

THE CT

NEWS
New media program • 3

SPORTS
Black and Gold game • 5

SPECTRUM
Folk Festival • 7

OPINION
Importance of voting • 9



Trump supporters and VCU students clashed during a rally for the presidential candidate. The two groups exchanged words and one protester was spit on.

FADEL ALLASSAN
Staff Writer

He’s led in the polls since August among GOP candidates vying for the Republican nomination. His outspoken persona has fashioned him into not only a business mogul, but a reality television star. With his unmistakable diction and demeanor, Donald Trump has amassed record numbers on televised debates and along the campaign trail — including Richmond.

“The fact that so much media and so much attention has been put toward a person who is intentionally racist and xenophobic is disgusting. The more that we can push back against someone like that — it’s important.

— KENDALL KING

Last week in Richmond, however, the spotlight may not have shone entirely on Trump. That’s because a group of determined dissidents, primarily VCU students, made it their mission to “disrupt the Trump” at his appearance in Virginia’s capital on Oct. 14.

“It all started with a Facebook post,” said Camila Grez-Messina, a senior chemistry major at VCU who helped organize the protesters. “I saw that he was coming to Richmond and I posted ‘demonstration opportunity’ to find out who would be interested in doing something like this.”

—continued on page 2

Order seeks to curb “devastating effects of gun violence”

MATT LEONARD
Print Managing Editor

Governor Terry McAuliffe signed an executive order last week mandating stricter prosecution of gun related crimes, increases scrutiny on gun retailers and restricts guns from entering state government buildings.

In 2014 there were 58 assaults committed in Virginia using some sort of firearm, according to the Virginia State Police. In his executive order McAuliffe specifically points to the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech in which 32 people lost their lives, and the shooting in Roanoke earlier this year that resulted in the death of two television journalists.

“The actions directed in this executive order will help our Commonwealth better

enforce Virginia laws designed to keep guns away from people who would use them for harm,” McAuliffe stated in the executive order. “Like too many communities around the nation, cities and counties across the Commonwealth have experienced the devastating effects of gun violence.”

The mandates outlines six specific orders that will now be enforced by both the attorney general and the state police.

Attorney General Mark Herring will now lead a gun control task force to enforce current sales licensing laws and that people who aren’t legally allowed to own or purchase firearms can’t obtaining them.

Aside from enforcement of gun laws already in place, the task force will reassess Virginia’s regulations on the gun industry to

ensure they are tight enough to prevent the illegal purchase of guns.

Much of this work will happen through the judiciary, and the governor has asked Herring to, “bring such cases as he may deem most appropriate in order to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth from illegal firearms sales.” McAuliffe also calls on judges and prosecutors to push to have guns taken away in appropriate criminal cases.

Placing a ban on firearms in state government buildings was the part of the order Republicans in Virginia’s House of Delegates focused on most in their written responses, which voiced disapproval of the governor’s actions.

—continued on page 9

OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR / PAGE 10

OPINION

VCU’s new admissions policy continues to hurt disadvantaged applicants

JUSTIN JOSEPH
Contributing Columnist

Last spring, VCU joined a national movement of colleges and universities that identify as “test-optional” meaning they no longer require students to submit test scores in order to be considered for admission. Despite the buzz generated by these policy changes, the new VCU admission policy is not as groundbreaking as many of us were led to believe.

Although many Americans consider the SAT to be a fundamental part of the college admissions process, institutions like Harvard University, the Brookings Institute and the National Association for College Admissions Counseling have found racial and socioeconomic biases associated with the exam. President Michael Rao said in his last State of the University address that, “We are not denying a transformative education to students who we know would flourish here just because they don’t have a certain SAT score.” Rao went on to call the test “fundamentally flawed,” and this year’s freshman with a 3.3 GPA or higher were no longer required to submit scores with their applications.

Such declarations would make it seem like VCU prioritizes equal access to options in higher education. Most VCU students and faculty support making academic opportunities available to students regardless of their socioeconomic background and racial identification.

“Let’s take first-generation students for example — we’ve seen on average a 70 point lower SAT score but the same GPA,” said vice provost for strategic enrollment Luke



Schultheis in an interview with the CT last spring. “We’ve been denying those students admission previously, but now we won’t be.”

But SAT and ACT scores are still required for those who apply to the VCU School of Engineering as well as the Honors College and its Guaranteed Admissions Programs. The Presidential, Provost and Deans’ scholarships, three of VCU’s most prestigious merit scholarships, also use standardized test scores as a selection factor.

These exceptions to score-optional review may be due to the competitive nature of these academic tracks and opportunities, but the selective nature of the new admissions policy perpetuates the injustice that is prevalent within our higher education system.

The score requirements send a message to the VCU community that those who are racially and economically privileged are more deserving to be an engineer, participate in a community focused on intellectual and personal

—continued on page 9

Lindsay Hawk: Testing boundaries by shedding clothes

AUSTIN WALKER
Spectrum Editor

A student in the Sculpture and Extended Media department is making audience members and internet viewers shift uncomfortably in their seats in the hopes of breaking down some societal walls.

Lindsay Hawk, a senior minor-ing in Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, has recently released a variety of work including a video installation titled “How to Make Popsicles,” a jarring visual and auditory experience involving the artist masturbating with red popsicles while naked.

Hawk’s work encompasses a range of mediums, styles and messages. She is a self-proclaimed feminist, and her work has a consistent pro-sexuality theme, embracing human intimacy and form. She said that studying GSWS would help her have a more qualified voice on the issues she tries to address.



Lindsay Hawk’s “Woman Reclining.” Hawk is a senior in the Sculpture and Extended media department, and her work explores idea of sexuality, women’s rights and body image.

—continued on page 6



In this section:
Insomnia study, city
budget deadline,
Virginia gun control

briefs

LOCAL

Wilson Bridge reopens after shut-down for suspicious package

The Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge has reopened after a suspicious package on the pedestrian walkway led to a shutdown of the inner loop of the Capital Beltway. State Highway officials tweeted about 4 p.m. Friday that the bridge had reopened. The Prince George's County Fire department's bomb squad received a call about the package on the span shortly before noon. Authorities closed the inner loop at the exit for Interstate 295. Fire department spokesman Mark Brady said after X-rays and a hand search of the package, and making contact with a company listed on a shipping label on the box, the package was deemed harmless. *Brief by the Associated Press*

Williamsburg attorney charged with fraud in timeshare scheme

A Williamsburg attorney has been indicted on charges related to participating in a timeshare scheme. Deborah Wagner was arrested on Friday. Court records say she's been charged with numerous counts of mail fraud, wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Prosecutors say the scheme involved conspiring with several other people, including a man who owned a number of travel and timeshare businesses. Court records say Wagner transferred timeshare units into the names of stolen identities and straw owners, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses to resorts due to lost maintenance fees and taxes. *Brief by the Associated Press*

Richmond museum receives paintings worth more than \$200M

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts says it has received a collection of American art worth more than \$200 million. The Richmond museum says the gift from James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin is the most significant collection of American art given to a North American museum in more than 30 years. It includes 12 works by John Singer Sargent and five by George Wesley Bellows. *Brief by the Associated Press*

NATIONAL
Police: Teen son was beaten for trying to leave his church

A mother and father whipped their 19-year-old son in church with an electrical cord and what appeared to be a belt during a deadly, all-night spiritual counseling session triggered by his desire to leave the fold, according to witness testimony and police Friday. Church deacon Daniel Irwin testified he peered through a doorway window in the sanctuary during the more than 12-hour ordeal at the Word of Life Christian Church and saw Lucas Leonard bleeding and in apparent agony. "Lucas was rolling himself back and forth on the floor and making a sustained, monotone moaning," Irwin said. *Brief by the Associated Press*

2 ex-deputies acquitted of manslaughter in stun gun death

Two former sheriff's deputies were acquitted Friday of involuntary manslaughter charges but still face prison time after being convicted of related crimes in the stun gun-related death of a 21-year-old jail detainee in southeast Georgia. The verdict in the January death of Mathew Ajibade prompted attorneys for his family to criticize Chatham County District Attorney Meg Heap for going after rank-and-file jailers rather than investigating lapses by Sheriff Al St. Lawrence and his senior staff. *Brief by the Associated Press*

Clinton backs Obama's move to keep US forces in Afghanistan

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton said Thursday she supports President Barack Obama's decision to keep 5,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan when he leaves the White House in 2017. Clinton said Friday in an interview with CNN that Obama's moves were an example of "a leader who has strong convictions about what he would like to see happen but also pays attention to what's going on in the real world." The president had originally planned to keep only a small U.S. military presence by the end of his presidency. But military leaders have said the Afghans need more support from the U.S. to fight the Taliban and maintain gains made during the past 14 years. Clinton, who served as Obama's secretary of state during his first term, said the U.S. wants to bring its troops home and "we certainly don't want them engaged in on-the-ground combat. We want them to help support and train the Afghan army." *Brief by the Associated Press*



PHOTO BY AUDRY DUBON

Governor Terry McAuliffe announced an executive order last week that attempts to create stricter enforcement of the state's gun laws, while also implementing new methods — including a gun control task force — to continue policy research, change.

