinton Democrat 42%

Trump Republican 35%

VIRGINIA GENERAL ELECTION

Johnson Libertarian 12%

Stein Green 1%

Stat of the Week

Audrey Sanderson notched her first shutout of the season in the women’s soccer win over Dayton.

THE PRESS BOX

Clinton slam dunks in Cleveland

SOPHIA BELLETTI
Sports Editor

Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton landed a huge endorsement in the pivotal swing state of Ohio when Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James vouched for her candidacy in a letter to Business Insider last week.

James encouraged the community so near and dear to his heart to register and be present at polls on Nov. 8. In the midst of an election that could drastically swing in the wrong direction, it is crucial for more athletes to follow in James’ size-15 footsteps and have their voice heard.

Athletes have an influential platform from which they can reach out and influence the thinking of American culture and society. It is especially important for the stars from leagues that are predominately Black, such as the NBA, to speak out on social issues and share their voice during the election.

Consequently, for the first time in a month polls indicate Clinton is now ahead in Ohio — a state where the popular vote was aligned with the last 28 of 30 presidential election winners since 1896.

James’ endorsement comes at a crucial time in the presidential race. In Ohio, King James is as close to royalty as you can get. His nod of confidence could potentially mobilize minority voters and tip the scales toward the Democratic nominee.

In contrast to his opponent, Republican nominee Donald Trump has struggled from the jump to develop inroads with the Black community as he runs a campaign fueled by demeaning comments and bigotry.

“We must address the violence, of every kind, the African-American community is experiencing in our street and seeing on our TVs,” James wrote. “We need a president who brings us together and keeps us unified.

“Policies and ideas that divide us are not the solution. We must all stand together — no matter where we are from or the color of our skin. And Hillary is running on the message of hope and unity that we need.”

In the wake of growing national attention to the number of Black men shot by police, James argued Clinton is better suited to respond to the heightened racial tension in the U.S.

In his column, James explained why this particular

campaign is different than any other presidential election — and why he is speaking out now. His endorsement is very personal and brimming with references to his hometown of Akron.

“Only one person running truly understands the struggles of an Akron child born into poverty,” James wrote in his editorial. “And when I think about the kinds of policies and ideas the kids in my foundation need from our government, the choice is clear. That candidate is Hillary Clinton.”

James’ endorsement is important and timely. The pressure is on for athletes to project their opinion on social inequalities, and James has made stances before.

“
Only one person running truly understands the struggles of an Akron child born into poverty.

Hillary Clinton

Most recently, James took the stage at this year’s ESPYs alongside fellow NBA players Carmelo Anthony, Dwyane Wade and Chris Paul to address violence impacting the country.

In 2014, James was one of the NBA players who stood up for Eric Garner by sporting an “I can’t breathe” shirt during warmups. Garner died at the hands of police after he was approached for selling cigarettes in New York. A grand jury did not indict the officer.

James’ endorsement of Clinton could be pretty significant considering Ohio is a key battleground state.

Celebrity endorsements have not been particularly well-known for holding much weight, but few people carry the amount of clout in their home state as James. The King is not just an athlete, he’s an icon.



Men’s soccer opens conference play:
VCU draws with GW in double overtime, beats GMU



The VCU Men’s Soccer team is tied with Duquesne University for third in the Atlantic-10 conference.

ADAM CHEEK
Contributing Writer

George Washington

Men’s soccer played their 13th game of the season Wednesday, Oct. 5. The match concluded with a 2-2 draw after two overtime periods at the George Washington University.

Redshirt-junior midfielder Francesco Amorosino and redshirt-senior midfielder Dakota Barnathan scored for VCU with assists from senior forward Jorge Herranz and sophomore midfielder Steven Dal Molin.

VCU senior midfielder Brandon Eaton and redshirt-junior midfielder Luc Fatton provided early sparks in the 6th and 22nd minutes, respectively, but to no avail.

Consequently, the Colonials drew first blood on goal. GW midfielder Garrett Heine struck early in the 11th minute on a free kick that ricocheted off of the far post and narrowly slipped past VCU junior goalkeeper Pierre Gardan.

VCU’s Dal Molin was given a great scoring opportunity off a header in the 41st minute, but GW keeper Thor Hofs successfully maintained the shutout going into halftime.

The Black and Gold emerged from the locker room with renewed energy. Barnathan scored the first goal for the Rams by netting a free kick

from Herranz in the 58th minute.

In the 70th minute the Rams scored the tiebreaker. Amorosino notched his third goal of the season on a header off a corner kick by Dal Molin.

VCU sat at back with a one-goal lead, but their advantage was short-lived. Conical Dylan Lightbourn scored on a corner kick by George Dise, just three minutes after VCU’s tiebreaking goal.

At the end of regulation the score remained knotted at two and sent the game into overtime.

Play picked up near the end of the second overtime, but Gardan made two crucial saves with less than two minutes remaining to preserve the draw.

George Mason

VCU hosted George Mason University at Sports Backers Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 1. Edging closer to evening their record at .500, the Rams pulled out a win over the Patriots.

Gardan notched his second shutout of the season. Fatton remains the leading scorer on the squad, adding his fourth goal of the season Wednesday night.

VCU had a host of scoring opportunities, particularly early-on, with 30 chances in the first period alone.

The Rams broke through with Herranz’s

goal 35 minutes in. Redshirt-sophomore midfielder Eli Lockaby drove towards the 18 and passed to Herranz. Herranz took one step and took aim. The shot hit off the post and bounced in to give the Rams the advantage. VCU entered the locker room up 1-0.

Corner opportunities continued to pour in after the start of the second half. In the 79th minute, Lockaby was inside the 18-yard box and sent a pass to the 6-yard-line. Fatton rebounded the ball into the net to extend the lead to 2-0.

Freshman midfielder Travis Cooke had three consecutive scoring opportunities in the 85th, 87th and 89th minutes. GMU saved Cooke’s first shot, his second hit left post and ricocheted out and the third went in but was nullified by an offsides call.

When regulation ended, the Rams came out on top by a score of 2-0.

Herranz and junior midfielder Rafael Andrade Santos are the second leading goal scorers on the team behind Fatton with three each. Herranz is also the first VCU player to post double digit points with 11 goals this season.

Lockaby was credited with both assists, marking his first multi-assist game of the season.