Order seeks to curb “devastating effects of gun violence”

—continued from page 1

“The Governor’s decision to prohibit firearms in state buildings is shortsighted,” said House Deputy Majority Leader Todd Gilbert (R-Shenandoah). As we have seen again and again, such policies leave law-abiding citizens vulnerable to acts of senseless violence rather than protecting people from such tragedies. We will review this policy during the 2016 legislative session and take the appropriate

action to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens.” In the 2015 legislative session there were 33 bills involving guns introduced by the the General Assembly. Two were signed by the governor. One made it a class 6 felony to have a gun on school property. The other allows people who lost their ability to own a firearm for legal reasons to petition that decision in court. House Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) said in response to

McAuliffe’s order that the best way to prevent gun violence is to simply enforce what the state already has on the books and focus on improved care for the mentally ill. “For years, we have consistently said the best way to keep Virginians safe is to enforce existing law,” Howell said. “We will monitor the work of the task force. The Governor’s policy on firearms in state buildings will not apply to the State Capitol or the General Assembly Building.”

House Majority Leader Kirk Cox (R-Colonial Heights), who, along with Gilbert and Howell, has a 100 percent rating from Virginia’s pro-gun group the Citizens Defense League, said the order gets in the way of other law enforcement agencies implementing state law. “It is curious that the governor and attorney general are putting such special emphasis on enforcing Virginia’s gun laws when they have been so eager to ignore other laws in the past,” Cox said.



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH BUTLER

Insomnia’s predominance differs with gender

LOGAN BOGERT
Contributing Writer

A graduate student’s research recently concluded that females may be more predisposed to developing insomnia than males. Mackenzie Lind received her bachelor’s of science from the University of Scranton before attending VCU to pursue her interest in addiction and neurobiology. Lind is currently in her third year of the M.D.-Ph.D. program at VCU for clinical and translational sciences with a concentration in psychiatric, behavioral and statistical genetics. “I’ve always been interested in sleep because it’s an area where we know very little still,” Lind said. “You think of all the advances we’ve had in other areas like medicine and physiology but there’s so little that we understand about sleep and particularly disturbed sleep in general.” According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 30 percent of adults have symptoms of insomnia while 10 percent have insomnia so severe it interferes with their daily lives. Lind examined a database of pre-existing data from the Virginia Adult Twin Studies of

Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders. The VATSPUD has data on approximately 7,500 adult male and female twins that Lind was able to utilize in her research. Lind said nobody had looked at the sleep items in the VATSPUD, but by using the data from twin studies, researchers are able to examine differences in people who share the same DNA. Examining twins helped Lind see how genetic and environmental factors affected certain traits, like sleep. “Our big and probably the most interesting finding is that within the final model I saw that insomnia appears to be more heritable for women,” Lind said. “That means theoretically that genes may be playing more of a role for women than for men in terms of developing insomnia.” Lind’s findings suggest that analyzing family history regarding insomnia in women could be beneficial. “None of this is proof per se; it’s evidence that there may be these differences,” Lind said. “Being able to elicit sex differences may be really important within research because we do find that men and women differ.” Lind said her next step it to publish a follow-

up paper looking for genetic overlap between insomnia and depression, insomnia and general anxiety disorder and insomnia in relation to other disorders. “I’m trying to see how much the genes and the environment overlap between insomnia and other psychiatrist conditions like problematic alcohol use and antisocial personality disorder as a contrast,” Lind said. “We tend to see that insomnia and depression seem to coincide a lot.” The overlaps that Lind is examining are not limited to only women, although she said the sample from the VATSPUD has shown that there are sex effects for depression as well. “What’s unique is that the data set, VATSPUD, is a big longitudinal study so that’s what allowed me to be able to detect these sex differences because we could pull data across multiple time points. We had two time points for each individual,” Lind said. “When you have multiple time points you can kind of get a better idea about the true endorsement of those items because you can separate out some of the error that might have occurred. You can get better estimates with better time points.”

City expects to meet budget deadline after past problems

ANDREW CRIDER
Contributing Writer

Following a week of mixed messages from public officials, city council declared Richmond would complete its Comprehensive Annual Financial report by the Nov. 30 deadline set by the state, during an Oct. 12 council meeting. Last year’s financial report for the 2014 fiscal year was published 10 months overdue on Oct. 5 of this year — five days after the city’s projected completion date. Doubts about this year’s 2015 report meeting state deadline began the day after the 2014 report was published. “Our goal is to work as hard as we can to get it done sooner rather than later,” said Selena Glenn, Chief Administrative Officer, to the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Glenn then said she would not give a specific completion date because “then you’ll use it against us.” If Richmond were to miss the deadline, lawmakers would not be able to judge the city’s financial performance. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) deadline allows Martha Mavredes, the state’s Auditor of Public Accounts (APA), to create a legislative report used to guide budget decisions for the future. “It is the responsibility of the locality to prepare the (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) and to hire a CPA firm to audit the CAFR,” said Staci Henshaw, deputy auditor at the APA. “It is also the responsibility of the locality to take action to correct the situation that caused the delays.”

“When the reports are delayed, the information contained in them is not available timely for the governing body for decision making.

— STACI HENSHAW

Henshaw said the reports allow the APA to see financial activity in the city and provide an overall perspective of the inflows and outflows of resources for the locality, including budgetary information for certain funds. “When the reports are delayed, the information contained in them is not available timely for the governing body for decision making,” Henshaw said. During the city council meeting last Monday however, deputy administrator of finance Lenora Reid said the report would be in by this year’s Nov. 1 deadline. “We’re looking forward to meeting the state deadline,” Henshaw said. “That’s our goal.”



The scene became heated last week when Trump supporters used racial slurs and curses against protesters who came to voice opposition to the politician's views.

VCU students heckle Trump at Richmond rally

—continued from page 1

Greza-Messina's efforts to coordinate through social media were successful. Within two days, Greza-Messina was able to garner more than 100 interested people on a Facebook event page.

One of those people was Kendall King.

"The fact that so much media and so much attention has been put toward a person who is intentionally racist and xenophobic is disgusting. The more that we can push back against someone like that — it's important," King said. "I have friends who are Latino and Latina, they identify with identities that people like Donald Trump are continually trying to insult."

Before living in Richmond, Greza-Messina said they* resided in Leesburg, Virginia. Originally, though, they hail from Rancagua, Chile, and as a naturalized United States citizen, said they're offended by Trump's language and proposed policies on immigration.

"I'm an immigrant myself and my parents are immigrants," Greza-Messina said. "The way that he has been talking about us is not correct, it's demonizing. I'm not going to stand for that, he is not welcome here."

The students erected a large sign at the rally that read "no human life is illegal," which they said was immediately and forcefully removed by Trump supporters as Trump bellowed, "That's why we have freedom of speech."

One supporter even stood on the



Trump addressed the crowd with topics including immigration and America's relationship with China.

“When we started chanting, it got worse. People ripped signs out of our hands and we were forced out of the rally. We were yelled at, called dykes and lesbians and the N-word, and one of our protestors was spit on.”

— CAMILA GREZ-MESSINA

sign to ensure the students couldn't raise it again.



Protesters held signs in opposition to Trump's immigration plan.

"Even our presence in the rally without any kind of disruption was unwelcome," Greza-Messina said. "When we started chanting, it got worse. People ripped signs out of our hands and we were forced out of the rally. We were yelled at, called dykes and lesbians and the

Local business and VCU Arts launches certificate program in advanced media

SOPHIA BELLETTI
Staff writer

After four years of planning, the VCU School of the Arts officially launched a master's degree certificate program in Advanced Media Production Technology (AMPT) set to begin next spring.

Designed to connect graduates with employment opportunities in the expansive field of digital media production, AMPT is a hands-on, project-based program that brings disciplined craftsmanship together with innovative technology.

Carlos Chafin, president of In Your Ear Music and Video Production and co-director of AMPT, saw an industry need for

students with a better understanding of media and technology production, but a lack of universities with schools educating students on these topics. This realization is what brought him to design such courses within VCUArts.

Chaffin plays a large role in the program. In Your Ear has offered studio space for students to work and learn. He also helped devise the strategy and vision to identify the best faculty to teach courses.

"I've been involved in this business for a long time," said Chaffin. "I wanted to create a program where people had already put down their money and had already studied and graduated and worked very hard. I wanted to offer a really in-

tensive program of study that would take one or two years and you could really get up to speed with all the technological stuff."

The program is 24 credits, taken over the course of two semesters. Prerequisites include an undergraduate degree from an accredited four-year institution. Potential students can apply through the Common Application. A portfolio is not required, but a personal interview is highly recommended.

While the hiring process for faculty and staff is not completed yet, potential new hires include Richmond professionals and professors from the communication arts and cinema programs.

The certificate educates all students at the same level in sound, editing and production, film editing, production and post production. When students move into their second semester they will begin their capstone project. During this time, they'll have the opportunity to hone in on a specific aspect of what they want to pursue afterward graduation.

"(The certificate) is designed to immerse the students in media production technology and also designed to bring the students own interests, skills and talents into the program, no matter where they come from," said Matt Woolman, executive director of entrepreneurship for VCU School of the Arts and co-founder of AMPT.

Woolman said they are looking for a "diverse set of skills and backgrounds" so students will be able to

learn from one another, as well as the professors.

"We want students to have the confidence and ultimately the skills to go out and take risks and try new ideas," Woolman said.

Students entering new media industries, such as gaming or postproduction, must master the specific artistic demands and technologies of the trade and have experience with a wide variety of disciplines, including story development, audio production, video editing, digital photography and basic live film production. AMPT provides this broad base of skills while requiring students to concentrate in one of three professional areas: audio production, digital cinema production or post-production.

"Students are involved in developing their own content and telling their own stories with actual professionals and working on real world projects," Woolman said. "They're comprehensively getting an experience in the whole industry."

The AMPT certificate joins a growing list of entrepreneurial programs developed by VCUArts. Although courses on entrepreneurship are not explicitly taught, it is a principal point of the certificate programs and is woven into the curriculum.

"A single person equipped with technology can go out and launch their own studio or be an independent producer," Woolman said. "So built into every level of teaching the technology and working on projects, we build in this notion of

'you're an independently minded individual, you have the potential to launch your own venture.'"

Woolman and Chaffin faced internal and external problems when beginning the program. VCU does not have the correct facilities to teach the technology.

Internal problems include proposing the program to the department of education and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and all the governing bodies outside the university that see the establishment of new programs.

"There have been a lot of problems of students taking out a lot of debt and then not being employable afterwards," Woolman said. "The department of education put in place a lot of policy over the last several years of what is called workforce development."

The end goal of the certificate program is for students become well rounded and prepared to work in various fields. Possible professions include music recording, video recording, video game development and animation.

"We want to meet the professional needs of each student in their own unique way," Woolman said. "If they desire to enter the vast realm of the media technology, then they will be equipped to do so. We want to prepare the students to enter whatever the next step in their professional lives is and equip them with the technology and skills and confidence to do that."

vcu briefs

World renowned artists from across disciplines engage with VCUArts students

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts is hosting twenty national and international artists from across the fine, design and performing arts as visiting artists this fall. These artists come to the classroom for one-on-one discussions with students and faculty, participate in critiques, and give public lectures.

"The VCUArts student body has unparalleled access to some of the most talented, living artists of our time," says Dean Joseph Seipel. "This year's line-up has a critical eye on the world and its environments. Each artist brings a unique perspective to our campus and adds a new voice to our curriculum."

Find all of these lectures and more at arts.vcu.edu/calendar and search for "Visiting Artist."

VCU receives \$5 million grant to study adolescent brain development

The National Institutes of Health awarded a \$5 million grant to Virginia Commonwealth University to take part in a landmark study on substance use and adolescent brain development. NIH's Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study is the largest longitudinal neuroimaging study of human brain development ever launched.

The five-year grant will fund research that aims to map the neuropsychological trajectories of the developing brain. The study holds the potential to expand on current understandings of both normal and atypical brain development across human adolescence.

VCU was selected as one of 20 research institutions around the country slated to follow a total of about 10,000 children beginning at ages 9 and 10 through puberty and adolescence. The expectation is that the grant will be renewed at the end of five years so that researchers can continue to study the participants through adolescence and into early adulthood.

VCU is one of four consortium sites that will be recruiting pairs of twins to yield additional clarification of hereditary and environmental influences on brain development. The Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry, which is housed within the VCU Office of Research, played a key role in VCU's selection for participation in the study. The largest twin registry in the United States, the MATR is a database of twins and their families who are willing to consider taking part in twin-based, health-related research. It has been providing researchers with access to twins for more than 35 years.

The study will feature biannual MRI scans at the VCU Collaborative Advanced Research Imaging facility, which will screen for changes in brain structure and function. It will also entail psychiatric interviewing of the children and their parents as well as questionnaires on academic achievements, cognition measurements and other life history factors.

Brief by Anne Dreyfuss, VCU News

VCU to host daylong discussion of race and American society

Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Union University are examining the role race plays in the criminal justice system, public opinion and the media at the daylong Wilder Symposium "Race and American Society."

The symposium will take place on Friday, Oct. 16, from 9 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. at the Grace Street Theater, 934 W. Grace St. on the VCU Monroe Park Campus. The event was free and open to the public.

"To say that race is the '500-pound gorilla' in the room would be a gross understatement. A thoughtful and intellectual discussion about 'Race and American Society' not only is timely, but necessary," said former Gov. L. Douglas Wilder. "Hopefully, this symposium will provide for the fullest opportunities to hear from those best qualified, by training and experience, to engage and to inform a questioning audience."

The day's first session, "Race & the Criminal Justice System in America," took place between 9 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. The keynote speaker was Rep. Robert "Bobby" Scott. Presenters were John Venuti, VCU police chief; Alfred Durham, Richmond police chief; and local attorneys Vinceretta Taylor Chiles and Vincent Robertson. Robert Holsworth, Ph.D., moderated.

The second session, "Race & Public Opinion," ran from 10:30 a.m. until 12:15 p.m. Presenters were Scott Keeter, Ph.D., survey director of the Pew Research Center; Gail Christopher, vice president of policy at the Kellogg Foundation; and Andra Gillespie, Ph.D., associate professor of political science at Emory University. The session was moderated by Ronald Lester.

The final session, "Race and the Media," took place from 2 p.m. until 3:15 p.m. The presenters for this session were talk radio hosts Joe Madison at Sirius/XM radio and Jack Gravelly at WLEE.

Brief by Mike Porter, VCU News

Patients and families celebrate Halloween early at Children's Hospital of Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University

Pediatric patients and families at Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU (CHoR) were treated to a special Halloween party from Spirit of Children, a program that to date has raised more than \$226,500 for the Child Life Program at CHoR on Wednesday, Oct. 14.

Shira Pollard, VCU News



A new program offered through the art school will prepare students for the changing media landscape with topics including video editing and video game development.



sports

Club sports continue to grow students

Club sports are offered for college students to continue playing the sports they love at a competitive level. Over the past few seasons, new leaders and founders have developed club sports to be more competitive and serious. This season comes with high expectations and hopes after several teams had stellar performances in the spring.

WRESTLING

Wrestling has always been a huge part of junior Yassin Semmami's life. After being a ranked wrestler in high school and captain of his team, Semmami wanted to continue wrestling in college.

When Semmami arrived at VCU his freshman year he was disappointed to learn there was no wrestling club. Determined to continue what he loves, Semmami went to the clubs office with intentions of creating the club, but ran into several problems with practice space.

"We can't practice at Cary Street and I went gym to gym asking if we could practice and every school said no," Semmami said. "Then I went to MMA gyms and they all charged an unreasonable amount of money."

Eventually, Semmami formed a relationship with the owner at an MMA gym and worked a deal out and finally got approved by VCU, two years later.

Last semester, the club became active, but wasn't at the level to compete yet.

"There wasn't anything to be a club about," Semmami said. "We didn't practice, we only had members that didn't do anything. Now we're an active club."

This semester, the team practices regularly and gained 30 new members. The goal for this season is to focus on practicing so that next semester they can begin to compete in tournaments.



The original members of the wrestling club.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

“We’re pretty close as teammates go and we all adore each other but I hope to make a bond that’s further trustworthy and strengthened off the court.”

— JENNIFER OUK

Senior Jennifer Ouk founded club basketball at VCU her sophomore year in 2013. Ouk played basketball throughout high school and wasn't ready to give up the competitive game.

"There wasn't an athletic organization that I felt passionate about, and it's common sport that I'm surprised our school didn't already offer," Ouk said.

Ouk felt prepared to undertake a brand new club, carrying her leadership skills she learned as a varsity captain her senior year of high school.

"Being captain in high school helped me be communicable and sort of a leader in a sense of creative thinking of how to create a sense of community within the team," Ouk said. "While being president,

I learned how to be more of a mentor and advisor as well which is great."

Last year, the team's fall season ended with an 8-7 record, but improved to 10-4 during the spring season. This fall, two new players were added to the roster.

"I hope to improve on unity," Ouk said. "We're pretty close as teammates go and we all adore each other but I hope to make a bond that's further trustworthy and strengthened off the court. In a weird way it eventually pays off in the game chemistry on the court itself."

The season kicked off with a red robin-style tournament this weekend at Old Dominion University but results were not final by press time.

BASEBALL

Over the last year, VCU club baseball went from being the doormat of the conference to conference champions and a top-10 team in the country.

Last fall was when the team turned its attitude around, thanks to leadership by senior outfielder/second baseman John Lyons-Harrison and senior pitcher/shortstop Teddy Leinbach.

"We try to set an example," Leinbach said. "We've always made club (baseball) a serious thing."

This season, VCU added 12 new players to the roster, especially with pitchers. The pitching staff went from three last season to seven this season.

"Last year we had a problem with pitching depth," Lyons-Harrison said. "We like to compete in tournaments so we came into this season with the mindset that we want to fill out the bullpen and try to develop guys into pitchers. This year we decided to really focus on the pitching aspect of the team."

Last fall, the team finished with a 4-3 record. In the spring, the team finished 17-4, with a World Series appearance and as conference champions.

VCU won the first games of the series against SUNY Brockport and Eastern Ken-

tucky University, but fell to the University of Saint Louis 10-5 in the third round.

Leinbach was the ace of the staff and went 5-0 with a 2.33 ERA. Logging 33.2, the Durham native led the team in innings pitched and believes he can do it again this season.

"At the end of the year in the regional tournament I pitched 13 and 2/3 innings, so it definitely got stronger as the year went on," said Leinbach.

Lyons-Harrison is the president of this year's program and led the league last fall in dingers.

"I just try to make solid contact with the ball and get guys on base," said Lyons-Harrison. "I don't really try to hit home runs. It's about having a good approach at the plate. I just try to hit the ball hard and see what happens."

This season began with a doubleheader against George Mason University on Oct 10. VCU won the first game 5-0 and tied the second 4-4.

This season's goal is to have a winning season so they can make it back to the World Series in the spring, and potentially win it all.

"We got red hot out of nowhere in the spring and I think we can carry that over pretty nicely into this year," Lyons-Harrison said.



VCU has added 12 new players for the team this season.

Women's soccer suffers first A-10 loss

ZACH JOACHIM
Contributing Writer

The women's soccer team split a pair of home conference matches this past week, defeating the University of Dayton 3-2 on Oct. 11, and falling to George Washington University 2-0 on Oct. 15.