The Rams will look to keep their momentum going when they host La Salle University on Wednesday, Oct. 12. Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Final Four star returns to VCU

NICK VERSAW
Contributing Writer

Former VCU point guard Darius Theus will return to the men’s basketball program as director of student-athlete development, according to an announcement by head coach Will Wade.

Theus, who played for the Rams in 2009-2013 and was on the 2011 NCAA Final Four team, said now was the right time to return to his alma mater as his professional playing career comes to a close.

“Coach Wade and I sat down and talked,” Theus said. “I had a couple things going on with basketball that I wasn’t too pleased with, so Coach Wade gave me this opportunity and it’s a great thing to come back and help these guys out.”

Wade said he’s equally pleased to have Theus back on-board as part of the team. Theus played for Wade during his time as an assistant coach under former head coach Shaka Smart.

Theus played in 146 games, including the Ram’s 2011 NCAA Tournament Final Four game against Butler, during his career at VCU. Theus ranks top six in school history for both assists (462) and steals (237). In 2012 he earned Third-Team All-CAA honors and was named CAA Tournament MVP.

“We’re thrilled to have Darius back in our program,” Wade said.

“He’s one of the finest leaders I’ve ever coached, and he’ll be an outstanding example and mentor for our student athletes.”

Theus said his new role will include organizing team community service events, being a mentor and leader for the team and preparing the players for off-the-court life.

“(My job is) just being there for them no matter what time of day it is,” Theus said. “I’m here for the guys to make sure their minds are focused on practice, school and if there’s a game — locked in on the game.”

Theus said his experiences playing for VCU will give him a unique bond with the Rams’ current roster.

“I’ve been through what it takes to play here,” he said. “Some of the stuff they’re going to go through this season, I went through the same. So if I can help them through that process, I’m all for it.”

Although some things changed since he graduated in 2013, including a new coaching staff and the new state-of-the-art \$25 million Basketball Development Center, Theus said it’s still the same school he came to love during his time as a Ram.

“It’s still a family here at VCU,” he said. “That’s one thing that will never change.”

The basketball team kicks off their 2016-17 season on Nov. 11 against UNC Asheville at the Siegel Center.



During his time as a Ram, Theus was named CAA Tournament MVP in 2012 and was on the A-10 All-Defensive team in 2013.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT:

KEYRIS MANZANARES
Contributing Writer

Senior Lia Rossetti is wrapping up her first season as the VCU women's club volleyball president. In her role, Rossetti serves as a player, coach, manager and role model.

The 5-foot-9 outside hitter from Falls Church, Virginia talked with the Commonwealth Times about giving her all during tryouts because, in her words, you are never guaranteed a spot anywhere in life — you have to work at it.

What is it like being a member and the president of VCU club volleyball?

As the president I am in charge of the planning procedures and keeping the team up-to-date with future tournaments and planning with other schools. I also have to be in charge of financing too, so it's a lot of delegating and management.

But as a teammate, which is the best part, I get to interact with all the students and I get to play my favorite sport every Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. I love being able to unwind on the court.

When you arrived at VCU four years ago, what was your initial experience of joining the club team like?

It was nerve wrecking. I didn't even know about tryouts until the day of. Being a freshman you don't really know that much. I had not played in months and so I was always one of those people who, even if you knew you could make the team, always had to try.

You are never guaranteed a position in anything or anywhere you go. I was really nervous but I ended up loving the girls and made a lot of my best friends that way.

What would your advice be to younger girls? Why is it important they are not just students, but athletes as well?

I think everyone should try out because you don't really know if this could be your niche or where you fit in at college. College is so stressful we have a lot of stuff to take care of and manage and having this time to do something that you actually enjoy for two hours makes sense to me. On the court I don't have to think about anything but the game.

What is an important lesson that you learned from a coach that you are now applying to the girls on your team?

My high school volleyball coach, Sharon Ponton, taught me a lot about teamwork and helping a team-

mate if they are in a rut.

If you miss a ball or mess up a play it's not the end — you still have an entire game to make up for it. When you mess up and are able to say 'okay well I got the next ball' or 'I am going to kill the next ball,' it makes you feel good.

It's okay to mess up but you have to take initiative and not let it happen again. Overall, just being a support system for the girls.

What is your personal goal for this season?

To win as many tournaments as we can. Last season we won almost every one that we went to and it's so rewarding when you go to another school and beat them on their home court.

I'm looking forward to seeing the expression on people's face like, 'VCU? Oh they can play volleyball.'

What is left for the team this season?

The season is halfway over but we have a couple of tournaments left, so honestly this is a learning experience for me being club president. The Dig Pink event happening at Virginia Tech is going to be big. There are over 20 teams going. So it's going to be nice to play teams from other states.

The team traveled this weekend to the Dig Pink Volleyball Tournament at Virginia Tech. After playing all morning Saturday, the Rams ended up in the gold bracket but lost during the elimination round. The next match is Oct. 22 at James Madison University.

“
But as a teammate, which is the best part, I get to interact with all the students and I get to play my favorite sport every Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. I love being able to unwind on the court.

Lia Rossetti

VCU Women's Club Volleyball



Virginia Tech held their first annual Dig Pink Tournament on Oct. 8. VT and VCU partnered with the Side-Out Foundation to raise money for metastatic breast cancer research.



Women's soccer has not dropped a match to Dayton since the Atlantic-10 Conference Championship Quarterfinals in 2013.

Women's soccer soars over Dayton Flyers

Rams bounce back after a tough loss earlier in the week, beat Dayton 1-0 on Sunday

RODNEY ROBINSON
Contributing Writer

Dayton

Once again, the Rams found themselves in a tight, defensive A-10 matchup Sunday at Dayton, but it was nothing redshirt-sophomore goalkeeper Audrey Sanderson couldn't handle. Sanderson was a brick wall and had a breakout game against the Flyers, racking up nine saves and marking her first shutout of the season. The Rams' defense finished with 11 saves in total.

However, VCU's offense lagged. The Flyers outshot the Rams 19-5, 11-2 which were shots on goal. However, strong defense by VCU didn't allow Dayton to capitalize on any scoring opportunities.

The Rams had a slight edge in corner kick opportunities Sunday, 6-5. Sophomore forward Kelly Graves led the way for the Rams on offense. Graves scored her second goal on the season only 1:26 into the second half. Sophomore midfielder Maddi Santo assisted the lone goal that would be the deciding factor for the Rams.

Santo is now the second Ram this season to climb into double-digit points, now sitting at 10 this year. Sophomore forward Julia Suarez has 13.