With 12 combined wins consecutively between the Rams and GW, the Thursday night match created a tense atmosphere. The winner would claim sole possession of first place in the Atlantic 10 and an inside track to the top seed for the A-10 championships held in mid-November.

It was a chilly evening at Sports Backers stadium and George Washington controlled the pace of the match throughout the first half, scoring in the 32nd and 40th minutes off set pieces to build a commanding 2-0 lead going into halftime.

The Rams opened the second half with renewed energy. In the 48th minute, freshman Julia Suarez made a run down the near sideline and put a cross into the box that prompted a frantic clear

from the GW defense. The Colonials conceded most of the possession for the remainder of the half, choosing to sit back and protect the lead. Suarez and senior Kailyn Slade would keep the heat on, as a rip from the top of the box by Suarez in the 58th minute sailed just over the crossbar. VCU's last significant chance for a goal came in the 84th minute came with GW's back line on its heels after a turnover. Suarez made a run down the far sideline and found Slade in the box, whose one-time effort curved barely wide of the post. The game ended, along with VCU's five-game undefeated streak, in a 2-0 defeat.

After the match, head coach Lindsey Martin expressed disappointment in her team's lack of energy, particularly during the first half.

"If we think that effort will get us points moving forward we are sorely mistaken," Martin said. "Good teams will make you pay, and that's exactly what GW did tonight."

The Lady Rams earlier in the week, however, came out on

fire against defending conference champion Dayton. Seeking its fifth consecutive win, VCU jumped out to an early 2-0 lead. In the ninth minute, Slade dribbled through the Dayton back line before finding Suarez along the baseline. Suarez then lifted a cross into the box, while junior Tori Burress headed home into the far corner of the net for her first collegiate goal. Less than three minutes later, senior Sharon Wojcik would double the lead by blasting a shot from the top of the box just past a

diving goalkeeper.

Dayton answered in the 18th minute with yet another goal from the A-10 leading scorer Ashley Campbell. The Flyers then seized the momentum, enjoying a large majority of the possession for the remainder of the half. The VCU defense and senior keeper Emma Cruz was able to hold strong and the Rams took a 2-1 lead into halftime.

Dayton stayed on the offensive to begin the second half, limiting VCU to fleeting counter-oppor-

tunities. Burress converted one of those quick chances in the 65th minute after some nifty passing from Slade and Wojcik to build a 3-1 cushion. Campbell again cut the lead in half for the Flyers in the 71st minute to keep the pressure on. Dayton continued a relentless attack until the final whistle, outshooting the Rams 20-10, but Cruz and her backline were there with clutch saves and clearances. VCU prevailed to stay undefeated in conference play.

Despite the loss to GW, the

Rams still boast an impressive 4-1 conference record and respectable 6-7-1 overall line. Having concluded its out-of-conference schedule, Martin's team now looks ahead to its pivotal five remaining conference matches: at La Salle University (Oct. 18), at George Mason University (Oct. 22), home against University of Massachusetts, Amherst (Oct. 25), home against Saint Louis University (Oct. 29), and at The University of Richmond (Nov. 1).



Siegel not the only domain for the Peppas to seize the moment.



Sophomore defender Amanda Hallesjo and junior midfielder Tori Burress were busy stopping the GW attack in the 2-0 loss.

Black and Gold game set for Oct. 24



The Rams enter the season predicted to finish sixth in the A-10.

Basketball season is almost here and the inaugural Black and Gold game is slated for Oct. 24 at the Stuart C. Siegel Center. This is the third year VCU has put on this free-of-charge event for all Ram basketball fans.

“Because of all the sellouts, a lot of people in the community don’t get a chance to see our guys on a regular basis and this is an opportunity for them to get up close and personal with them,” said Scott Day, assistant athletic director for athletic communications.

The intrasquad scrimmage is slated for a 4 p.m. start, with multiple chances for player-fan interaction throughout the day. An alumni game will take place after the current squad, including recent stars Joey Rodriguez ’11, Ed Nixon ’11 and Rob Brandenburg ’15. Older Ram fans will recognize other notable alumni participants

in Calvin Duncan, Kendrick Warren, Lionel Bacon and Bo Jones.

“We hope for 3,000-4,000 fans, but if the weather is bad there could be a setback,” Day said. “First time we had it three years from now, we were taken back because we had around 3,000 and last year we had around 4,000.”

As VCU continues to grow into a basketball powerhouse, the transition to having a ‘Midnight Madness’ could be in the foreseeable future — an event held at other schools where the team’s first official practice is open to the public, often with a pep rally.

“A lot of schools do the midnight madness, and we have never done that,” Day said. “We are trying to do some things different every year to spike interest.”

Welcoming the new team has grown each year with the addition of an autograph session and the

alumni game. Normally scheduled for Sunday evenings, the event will take place on Saturday in aspirations of having more students attend.

“We want this to be a big student event which is why we moved it to a Saturday,” Day said. “Having it on Sunday people have already transitioned for the school night and end of the week.”

A special guest, known by all Rams fans, has hinted at an appearance — Larry Sanders, the former Ram superstar Instagrammed Thursday of his interest to come back to VCU and participate in the all-star game. Day noted Sanders has showed interest in coming, but has not given a definite answer on whether he will attend or not.

VCU opens the season at home against Prairie View on Friday Nov. 13.



Sophomore Johnny Williams looks to takeover the reigns as the teams’ point guard this year.

Women’s club rugby down to play rough

Erika Robinson
Contributing Writer

Club sports have become an outlet for former high school athletes that don’t possess the tangibles needed to play a collegiate

sport. Hence, VCU has many club sports that are flooded with talent.

One of those is VCU’s women’s rugby team. They practice twice a week for two hours and have games on Saturday’s where they play other collegiate club teams.

Ruthie Rowane, a senior cap-

tain, came to VCU with a soccer background, but quickly transitioned into playing rugby. She has asserted herself as the leader of the team due to her determination to win and her four years of experience.

“You don’t have to be a huge girl to play rugby,” Rowane said. “There is a position for every size.”

While the sport is high-intensity and an easy one to quit. Rowane uses her experience to help younger players when she sees their play reflecting frustration.

“I always have to tell people to keep their heads up even when they are tired,” Rowane said. “I always tell them they aren’t tired, even though I’m exhausted. If I look tired, I can’t tell them not to be tired. I have to hide it and keep playing on.”

Rowane’s personal and team goals are mutually exclusive. Post-season play is not only her goal, but the teams as a whole, this could be the year.

“It’s my last year, so my goals are to just get better and help my team get better as a whole,” Rowane said. “I really want us to make it to the tournament, and we have a really good shot at making it this year.”

Giulia Disanto, a junior and member of the team, has played for three years. She recently transferred to VCU from George Washington University and was originally a hockey player. She wanted to be active with a club sport so she gave rugby a chance.

For her, the transition has been easy, but there is one aspect that she has not encountered before.

“I have never played a sport where everything depends so much on being a team,” Disanto said.

Men’s soccer channeling inner Drake with back-to-back wins



Junior Kai Marshall has contributed one goal this season.

MARCUS BLACKWELL
Staff Writer

Men’s soccer continues to roll, ending the week with a win against the University of Davidson and a tie against La Salle University. The Rams now have compiled a record of 4-6-3 (2-0-2 in conference play).

VCU traveled to Pennsylvania in its road contest against La Salle on Oct. 14 in what ended up being a tough, hard fought stalemate.

La Salle came out aggressive early, when Joe Farrell got a good look at a goal, but was saved by sophomore Pierre Garden, giving him his first save of the match.

The Rams first shot attempt in the 18th minute missed wide. Both team’s defenses were on display throughout the rest of the first half, with neither team being able to get on the scoreboard.

The second half was much of the same as both teams continued to miss opportunities. Junior Dakota Barnathan was able to slide through the defense in the 15 minute but also missed just left.

The game went on to double overtime with both teams continuing to struggle to score. The game finally came to a close with the

score ending 0-0.

On Saturday the Rams took on Davidson, in an effort to get back in the win column.

The game got off to a quick start, with both teams getting multiple shot attempts early. Within the first sixteen minutes the Rams had two good scoring opportunities from Jack Bates and sophomore, Ivan Sakou that both missed just wide. VCU continued to bring the pressure, as moments later Jorge Herranz maneuvered through the defense and got a



Sophomore Rafael Andrade Santos thrives in the midfield.

during games to her teammate’s competitive approach.

“The fact that I know no one else on the team is going to give up,” Disanto said. “I can’t give up and let them down.”

A lingering question about the sport is the game’s safety. Known for being a tough and rugged sport, rugby isn’t a sport for the weak, but it isn’t a sport to fear either.

“It’s not as dangerous as you think it is,” Rowane said. “The

fact that we don’t have pads makes it so that everyone tackles more safely. There are not as many concussions, you learn better form and you practice it so that you don’t get injured.

Rowane also mentioned she is optimistic that the sport will continue to grow throughout VCU.

The Rams take on the College of William and Mary this Saturday, Oct. 17.



Rugby next plays against Longwood University on Oct. 24.

what’s happening RECSports VCU

program details, rates, and locations at recsports.vcu.edu



- climbing weekend [sat & sun, 10/24 – 10/25]
- great distal swamp canoe trip [sat & sun, 10/24 – 10/25]
- halloween climbing comp [fri, 10/30]
- ARC First Aid/CPR/AED full certification [oct. 24, 9am – 3pm] recertification [oct. 26, 5 – 9pm]
- AHA BLS for healthcare providers [oct. 22, 9am – 5pm] [includes First Aid]
- adult swim lessons session 3 [10/26 – 11/20] register [10/12 – 10/23]

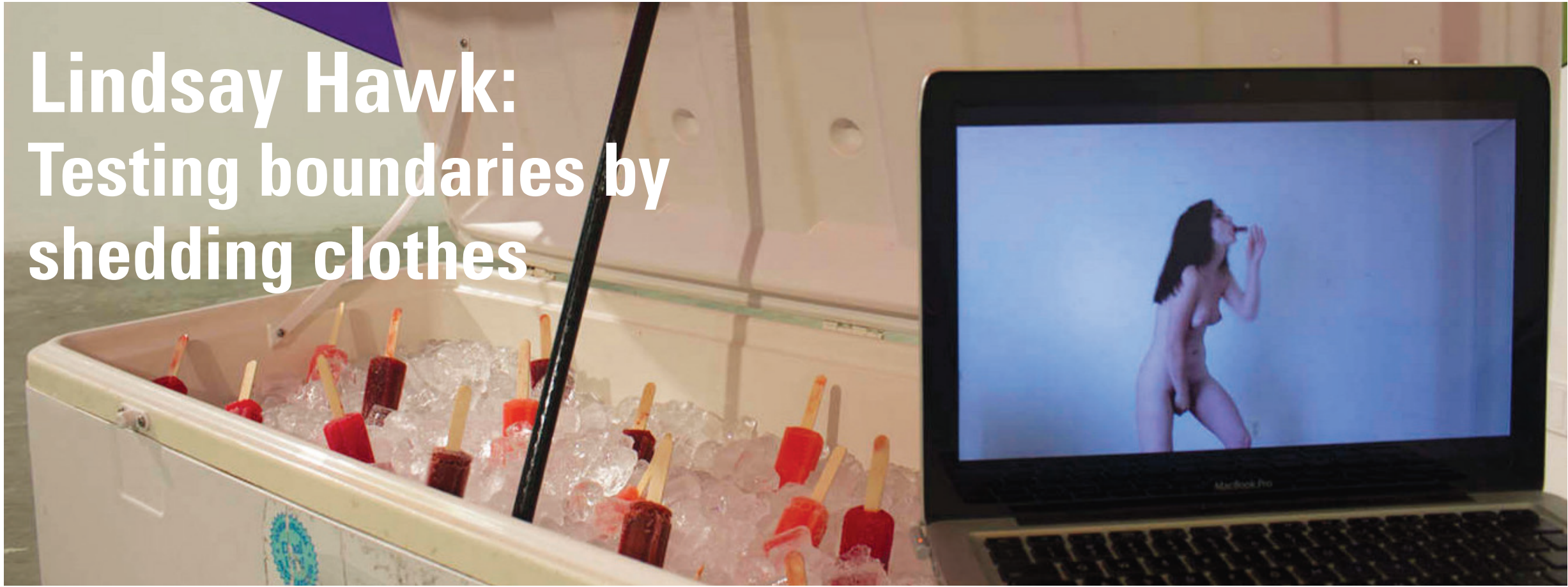


spectrum



ON THIS DAY

in 1982, the creator of the DeLorean is arrested while attempting to make a \$24 million cocaine deal.



Lindsay Hawk’s installation piece for “How to Make Popsicles.” Hawk is a senior undergraduate student in the Sculpture and Extended Media department at VCU.

— continued from page 1

One of the first times Hawk put out work that challenged herself and combined her GSWS education with her art was when she created a sculpture piece titled “Sex Machine.” This was a multimedia piece, involving a lawn chair with a moulded penis below it, where the mechanism to operate it was a series of water balloons suspended above the user.

Around this time, Hawk also created a piece titled “Eating Out at the Dinner Party.”

“It was this little stage where you could get up and get really close to this pie,” Hawk said. “From far away it looked like whipped cream, but really it was my vagina in a bowl.”

She said she strives to achieve these levels of both enticing and shocking in all of her work, and that it helps to convey a different message within each piece.

“What I see it all going back to is taking advantage of the obligation my audience has, because we’re in an institution where it’s structured that way — they have to critique it,” Hawk said. “And also, they’re not expected to be put off by something, or repelled.”

The idea of combining societal views of crude sexuality with art isn’t exclusive to this generation or this artist. From Barbara Kruger to Annie Sprinkle, exploring sexuality and the sexualization of women functions to examine societal norms. Hawk said her art ties in with that of other feminists in that it challenges ideals and expectations.

“Why is it problematic? What about that makes you uncomfortable?” Hawk asked.

Clifford Owens is a visiting artist in the Sculpture and Extended Media department this semester who regularly engages in performance art along with photography and other mediums. He met with Hawk earlier in the semester, and found her artwork to be particularly interesting.

Owens explained the ways in

which radical, challenging art may advance society by posing questions that aren’t easy to answer. He pointed to the art group in the ’80s named NEA Four, who lost federal grant money due to the risqué content of their work. He said the incident raised questions about censorship and patriarchy in our government and society.

“There is work that pushes sexuality further than she is right now,” Owens said. “We can think of work by Annie Sprinkle, Holly Hughes, Barbara Degenevieve. There’s a host of artists who have dealt with issues of women’s sexuality.”

When challenging issues of women in society, race and sexual preference are key components. Hawk is a white heterosexual woman, and criticism of her work might include her frequent depiction of herself and other similar people. She concedes that her work is limited in its scope, but says it still accomplishes much of what she aims to do.

“I know that white women having a sexuality is not as radical as it has been in the past,” Hawk said. “But personally, it is a radical thing for me because I haven’t always been so open to it and so comfortable, and it hasn’t always been an approachable subject for me, so that has always been a process for me.”

She hopes that by displaying herself comfortably and attempting to make her sexuality and nudity normal, she can provoke others to have conversations about their sexuality and feel more comfortable.

Owens dismisses the criticisms of Hawk’s limited scope on the basis that it isn’t her responsibility to represent all members of any societal group, only to stand with them.

“I don’t think it’s at all her responsibility to represent all women,” Owens said. “I think it is her responsibility to care for, cultivate and think critically about her own vested interests. It’s a tall order to think that any artist of any demographic can represent all members of the demographic.”

He ventured on to say her work examines critical aspects of our culture, and do represent feminist values.

“Sexuality and sex are feminist issues,” Owens said. “The work that she’s making is about women. It is about a woman’s right to represent her sexuality and to use her body freely. In fact, I think that her work is super important to our generation of women.”

Owens said any fears or discomfort a viewer might experience going into her work is a result of patriarchal norms that determine how a woman’s body is intended to function, and that by bucking these norms Hawk is challenging ideas that restrain women.

Hawk has worked with a wide variety of mediums in her artistic career at VCU, and said she’s now dealing with some of the limitations of the various forms.

“The degrees away from how the art is experienced by others versus what it originally is,” Hawk said. “A photograph is the truest form. If it’s a live performance, the truest way is to be there. Every degree away from that — how it’s documented, how it’s written about — means there’s something to be said about being there and experiencing it.”

Some of her performance art

“I know that white women having a sexuality is not as radical as it has been in the past. But personally, it is a radical thing for me because I haven’t always been so open to it and so comfortable, and it hasn’t always been an approachable subject for me, so that has always been a process for me.”

— LINDSAY HAWK

has been documented through photographs and videos, and can be seen on her website. Notable works include “Contour Line Drawings” and “The Kiss.” Both involve her and her boyfriend, Jake Greenbaum, intimately interacting with each other surrounded by audience members.

Another controversial piece, titled “Artist Statement,” involved her reading aloud original prose about her discovering her sexuality while Greenbaum performed oral sex on her in front of a room of people.

Many of her performances involve her, and sometimes Greenbaum, being naked. After performing these pieces multiple times, Hawk said her art doesn’t affect her like one might expect.

“I feel like it affects other people more than it does me,” Hawk said. “It almost gives me a commanding presence. But I also am so aware that with my body, it’s more okay for me to do that. If I were anything other than conventionally attractive, people might not view me as someone they’re okay with seeing.”

She said her body type has helped her in spreading her message, and that her being able-bodied, white and conventionally attractive keeps people from being averted from her solely because of societal expectations.

Owens said spreading these messages and examining society is extremely important.

“The political-social economy of this country and this culture must be challenged by artists are intellectuals. Artists are public intellectuals,” Owens said.

Hawk worries, however, that her message is lost on many because of these very reasons. She insists that the art she is creating doesn’t aim to mimic pornography by being arousing and pleasing, and she has

fears about people only gleaning that aspect of it.

“Do I care if you think I’m hot? Or do I care if you understand what I’m trying to convey?” Hawk said. “Sometimes I can tell when that’s someone’s primary, and that’s their limit. I’m not making work for people who only respond to that. Will they see it? Yeah. Do they seek it out? Probably.”