Dayton continued to press with shots as the 90th minute approached, but the Black and Gold held strong defensively with key plays down the stretch, highlighted by a defensive save from senior midfielder Tori Burruss.

Fordham

The Rams fell short 1-0 in a nailbiter to conference foe Fordham University on Oct. 6.

In a defensive battle Thursday night in the Bronx, fans did not see a goal until the 86th minute of the contest as extra time was looming.

Despite the loss, the Rams' defense produced impressive results in the match. Redshirt-

sophomore goalkeeper Audrey Sanderson tallied three saves on the day, keeping the Rams within striking distance throughout the course of the game. The Rams' defense finished with four saves in total.

VCU's offense had been consistent all season as they entered the matchup with a five game streak without being shutout. However, the Rams were unable to connect any shots against Fordham.

The Rams were outshot 9-5 and only took three shots on goal, while Fordham had five. The Rams had an edge on corner kicks, but they were unable to capitalize due to Fordham's stonewall defense. The Rams' offensive attack was led by Suarez and sophomore forward Kelly Graves, as they both took two shots in the game.

The Rams continued to fall short of crucial opportunities. VCU had a corner kick opportunity late in the first half, but Fordham's defense did not allow a score. In the 53rd minute of the match, Suarez had a solid opportunity at net but a great save by Fordham's goalkeeper kept the Rams scoreless. Junior defender Megan Dell contributed offensively as she created an opportunity with a shot on net in the 68th minute.

Despite Dell's and the rest of the team's efforts, the Rams went scoreless for the first time in four weeks.

The Rams look to carry the momentum over from the victory against Dayton as they face another A-10 conference opponent the George Washington University Thursday, Oct. 13.

Final Scores	
VCU:	1
Dayton:	0
VCU:	0
Fordham:	1

Rams set personal records at Pennsylvania XC meet

JESSICA WETZLER
Contributing Writer

VCU Cross Country improved their overall time by a minute at the Paul Short Run in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on Oct. 1.

The Rams are averaging a time of 22:32 as a team — a minute faster than last year's average time. Each member on the women's side set a personal record time, and overall the team placed 44th of 45 schools.

"Our freshman led the way today," said cross country coach Nicole Cook. "We packed well, and are one step closer to improving on what we need to do going into conference."

The women's 6,000-meter run was led by freshman Delaney Savedge, who placed 213th out of 404 runners with a time of 22:19 and an average mile time of 5:59.

Junior Courtney Holleran and freshman Ashley Brown followed closely behind. Holleran finished with a time of 22:26 and Brown finished on her heels at 22:27. Freshman Judith White finished in the middle of the pack, placing 238th with a time of 22:31.

Junior Nichelle Scott led the latter half of the Rams' squad, placing 279th with a time of 22:56.

"It was a pretty good meet," Scott said. "It was nice to see the team improving and staying together."

Junior Kathleen Gardner posted a time of 23:13 and was followed by sophomore Katherine Samsky who crossed the line at 23:32.

The VCU men were once again led by freshman Bryce Catlett in the 8,000-meter run. Catlett finished in the top 20 percent of the pack at the Paul Short Run, hitting a per mile average of 5:10 and placing 65th of 401 competitors.

"Catlett led the way again. The men raced with much better confidence today, competed, and stepped up to plate," Cook said.

The Rams' top five runners improved their average time by 1:20, averaging a time of 26:22 this year. Every runner for the Rams hit a personal record in the 8,000-meter and placed 32nd of 45 schools.

"The season is going well," Catlett said. "We motivate each other together and are seeing progress."

Junior Bismillah Alidost and freshman Brandon Wells finished with times of 26:10 and 26:19, respectively. Alidost placed 136th and Wells 153rd.

Senior Calvin Wood posted a time of 26:37 and finished 187th. Sophomore transfer Austin Conway competed in his first event as a Ram and put up a time of 27:04, placing 238th.

Freshman Lucas Sidle and Sophomore Michael Villagomez rounded out the rest of the Ram squad, finishing with times of 27:14 and 28:08, respectively.

"It is very competitive this year," Cook said.

The team has shown improvement in each race this season. Rams' Cross Country will compete next on Oct. 15 at a conference at Christopher Newport University.



Junior Nichelle Scott, the 2016 Atlantic-10 Outdoor 800-meter champion, led the Rams' squad.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY VCU ATHLETICS

ADVERTISEMENT

YOU CAN
BUILD TOMORROW
BY CHOICE.
NOT BY CHANCE.



Wherever you are on your financial journey, TIAA can help you make informed choices to help you pursue your personal definition of success.

Enroll in your retirement plan today at TIAA.org/VCU.



INVESTING | ADVICE | BANKING | RETIREMENT



BUILT TO PERFORM.

CREATED TO SERVE.

C34117a



spectrum

Fact of the week:
Woodpeckers have three eyelids.

Folk Festival returns, college kids don't



More than 30 groups performed at this year's Richmond Folk Festival on seven stages across three days.

HANNAH PARKER
Contributing Writer

This past weekend the 12th annual Richmond Folk Festival represented the different cultures and demographics that compose RVA, with the exception of a vital part of the city: college students. Grandparents danced beside high schoolers to the beat of Dori Freeman's songs while parents ate Boka Truck's

tacos with 10 year olds — but few college students could be spotted among the crowd. According to volunteer Genevieve Solomon, over the 10 years she has attended and volunteered at the festival, only last year saw an increase in the number of college students. This was because of the performance by DJ Grandmaster Flash, she said. A variety of cultures were represented

at the festival through different forms of music, dance, speeches, food and puppetry. But somehow college students were still lacking physical representation at the actual event. "Most students barely leave campus," said VCU senior Ardilla Deneys. "There are no ads on campus and no faculty talk about it. It's free, there are big names. It seems like students would want to come, but most of them can't drink."

Solomon said with different and more in-depth advertising more college students may be more interested in attending the event. "They should call it an Americana Festival," Deneys said.