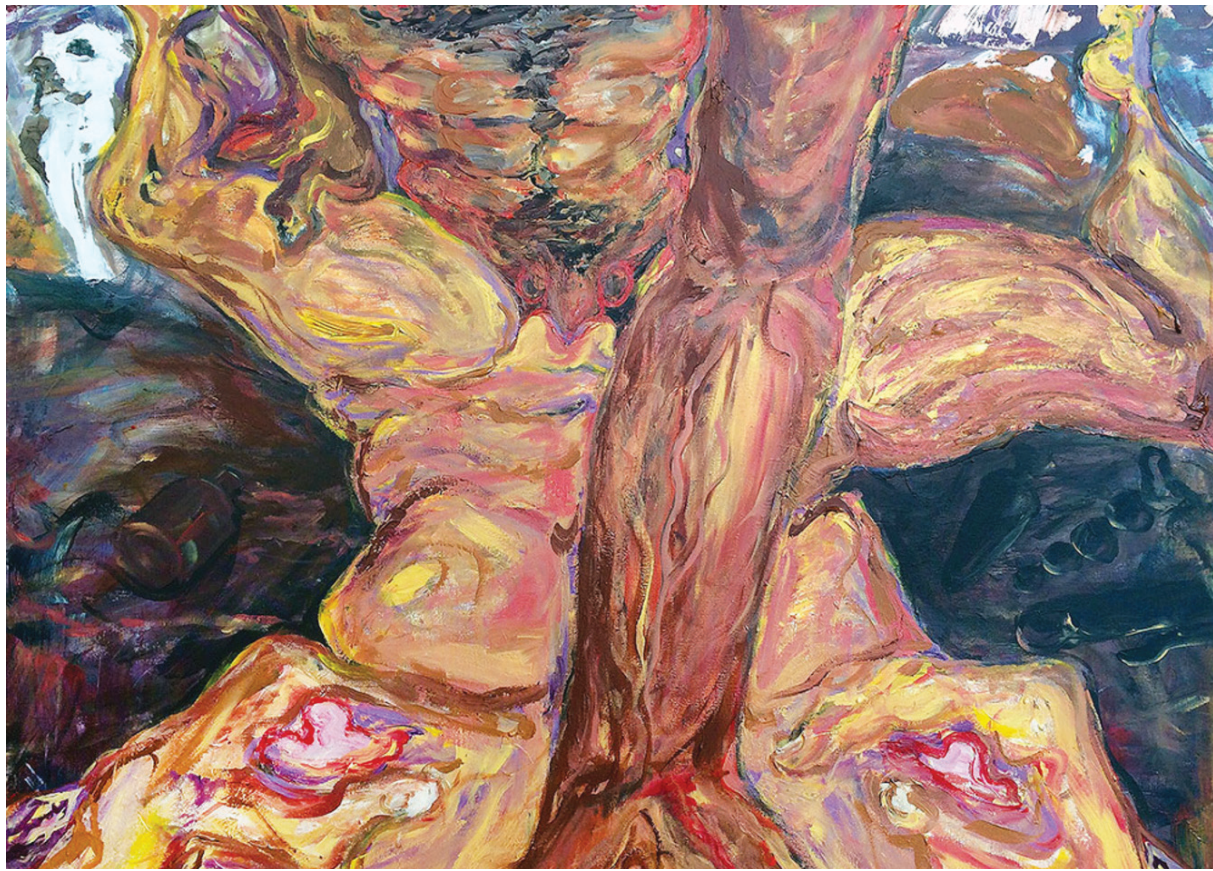
She said that she hasn’t run into a wall where she feels as though she has done too much or gone too far.

Instead, she will sometimes reflect on her work, wishing she’d gone further.

“Sometimes I stop myself and think I could have done this, or I could have done more. After I make something I see what’s problematic with it and I want to push to do more,” Hawk said.



A photograph from Hawk’s performance piece titled “The Kiss” with with Jake Greenbaum.



Lindsay Hawk’s acrylic on canvas painting titled “Point of View.”

Shaferbird Feature

Shafer Bird is part of the Mesh Media Network, a division of VCU Student Media. The Shafer Bird team works to bring the VCU community menu updates and original content, including reviews of on- and off-campus restaurants. www.shaferbird.com

Tex Mex to a tee
at Rancho T
Tex-Mex / Italian



“Creative combinations evoke a powerful sense of character for each individual dish that makes a rhetorical appeal to the diner’s heart and tastebuds.”

— Grant Smith



Racho T’s entree, “Pulpo Especial,” made with squid.

PHOTO BY GRANT SMITH

Fiddling, fluting folk in Richmond

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Contributing Writer

One of Richmond’s largest celebrations of culture, art and music took place earlier this month.

With more than twenty musical groups, multiple vendors and an endless amount of local food, the Richmond Folk Festival was packed with things to do for its 11th year. The streets were filled with people of all ages bustling to the next event and performers from all around the world entertaining thousands of attendees.

“It’s huge, it’s multiethnic, and everyone’s having fun,” said Anne Gill, a volunteer at this year’s festival.

This was Gill’s fifth year volunteering, but Gill used to be a planner for the event. She said she keeps coming back because she “realized this was (her) festival.”

The Crafts Marketplace, a section of the festival full of handmade jewelry, sculptures and crafts, attracted a lot of patrons. Kelvin Henderson was one of the vendors; his art involves depicting famous jazz musicians through tile mosaics.

He said he was enthusiastic about the Folk Festival and said, “A lot of people come and people love the art. It’s the reason why I come back.”

While many stop by for the vendors, the main entertainment was this year’s line-up of diverse musical groups. There was bluegrass, R&B singers, gospel and hip-hop performers. Bands from out-of-state and out-of-country came to Richmond to display all styles of performance.

Richmond resident Bernard

Herbert has been coming every year, and spoke to his continued interest to the musicians.

“You always discover something every time you come,” Herbert said.

He also commented on the kind of crowd the festival draws.

“There’s a lot of energy, and the crowd is into (the performances), and people are getting along,” Herbert said.

Families and friends alike covered the festival grounds, partaking in all manner of activities. It didn’t matter if they were line for food, in the middle of a show or simply trying to walk across a bridge to Brown’s Island, the atmosphere remained light.

The laid-back feel of the Folk Festival could be seen on everyone from the fans to the musicians themselves. Traditional Irish folk band The Alt was one of the main events of the weekend, opening the festival on Friday night.

The group’s lead singer and flute player, Nuala Kennedy, lauded his group’s opening performance on Saturday.

“We had a great show last night,” Kennedy said. “It was fun playing, everyone was supportive and enthusiastic.”

The Richmond Times-Dispatch hosted a “Public Square” event where attendees could interact and have conversations with the bands they see throughout the festival. Many of the big names were involved, including The Alt.

Eamon O’Leary, another member of The Alt, spoke highly of Public Square.

“I don’t remember being at something like it at another festival,” he said. “If you have

questions or you wanted to meet someone you’ve been listening to, it’s a nice idea.”

O’Leary also commented on the setting of the festival, focusing on the effect of being right on the James River. The natural setting was a prominent feature of the festival, and was in view no matter where you are in the festival.

The concerts were also designed to incorporate this natural atmosphere. None of the stages were inside buildings, with the exception of smaller performances inside of tents. The main stage, sponsored by the Altria Theater, was a large venue in front of an equally large hill where people were free to stand or sit and experience the performances.

Along with the friendly and natural mix in the air was a focus on diversity. The amount of musical genres that were represented was large, nearly twenty in total. There was Feedel Band, an Ethiopian Jazz band based in D.C., The Campbell Brothers, who play gospel, sacred steel guitar music, and Sleepy LaBeef bringing back classic rockabilly.

One of the festival’s headlines was the performance by classic hip-hop disc jockey Grandmaster Flash on Saturday night. Performing at the Dance Pavilion stage, Flash’s show was packed with people all united under the stage through nostalgic music and the DJ skills of one of the genre’s pioneers.

Grandmaster Flash ended his show with a few sentimental words:

“There is no such thing as white music or black music or any other kind of music, there’s just music.”



One of the few art installations on display at the festival’s “Folklife Area.”



Colombian music group Grupo Rebolú performs at the Dominion Dance Pavilion. Groups from all around the world attended the festival, bringing a variety of styles and sound to Richmond.



An audience gathers for the Harris Brothers’ performance.

Eating brains for a good cause



VCU Cosplay Club president Hannah Huddle at the 2012 Richmond Zombie Walk. The organization regularly attends.

ADRIEL VELAZQUEZ
Contributing Writer

Soon, the Halloween season will bring the dead out to the streets of Carytown in a costumed faux-apocalypse in the name of charity.

On Saturday, Oct. 24, nearly a thousand people will meet up at the Fountain Lake at Byrd Park to participate in the 11th annual Richmond Zombie Walk benefitting the American Cancer Society.

The Richmond Zombie Walk was founded in 2005 by Roger Barr, the owner of a popular comedy and Halloween website. The first walk attracted close to 100 participants. The zombies made their way through Carytown and reached VCU’s Monroe Park Campus.

After the first year, Barr handed the organization of the event to John Bishop and Anthony Meñez.

“In the first few years, the Richmond Zombie Walk’s route was not limited to Carytown,” Meñez said. “There were at least

two to three stops including the VCU campus. Back in those days, we’d even walk through Cabell Library.”

However, the horde diminished in size at every new location they visited. To prevent this, the organizers restricted the path of the zombie walk.

“So now we only raid Carytown and make it count,” he said.

The Zombie Walk is meant for participants and spectators alike, with many people visiting the shops in Carytown simply to witness the arrival of the horde, which is said to be both funny and terrifying.

Hannah Huddle, a senior at VCU and president of the Cosplay Club, attended the Richmond Zombie Walk in 2012. “There were a lot of people,” Huddle said. “Mostly dressed up as zombies. However, a lot of people came to spectate, and a few were dressed up as survivors. Many dressed as generic zombies, but some did zombiefied versions of characters like Scooby-Doo.”

Before the event starts, participants can take part in the annual costume contests for a chance to win prizes. The categories include most disgusting, best couple/group theme, best pop culture

theme, best zombie kid and 2015 Zombie of the Year. The event will also include giveaways sponsored by the Byrd Theatre and Rest in Pieces, a Richmond oddity shop that specializes in taxidermy and animal-corpse-based art.

“Additionally, we will have local illustrator Abigail Larson attending to autograph her posters,” Meñez said. “She has created our event poster for the last six years and will be making them available for purchase on the day of the event.”

The posters will sell for \$5 for one poster or \$20 for all six.

Over the years, the number of participants has grown almost exponentially. Meñez believes attendance increases by about 100 participants every year.

“Honestly, we stopped counting in 2010 when we reached 600-plus zombies,” said Meñez.

The event has a large focus on costuming and makeup, playing into the Halloween atmosphere of late October. There’s a range of commitment to the costuming, though, and some people might spend hours preparing.

“The makeup totally depends on how far you want to do and how much practice you have,” Huddle said. “If you want to use

prosthetics or latex as peeling skin ... it can be a couple hours easily.”

Huddle said she went thrift shopping beforehand to get clothes that she did not mind ripping to shreds. If you plan on buying clothes and ripping them up, this will also factor into how much time it will take for you to get ready to terrorize the living.

Overall, Huddle enjoyed the experience of the Richmond Zombie Walk and suggests that VCU students attend.

“I would definitely recommend the event to VCU students,” she said, “It’s easy to go to just watch if you want to check it out and then try walking in the future. The event raises money for charity, so it’s even a good cause.”

Meñez also believes that the zombie walk would be an enjoyable event, but issued a warning to those brave enough to attend:

“Look out! We’re coming for your BRAAAIINS!”

The suggested donation amount for the event is \$5 with all donations going towards the American Cancer Society. For more information on where to go and how to participate, visit their website.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HANNAH HUDDLE

PHOTOS BY KELLY MICKEY

English undergrad taught poetry master class

MEAGAN DERMODY
Copy Editor

This weekend, a VCU English major flipped the script and took the teaching role in a poetry master class, three panels and a plenary session for the James River Writers annual conference.

John S. Blake, a 45-year-old returning student, was hand-picked by the poetry chair for the 2015 James River Writers Conference, a local nonprofit, to lead “The Art of Slam: Adding Spoken Word to Your Performance Repertoire,” on Friday, Oct. 16, from 2-4 p.m. “I was thrilled when he ac-

cepted our invitation to be a part of this conference and facilitate the spoken word master class,” said Joanna Lee, the James River Writers Conference poetry chair. Blake, who is perhaps best known in Richmond for his work with slam poetry groups including Slam Richmond and VCU’s

nationally-ranked student group Good Clear Sound, published his first book “Beautifully Flawed” in 2012.

“I remembered John Blake from participating in an open mic with Slam Richmond years ago, and I knew him to be a masterful performer and speaker with a passionate belief in the power of poetry,” Lee said.

But for Blake, that passionate belief in the power of poetry may have quite literally saved his life. The slam poet said for him, Marty McConnell’s “Instructions for a Body” was the difference between a heroin overdose in South Jersey 10 years ago and his subsequent journey as a student, speaker, writer and member of the community today.

“I feel like if I don’t do this, I’m not paying it forward,” Blake said. “I’m not participating in my own legacy, I’m not giving back what was given to me. Anything I know, I know because another writer told me.”

After hearing McConnell’s poem, Blake said he began to attend workshops and classes in Philadelphia and New York, before moving to Richmond about seven years ago. He started at VCU last fall.

“I’d been going to a lot of workshops facilitated by great poets: Jericho Brown, Patricia Smith, Natasha Tretheway, Nikki Finney — but I still was afraid I didn’t know enough about poetry to make it through an MFA program, even if it was low-res,” he said. “So I was like, ‘I should probably start from the beginning.’ So I came to VCU, and Claudia Emerson talked me into VCU.”

Blake said he feels indebted to those who helped him, including Emerson. That debt, he said, is

why he is compelled to work with student groups like Good Clear Sound, and why he agreed to lead the master class this Friday.

James River Writers, a local nonprofit, holds the James River Writers Conference annually. The conference includes panels led by speakers in all genres, with

Katharine Herndon, the executive director for James River Writers, said the annual conference is meant to connect and inspire readers and writers in the area.

“It’s so important for writers to find people who support and understand all the highs and lows of their creative endeavors, especially when writing can sometimes be very solitary,” Herndon said in an email. “And, from a professional standpoint ... conferences are an important way to keep up with changes in the industry and show industry insiders that you’re serious about your chosen path.”

Blake said that a lot of his experiences as a returning student have been reassuring, despite his unusual academic path.

“It was refreshing to know I had been doing a lot of writing by instinct that I didn’t know there was a name for,” Blake said. “There was always the doubt of ‘what if I get here and I find out this isn’t where I belong?’ And then I found out this was exactly where I belong.”

Blake suggested a number of opportunities for aspiring young poets living in Richmond, including Slam Richmond’s free, two-hour writing workshops every Saturday. He also insisted that aspiring writers should not let doubts get in the way.

“That’s, I think, a voice that is ingrained in us through society, that we should only be concerned with the straight lines and the 90 degree angles,” Blake said. “When poets try to add curves to things, they’re shunned for it — until they die, and they’re famous. Then everybody wants you to respect them. So start early. Respect your voice now.”

“When poets try to add curves to things, they’re shunned for it — until they die, and they’re famous. Then everybody wants you to respect them. So start early. Respect your voice now.”

— JOHN S. BLAKE

varying degrees of publishing experience; this year, these panels followed five tracks, including one delving into diversity and another on making writing a career. The conference also hosted the Library of Virginia’s Literary Awards Luncheon; Jan Karon received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the organization.

JRW15 kicked off on Friday with a series of master classes. Blake said fewer than 10 people came to his master class. One obstacle he pointed out is another master class on the personal essay with Valley Haggard, titled “Life in 10 Minutes: Writing the Personal Essay with Valley Haggard,” which took place at the same time as “The Art of Slam.” Haggard, whom Blake said he adores, leads creative nonfiction workshops above Chop Suey Books several times a week.



VCU sophomore English major John S. Blake led the “Art of Slam: Adding Spoken Word to Your Performance Repertoire” master class on Friday, Oct. 16 at the 2015 JRW Conference.

“I’m saving at least \$10,000. That could be my new car.”

– Jamesa Parker

SAVE UP TO \$50,000.*
dothemath.vcu.edu



VCU
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Make it real.

* Estimated savings based on a 120-credit-hour program with standard tuition and fees, books/supplies, room, board, miscellaneous and transportation expenses and graduating in four years instead of six.

GRADUATE ON TIME

DO THE MATH

SAVE MONEY

an equal opportunity/affirmative action university 002075-05

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“When we don’t have the correct members in place to have a say in the matters we wish to change, we fail ourselves.”

– Monica Huston

The change we need won’t come from POTUS

MONICA HUSTON
Opinion Editor

With the Democratic presidential debates underway, many of the candidates are discussing the importance of the “Black Lives Matter” movement. But the change the black community is looking for is more likely to come from a different branch of government. If black America wishes to see the changes it desires, it must vote for the right people. Unfortunately, black voter turnout has decreased significantly from the 2012 to 2014 presidential and congressional elections.

In 1965 under President Lyndon Johnson, the Voting Rights Act was implemented under federal legislation to prohibit racial discrimination under state and local levels. The bill was passed with the Senate vote 77-19 on May 26, 1965, but not passed by the House until July 9 with a 333-58 vote. During the time, only six African Americans were members of the U.S. House of Representatives and none were present in the U.S. Senate. It wasn’t until 1971 that there were 13 members in the House and one black in the Senate.

According to the National Park Service, within just a few months of its passage, one quarter of a million new black voters had been registered as of August 6, 1965. In Mississippi alone, the black voter turnout

increased from 6 percent in 1965 to 59 percent in 1969. In 1969, Tennessee had a 92.1 percent turnout; Arkansas, 77.9 percent; and Texas, 73.1 percent. In the November 2014 report of voting and registration by the U.S. Census Bureau, of the total black population, only 63.4 percent registered to vote.

The correlation between most of these systemic problems, relate back to politics. A bottom-up effect occurs when you keep someone at their lowest by over-policing, imprisonment and stripping them of their basic human rights. Over-policing poor, drug-filled black neighborhoods leads to mass incarceration over nonviolent offenses and denial of human rights like voting, which could potentially influence a change for these systemic problems.

The American prison system, more prominently state prisons, are overcrowded. A good portion of the inmates are nonviolent, drug offenders who were targeted simply because they are black. Reiterating what our staff editorial expressed last week, black Virginians are disproportionately represented in jails and prisons and, as a result, 20.4 percent have lost their right to vote, “isolating them from their communities and civic participation.”