Stories from a different perspective

GEORGIA GEEN
Contributing Writer

Award-winning Cuban-American author and Richmond native Meg Medina writes picture books, middle-grade and young-adult fiction from the perspectives of Latino families. The most recent of Medina's publications, "Burn Baby Burn," released in March and is set in 1977 New York City. The plot intersects with Medina's personal upbringing, which she said she often incorporates in her writing. "Still, in 2016, we're looking at less than 10 percent of books being by or about people of color and that's not matching what's in the population," Medina said. "Micro-aggressions by the dozens, every day that you just have to sift through. In some cases you have to confront and in others just delicately side-step and keep going forward." Despite the fact that Medina's experiences often show within her work, more universal themes dominate the plot. "I look at violence in the lives of kids, whether it's family violence or social violence, social meaning the wider city or sometimes the

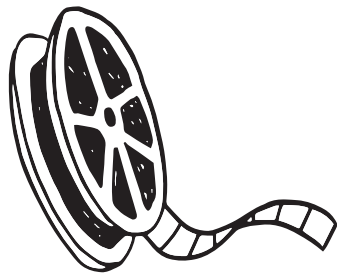
school community," Medina said. "I look at loss a lot, what it feels like to lose really important things, people, trust, that sort of thing." According to Medina, the lack of people of color in publishing creates challenges for authors writing from multicultural perspectives.

I think we need to write the world we live in, which is a world with a little bit of everybody.

Meg Medina

"A lot of times, I'm put in the position where I'm helping them think," Medina said. "So, it's all of us putting our heads together to share information and try things and see what works and what doesn't. And that's really different, I think, than other authors." For example, Medina said sometimes cultural sensitivity

is neglected in the editing process, and advertising to minority demographics can pose challenges to white marketing teams. Medina said another challenge is deciding which books to publish in different languages while being fiscally responsible. "My publisher (Candlewick Press) and I had this exact discussion on why it matters to have dual language editions and my publisher got on board with that right away," Medina said. For this reason, three of her works have been translated into Spanish, two of them being her children's books "Tia Isa Wants a Car," and "Mango, Abuela and Me," which Medina said have been quite successful in their dual editions. As an author, Medina said she has witnessed firsthand the benefits of her writing. Medina said she recalls fondly experiences with young Latinos who expressed their appreciation for her work when she visits schools. More broadly, she said, young girls have thanked her for confronting issues with bullying or romantic partners. "I think we need to write the world we live in, which is a world with a little bit of everybody," Medina said.



Sam's Take: The Birth of a Nation (2016)

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Staff Writer

The Academy faced criticism this year for nominating no black actors for Oscars Awards, but just as #OscarsSoWhite was catching on social media, a film won the Sundance Grand Jury prize in what seemed like a perfect response. "The Birth of a Nation" boldly re-claimed the title of a 1915 Ku Klux Klan propaganda film by flipping the narrative and depicting an uncompromising retelling of slave-rebellion leader Nat Turner's life. After premiering at Sundance, the film was hailed one of the best of the year. Ten months later the film has finally released in theatres and the hype is by no

means undeserved. A devout preacher from Southampton County, Virginia, Nat Turner organized a rebellion after witnessing the atrocities performed on his fellow man. As a first time director, Nate Parker blows the film out of the park. Parker's passion for the subject matter is evident as the film takes notable risks in utilizing certain artistic and surreal elements. The cinematography is beautiful and uses color to reflect Turner's current mindset. Parker is also the producer and star of "The Birth of a Nation," as he plays the main character, Nat Turner. Throughout the film the audience understands Turner did not start a violent man, rather he is horrified by the brutality he sees when preaching to slaves from other plantations to the point he becomes vengeful. Parker owns this role, expertly portraying subtle elements while having the skill to be compelling during his sermons and speeches. Yet, the intentions of "The Birth of a Nation" cannot be mentioned without also discussing the elephant in the room. In the past months, Nate Parker's 1999 rape allegations have become a major source of controversy for the film, specifically with how his case was acquitted and the aftermath of the trial itself. I understand how people

cannot in good faith watch his film knowing the horrible things he's been accused of. Yet, I also believe that Parker's film should be judged on its own merits, and I feel this way about most artists with deplorable pasts. One of the film's greatest strengths is the attention to realism. Few moments feel exaggerated, and the same can be said of the characters and violent scenes. In regard to the latter, Parker does an excellent job focusing on the aftermath of the violence, which often yields sobering consequences. When the violent slave rebellion does take place, Parker is able to mix the moving slave drama with a crowd-pleasing final act of revenge. I was originally apprehensive the film would advocate for violence in response to injustice. Instead, Parker's creation instills a sense of somber and unwavering commitment to a cause, and depicts Turner remaining true in the face of deadly adversity. "The Birth of a Nation" is an admirable film: powerful, unrelenting and unforgiving, Nate Parker's directorial debut is unafraid of taking chances.

**Rating:
A Must See.
Pure and Simple.**



Meg Medina was recognized as one of CNN's 10 Visionary Women in America in 2014.

Local faith leaders discuss spirituality on campus



Rabbi Matisyahu Friedman (pictured) heads the Jewish Life at VCU student association, just one of the 17 religious student associations that make up the ICMA.

JESSE ADCOCK
Spectrum Editor

The Interfaith Campus Ministers Association (ICMA) of VCU hosted an interfaith panel of religious leaders from student associations around campus to answer questions about the importance of spirituality on campus on Oct. 6.

The forum was held at the Grace and Broad residence center, and featured Catholic representative Rev. Mike DeNoia, Jewish representative Rabbi Matisyahu Friedman, Muslim representative M. Imad Damaj, Methodist representative Rev. Katie Gooch, and was moderated by ICMA member Joshua Soto.

“There’s unity and diversity in humans, and to understand that reflects good, right and true tolerance. To acknowledge the beauty of diversity,” Soto said. “We really want to encourage a dialogue. We can be honest about where we’re at, and still be tolerant. We can really still love each other.”

What is spirituality?

Friedman:

“It’s hard to have a conversation about spirituality when we all define it differently. I don’t think you need religion to be a good person and to live a meaningful life. When I say spiritual I mean nothing to do with practice. Just knowing that we matter to God. The best proof is that we all matter. It’s knowing that we might feel alone, but we know we aren’t alone.”

DeNoia:

“Religion and church are very important, but it doesn’t necessarily mean we’re spiritual. Many a religious person has sinned, and for that we beg for forgiveness. My religion gives me a structure to live in with my spirituality.”

Gooch:

“A big point of my understanding is the incarnation. A lot of times our bodies are still going, but we ignore the spiritual side of our life. Through prayer and works of mercy we help know that side of us.”

Damaj:

“You can break it down to one word: ego. Spirituality is controlling the ego. To get out of that state of distraction and into connection with the divine. To bring yourself into knowing yourself better to control the forces within ourselves.”

Why should we devote time to spirituality and religion when college takes up so much of our time?

Damaj:

“You certainly have less and less time in college. When you fail a test, you go back to the professor to ask to see your paper, so you can see what you did right and wrong. Spirituality is like this. It’s about knowing yourself.

Spirituality is the path to getting to know yourself and the path forward. ‘Why am I doing this? What is my intention?’ Your goals, your ethics, and the intention of your actions. Spirituality is being ethical and responsible.”

Gooch:

“When I was in college, I was so busy. I didn’t know what I was doing, or why I was doing it, but I was busy. Spirituality is asking ‘what is motivating you? What is God calling me to do?’ That’s going to change the motivation for what you do. Spirituality allows you that freedom. Religion provides structure to stay in check. Religious practices help bring me back to that state.”

DeNoia:

“My God doesn’t demand consistency. He’s not looking for an hour on Sunday. My God is looking to walk with me, every step, every hour of every day.”

Friedman:

“As the world goes on, the world becomes more and more lonely. There is more and more emptiness. We feel so terribly empty. Terribly alone. It’s about the awareness and understanding that each of us matters so tremendously.”

What is your definition of love? What is the soul? How do you know love?

Friedman:

“Love is an emotion. Its building, its developing. Very rarely do people fall into love. Love is about giving. You don’t fall into love and get married for years. The more you cultivate it, the more you will reap it.”

DeNoia:

“Love is about giving. When I love you, I don’t do it for me. Love is not selfish. It’s about you. My God tells me we are all blind people sitting around an elephant. Each faith touches a leg, the tail, the trunk.”

Gooch:

“I don’t fully know the definition of love. But if I want to get to know love, I have to get to know God. God is love.”

Demaj:

“God loves us because he created us. He gave us eyes, ears, heart and a brain and the freedom to use them. Along with that comes responsibility. Through Islamic tradition, it has become clear he does not like sin. But the door is always open to repent, to ask for forgiveness and come back to God.”

For more information on how to get in contact with VCU religious associations, visit the ICMA website at <http://www.icma.vcu.edu/>

Decolonizing Columbus: Questioning the legacy of the first colonialist

SIONA PETEROUS
Staff Writer

VCU’s Political Latinxs United for Movement and Action (PLUMAS) addressed the nuanced nature of Christopher Columbus and why his legacy and the holiday celebrating his name has is increasingly controversial and facing pushback throughout the Americas in a forum titled, “Decolonizing Columbus” on Oct. 6.

The panel of six consisted of two VCU students, Diego Orbegoso and Camila Aranguiz-

Allend, as well as VCU’s faculty: Dr. Antonio Espinosa, Associate Professor of Latin American History and Isabela Tavares de Melo, Adjunct Professor of Figure Drawing and Costume history. With two speakers from nearby colleges; Alicia Diaz, Associate Professor of Dance in The University of Richmond and Zoe Spencer, Associate Professor of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice at Virginia State University.

The panel’s diversity, in regards to age, race, ethnicity, as well as an open floor for audience questions,

allowed for thought provoking discussions and debates.

The opening question was ‘What does Columbus mean to you?’

“(Columbus’ landing was) a symbol of colonialism, forced Catholicization, the exploitation of (an) indigenous labor force, the extermination of indigenous groups,” Espinosa said. “The establishment of racial hierarchy which [erases] focus on the Caribbean.”

Professor Tavares de Melo, originally from Brazil, said that colonial systems initiated by Co-

lumbus affected Brazil differently - but at the root the it has the same results.

“In Brazil we don’t even talk about race. We really pretend we don’t have racial issues,” said Melo.

She said later on in the panel that due to colorism, she’s privileged due to her fair skin, another impact of colonization.

The rest of panel and the audience echoed Dr. Espinosa’s comments: Columbus’s legacy is one of oppression, violence and an audience member put it, ‘the start of people of color having to conform to systems that don’t value them.’

This is at the heart of a national debate: should institutions

change Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day?

Colorado recently joined the list of states who have made this nominal switch. Universities such as George Mason campaign annually to demand this change.

Both panel and audience were divided on the topic.

“I’m wondering how much a step forward that really is?” an audience member said. “We’re just gonna call it a different name but not address any systematic things?”

Both student speakers on the panel agreed and felt it was a tactic of complacency.

“To call Columbus day Indigenous People’s Day, it’s just a slap to the face to the them. It should be called Genocide Day,” Spencer said.

Espinosa said it’s important to change the name to highlight the resistance of Native populations.

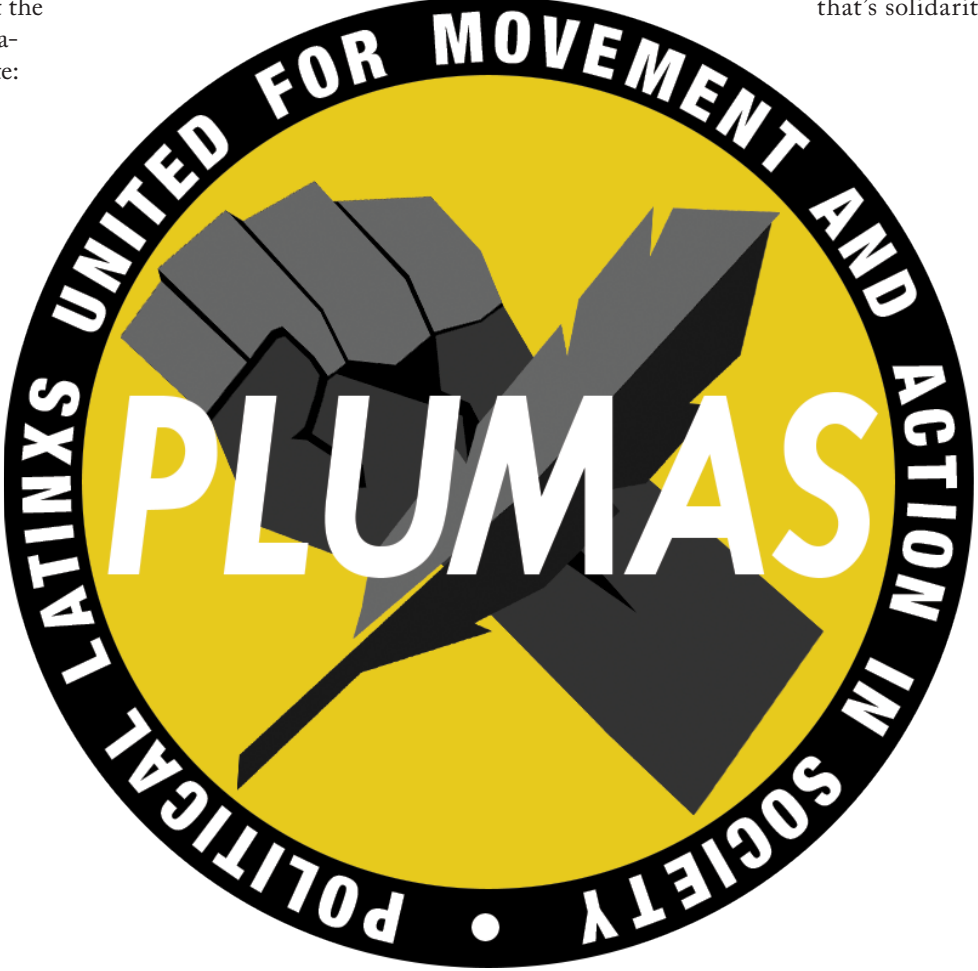
“What does solidarity look like to you? When different groups with similar struggles come together in strategic ways, respecting their specificities [but] understanding their power together?” Diaz said. “That’s interesting, that’s solidarity.”

ADVERTISEMENT

Evolution of The Groove
Rising Up



WWW.ETGBAND.COM



Quote of the week

“I have no regrets for standing up for myself, my history and my heritage.”
- Symora Thomas



Letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

Growing up as an African-American, there were always a lot of people who looked like me, but not in my classes. I was always searching for a way to fit in beyond the typical label of being an “Oreo.”* Aside from my family I wasn’t around many Black kids growing up; consequently, I learned to hide aspects of myself and heritage, and to believe the glossed-over, sugarcoated textbook narratives supposedly teaching the history of my people.

Coming to VCU, a PWI (predominantly white institution) where 51 percent of students are Caucasian and 16 percent are African American, I could often count on one hand the number of students in my classes who looked like me. Because we come from a background comprised of fewer advantages than people of lighter skin, I think it is important for Black students to see each other succeed, grow and recognize it is okay to celebrate who we are.

I never desired being lumped into any group of people, so I made the decision not to join a historically Black sorority and instead rushed with one of the chapters in the Panhellenic Council. I joined my sorority, Alpha Omicron Pi, in fall 2015 with the understanding it was predominantly white. VCU is a fairly progressive school and I expected a certain amount of acceptance — if not, at least, some level of open-mindedness. Unfortunately I was wrong.

At first, I found the group of women in AOPi to be very loving and accepting, but I eventually began noticing microaggressions here and there, but nothing that was quite enough to make me want to leave. Our chapter has always been very “hush, hush” when it comes to these topics to avoid truly addressing the persisting problems by either denying the issue, or agreeing it is not important.

This was extremely hurtful to me, especially since diversity was something my chapter personally, and often, advertised — making me

feel like a tokenized* individual within our group. My chapter has always been adamant about respecting each others’ opinions, especially on social media, so I personally never took the time to explain why these things were offensive to me.

I have seen sisters post statuses on their Facebook accounts ranging from memes mocking the Black Lives Matter movement to Tomi Lahren videos, to articles about using Colin Kaepernick’s jersey as a doormat. Although I personally find these things extremely offensive, I thought there was an understanding that we each have a right to expression and our own opinions and should respect that.

But all this changed when I decided to post a Facebook status of my own, making a strong statement about the American flag in response to the article about using Kaepernick’s jersey as a doormat: “TBH if I had an American flag, I’d use it as a doormat.” Twenty minutes later — chaos.

It started with a few comments here and there on the status. I was called “ungrateful” and “disrespectful.” I was told I am “lucky that I live in a country where I can post this sh*t.” I was told I was disrespecting our soldiers — that I should be grateful for what this country has given me. I was threatened. All from women I was supposed to be able to call my sisters. I had active sisters and alumnae adding me on Facebook just to tell me how ungrateful I was; to tell me they know the history of my people better than I do; to tell me there is no such thing as “my people.”

If these girls took the time to try and understand what it is like to grow up in a country that sugar coats an entire historical narrative; to have your classmates constantly make jokes about you because you’re the only Black person in class; to be consistently told racism ended long ago when my mother went to a segregated school, or now, when innocent people are being gunned down on American soil by facets of the state who are sworn to serve and protect all people — this situation may not have escalated to the point it did.

I understand it’s hard for people who have seen the world one way their entire lives to stop and think for a moment what it’s like to be someone else... to think about what it is like being told to respect a flag that was also flown, not even a lifetime ago, when my people were being lynched, torn apart and taken home as souvenirs. Undoubtedly, these conversations are necessary not just for my chapter but for all of Greek life, the university even — about how we can collectively make the experience better for people of color.

I can only hope VCU’s chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi will grow into a more accepting group of women and learn what it truly means to celebrate diversity. It is sad, and extremely hurtful, that an organization that claims to celebrate diversity would have so many women who are closed-minded and uneducated about the disadvantages all around them, but do not affect them.

Heart-breakingly, I have decided to leave my chapter because I no longer feel safe within a group of women that should have made me feel empowered and strong, regardless of my race. This continues to pain me, but I find strength in knowing I can sit and share this with you. It deserves to be known that this treatment is not okay. And I deserve to be able to say I was hurt and, no matter what, I have no regrets for standing up for myself, my history and my heritage. And that is something they can never take away from me.

Symora Thomas, Senior

What is Aleppo?

Gary Johnson isn’t the only one in jeopardy

ELEANOR FIALK
Opinions Editor

James Birney did it in 1844. Theodore Roosevelt did it in 1912. George Wallace in 1968, Ross Perot in 1992 and Ralph Nader in 2000.

That’s right, all five third-party candidates split the presidential vote and denied victory to a candidate who otherwise would have won.

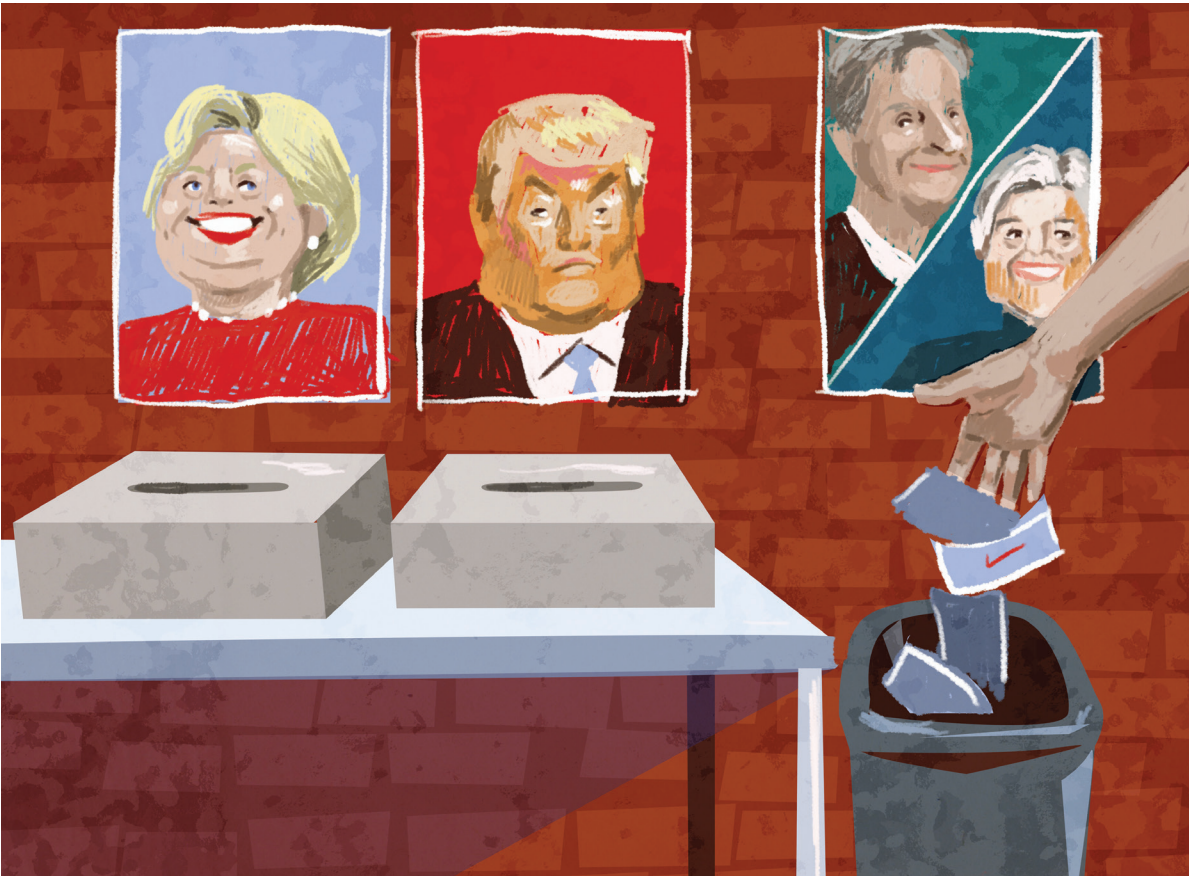
Distaste for the American two-party political system is nothing new — the winner-takes-all electoral system has proven success nearly impossible as an independent or third-party candidate. Despite many citizens’ desire for change, the system has caused countless voters to consider a third-party or independent candidate to be a “wasted vote” — but this is far from true.

Between Donald Trump’s frequent toddler-esque temper tantrums and the media’s painting of Hillary Clinton as a crooked liar, it is no surprise numerous Americans have looked toward a third-party candidate in a frantic frenzy for stability. Perhaps a vote for either Trump or Clinton would serve as nothing more than an obligatory choice between the “lesser of two evils,” hence why some voters prefer to vote third-party than refrain entirely.

Although the optimism many voters possess in regard to changing the two-party system is admirable, it is imperative we consider the consequence of voting third-party — especially with this election year.

The bottom line: A vote for a third-party or independent candidate is not a wasted vote, but rather holds the potential to skew the entire 2016 presidential election.

When included on the ballot, Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson and Green party candidate Jill Stein pull more votes from Clinton than Trump, according to studies conducted by FiveThirtyEight. If this



forecast proves accurate, voters who ultimately vote for Johnson or Stein over Clinton could unintentionally act as a catalyst for Trump’s success.

In 2000, Green party nominee Ralph Nader split Democrat Al Gore’s votes, allowing Republican George W. Bush to win the presidential election by a mere 537 votes in Florida.

A study conducted in 2001 by political scientist Gerald Pomper of Rutgers University found “approximately half (47 percent) of the Nader voters said they would choose Gore in a two-man race, a fifth (21 percent) would choose Bush, and a third (32 percent) would not vote.”

With Green party candidate Nader out of the picture, it is very likely Bush, whose approval rating plummeted to 25 percent at it’s lowest point during his presidency, would have never been elected.

To put that into perspective, Bush’s lowest approval rating ranks at only one percentage point above impeached Richard Nixon’s lowest approval rating, according to data taken from analytic organization Gallup.

If the 2016 election follows in the footsteps of the turn of the century, Johnson and Stein supporters could inadvertently land Trump in the oval office.

Stein poses as a lesser threat to Clinton’s campaign a Johnson, predicted to secure only 2.4 percent of the vote on election day, according to Vox. Johnson, on the other hand, is expected to secure 7.1 percent of the vote — the highest of any third-party candidate in the 21st century. Combined, this makes the slim difference between Clinton and Trump even more marginal.

Johnson, however, has not proven himself worthy of presidential office.

In an interview with Johnson, MSNBC’s Mike

Barnicle, asked what Johnson would do in regard to Aleppo, the epicenter of Syria’s refugee crisis and civil war if elected to office. Johnson was at a loss for words, responding to Barnicle with a perplexed facial expression. “What is Aleppo?” Johnson asked.

As a candidate running for presidential office, the inability to identify a foreign city in turmoil to the extent Aleppo is suffering is inexcusable. The Syrian refugee crisis has been a highly controversial topic in American politics for months and Johnson’s lack of knowledge on the subject is beyond concerning.

After the MSNBC interview shed light on Johnson’s apparent unpreparedness, many voters felt as though Johnson should be given some slack for what they considered to be a slip-up. At a later interview with MSNBC, host Chris Matthews asked Johnson to name and discuss his favorite foreign leader.

“I guess I’m having an Aleppo moment,” Johnson said, unable to name a single foreign leader from any country across the globe.

Both of Johnson’s “Aleppo moments” validate the Libertarian candidate is neither prepared nor deserving of presidential office. As foreign affairs continue to play a major role in American politics, Johnson’s lack of preparedness and knowledge is unacceptable.

At the end of the day, Johnson supporters must ask themselves if a vote for Johnson (and his subpar knowledge of foreign affairs) is worth handing Trump the presidency.

It is no longer a question of “voting with conscience” nor optimism, but boils down to the hard truth: Johnson’s 7.1 percent nor Stein’s 2.4 percent stand a chance of victory in this election. However, a vote for either candidate could be exactly what Trump needs to get his greedy, orange little hands on a four-year term.

Papal Petulance

SHAUN JACKSON
Staff Columnist

While it’s no surprise most faiths have not taken into account the identities of certain disenfranchised members of our society, Pope Francis recently reiterated his disagreement with teaching gender theory and identification in Sunday schools.

Pope Francis referred to the teaching as a “war against marriage” and “ideological colonization.” Of course this comes as no surprise after Pope Francis compared the teaching of gender theory to nuclear arms in February 2015.

Yikes.

For those uneducated on the subject, Gender Theory is essentially an umbrella term for the school of thought examining how people come to identify themselves sexually, as well as how they may be forced into certain roles based on societal expectations.

In other words, this is apples and oranges.

It’s one thing to compare nuclear arms with genetic manipulation, as both are forms of human efforts to affect life. However, simply DISCOVERING that traits of sexuality exist along a continuum (something that has been pretty well established, actually) is way different than manipulating anyone’s biology.

Furthermore, the argument stating intersex individuals are unnatural is an unsubstantiated claim.

If anything, the existence of intersex individuals is not necessarily against natural law, but proves there is at least some gray area distinguishing the male/female binary. It would be nice if “natural law” wasn’t used as an excuse to discriminate against or even mutilate these individuals.

The Catholic Church still won’t endorse birth control, so I do not expect the Church to completely grasp the finer points of Gender Theory. But given the Catholic Church’s history, it is completely beyond me why Pope Francis thinks he can be an authoritative voice on anything pertaining to sex and gender.

I’m not expecting the Catholic Church to jump on the proverbial bandwagon and into a social movement, the same way it is unrealistically optimistic to expect the Pope to publicly support something that a relatively few number of people even understand at this point, let alone actually accept.

But Pope Francis has power, and with this power is the ability to, without much effort, persuade the minds of others. Which is why, as a cisgender white man, his nuclear arms statement means absolutely nothing to those disenfranchised by his perspective. And yet his Papal word can single-handedly sway a huge religious following — and thus Pope Francis needs to constantly evolve in his thinking and understanding on these issues.

This is not to say that there are not layers to this issue. A lot of the time people fail to understand gender and the effects of it.

The lack of understanding these issues is closely tied to a misogynistic culture — just like homophobia is closely tied to misogyny — which is also why there are typically more trans women to remember on TDOR (Transgender Day of Remembrance) than transmen. Well, misogyny and people’s deeply held beliefs in heteronormativity.

Our human experiences so often challenge the surface level definitive claims contained in the bible, and evoke the need for nuance and complexity, which needs to not only be understood by the Pope himself, but many members of the church.



comics

But I’m A Senior by Kelly Macrae



Losing Control by Skye Ali



Convenient Outrage by Gareth Bental



Are you surprised?

THE CT STAFF

- Executive Editor**
Sarah King
kingsa@commonwealthtimes.org
- Creative Director**
Ashley Moody
moody@commonwealthtimes.org
- News Editor**
Fadel Allasan
allasanfg@commonwealthtimes.org
- Online Editor**
Maura Mazurowski
mazurom@commonwealthtimes.org
- Sports Editors**
Sophia Belletti
bellettisr@commonwealthtimes.org
- Zachary Joachim
joachimz@commonwealthtimes.org
- Spectrum Editor**
Jesse Adcock
adcockj@commonwealthtimes.org
- Opinion Editor**
Eleanor Fialk
fialke@commonwealthtimes.org
- Illustrations Editor**
Gareth Bental
bentalgr@commonwealthtimes.org
- Photography Editor**
Julie Tripp
trippjm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Webmaster & Social Media**
Josh Akan-Etuk
akaneti@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Writers**
Gabe Hauari
hauarig@commonwealthtimes.org

- Hiba Ahmad
ahmadh@commonwealthtimes.org
- Joe Johnson
johnsonj@commonwealthtimes.org
- Mary Lee Clark
clarkml@commonwealthtimes.org
- Muktaru Jalloh
jallohmm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Photographers**
Ali Jones
jonesa@commonwealthtimes.org
- Becca Schwartz
schwartzb@commonwealthtimes.org
- Erin Edgerton
edgertone@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Columnist**
Shaun Jackson
???????@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Illustrators**
Carson McNamara
mcnamarac@commonwealthtimes.org

- Skye Ali
alis@commonwealthtimes.org
- Graphic Designers**
Ashley Moody
Sarah Butler
Rachel Lee
Desiree Choe
Eric Ngo
designers@vcustudentmedia.com
- Advertising Representatives**
Abigail Keatinge
advertising@vcustudentmedia.com
804-828-6629
- Outreach Coordinator**
Felix Mallaby-Kay
smc_outreach@vcustudentmedia.com

- Student Media Director**
Allison Dyche
abdyche@vcu.edu
804-827-1975
- Production Manager**
Mark Jeffries
mjffries@vcu.edu
- Business Manager**
Jacob McFadden
mcfaddenjc@vcu.edu
- Assistant Business Manager**
Mikaela Reinard
smc_assistant@vcu.edu

The Commonwealth Times strives to be accurate in gathering news. If you think we have made an error, please call Sarah King, executive editor, at 804-828-5317 or email her at kingsa@commonwealthtimes.org.

Corrections will appear on the Opinion page or online at www.commonwealthtimes.org.

Opinions expressed are those of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times or Virginia Commonwealth University. Unsigned editorials represent the institutional opinion of The CT.

One CT per person. Additional copies can be purchased at the Student Media Center for \$1 each.

ADD YOUR VOICE

The opinion pages of The Commonwealth Times are a forum open to the public.

Clear, concise and compelling contributions are welcome by email at fialke@commonwealthtimes.org, by mail or in person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220-2806.