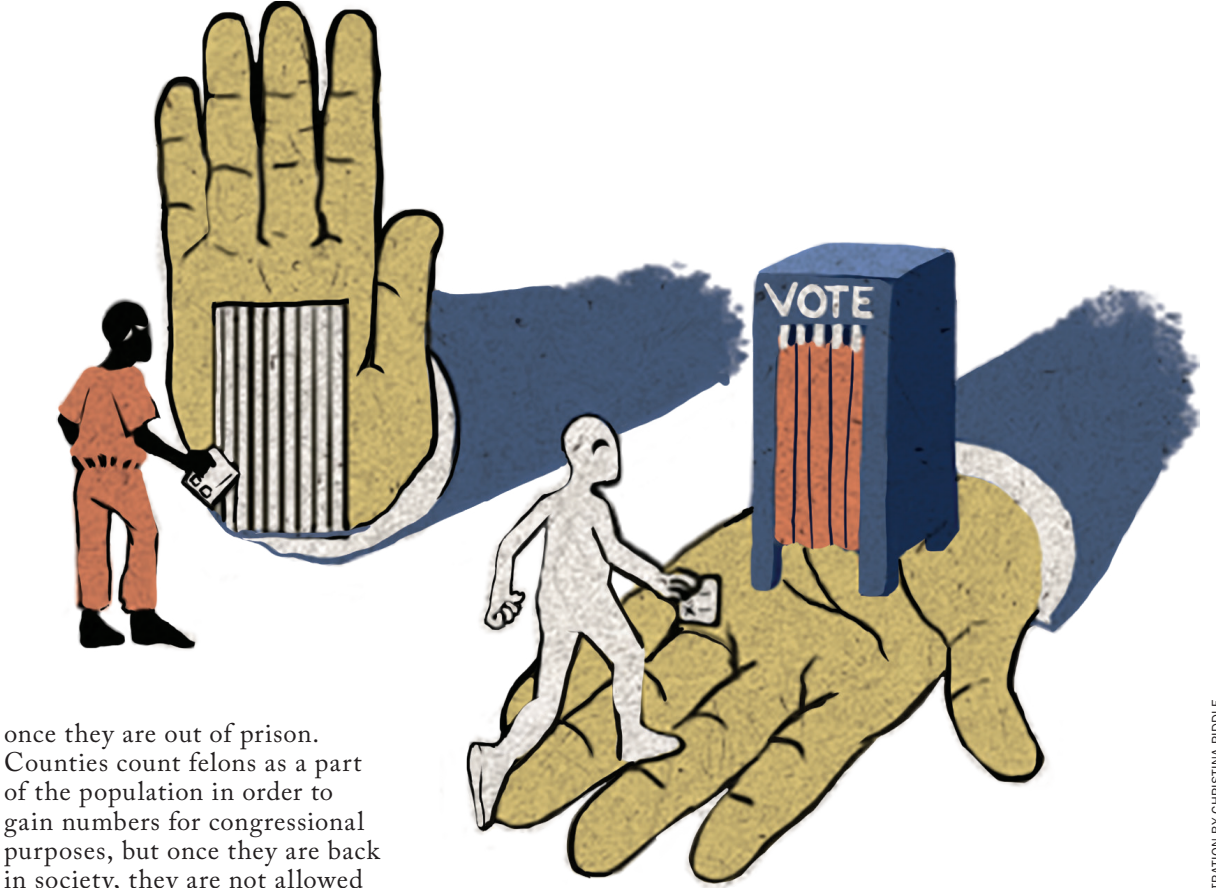
The president only has some power in executive decisions. Most power is held by the congressional level. The Democratic

party has the largest backing from minorities, but the number of elected state representatives are lacking compared to those in the Republican party. Black America needs to understand the role Congress plays in executive decisions, especially when Republican members purposely try to sabotage Democratic efforts.

Efforts have been taken so far as to ensure black representatives fail at their goals in establishing change for the minority. Members of the Florida Republican Party held a secret meeting against Congresswoman Corrine Brown, where the goal was to jam numerous inmates and felons, who are ineligible to vote, into the 5th Congressional District.

Rep. Janet Atkins, who organized the secret meeting, stated, “They’re a part of the population. No, they can’t vote. So when you take a look at ... how many minorities are in the prisons within that newly drawn proposed congressional — how many of them live in the prisons, that’s why Corrine Brown is so against having an east-west, because her concern is that they live in prisons and they can’t vote. So it’s a perfect storm.”

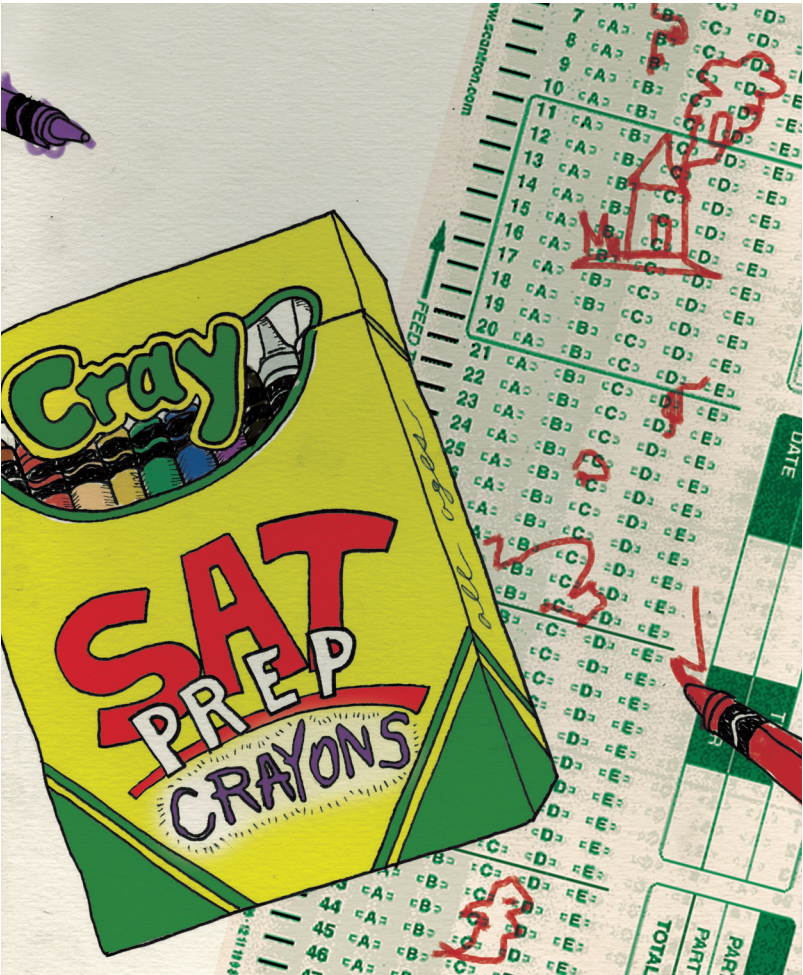
According to an interview on NewsOne Now, in efforts to counteract this plot, Brown has gotten support from neither the National Democratic Party nor the Florida Democratic Party. Felons are not allowed to vote



once they are out of prison. Counties count felons as a part of the population in order to gain numbers for congressional purposes, but once they are back in society, they are not allowed to vote for the congressional members.

“Black Lives Matter” has gone as far as to create an entire website designed to discuss the political action they wish to change and have changed thus far. The website, Campaign Zero lays out comprehensive policy agendas at the federal, state and local levels, topics each presidential candidate supports in relation to Black Americans, and 10 quick-and-easy policy

solutions to end police brutality. Those of us who can vote should. When we don’t have the correct members in place to have a say in the matters we wish to change (such as felons losing the right to vote), we fail ourselves. We can no longer blame the system. We cannot blame a system that was not built for us, but we can vote the right representatives in to change the system to work for us. The change we wish to see is a political battle. The only people that we need reversed are “the ones with the power,” and as of now the power is not with the people. It’s a matter of politics, literally. There has never been a more true statement than Mahatma Gandhi’s: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Black votes matter. Black incarcerated votes matter.



Pressured to death in schools

MIKAELA REINARD
Contributing Columnist

Depression, suicide, addiction and a loss of hope are just a few of the many symptoms mentioned in interviews of children from kindergarten through the 12th grade in the documentary “Race to Nowhere.” The documentary casts a spotlight on the need of reform in our school system, intended for the fruitful minds of young people ages 5-17, when our current system is for no person of that age.

All of the pressure on students to be the best in every subject, take the most challenging courses regardless of their passions, and maintain an extracurricular schedule compiled of sports, volunteer service, hobbies and work and internships is absolutely preposterous. Speaking from personal experience, I know that the feeling of being overwhelmed can often be far too much to handle

at such a young age. During my junior year of high school, I would incessantly stay up till 4-5 a.m. every morning struggling to get all of my homework done. I ended up relying on 5 Hour Energy to keep me awake. I felt trapped in a cyclical fear of disappointing myself and others around me if I didn’t complete all the tasks at hand.

My senior year, I received bad news regularly regarding people I had known killing themselves as an escape from the insurmountable pressure they were being exposed to.

According to a study conducted by Indiana University over the last two decades U.S. lawmakers and business leaders have placed more pressure on schools to raise achievement rates to suppress worries regarding global competition in academic success.

Sarah Bennett, a New York City lawyer, stated in the CQ Researcher, “piles of homework

dim children’s love of learning — while depriving them of vital free time — without improving their school achievement.” She also expresses that “polls say that kids no longer read for pleasure after age 8.”

Despite incessant cries from students who slave over the pressures of society to be considered for a slot in a selective university or entry-level, full-time job, a staggering 56 percent of parents still believe that students ages 5-17 need to have more pressure inflicted on them for preparation of life.

Only 15 percent of parents feel as though students are under too much pressure. With such a minute sliver of parents who feel this way, it’s quite possible that there will be even more pressure added to the lives of these students. If they can barely cope now, how will they in the future?

From 1997 to 2002, the proportion of six to eight year olds

that were assigned homework on a daily basis rose from 34 percent to 64 percent.

There’s too much pressure being placed on students, and although pressure isn’t necessarily a bad thing, too much of it can be detrimental. Making sure a child has the opportunities and proper tools to succeed is important. It’s even more important to insure that they’ll be able to see the day past their 18th birthday.

“There’s too much pressure being placed on students, and although pressure isn’t necessarily a bad thing, too much of it can be detrimental.”

— MIKAELA REINARD

VCU’s new admissions policy hurts disadvantaged applicant

– continued from page 1

on intellectual and personal development, or receive the limited amount of funds currently earmarked for scholarships. They also close off many doors to applicants who want to take advantage of the best VCU has to offer.

Furthermore, William Hiss, a former dean of admissions and vice president at Bates College, published a report for the National Association for College Admissions Counseling that found no significant difference in college GPA or graduation rates among students who submitted and did not submit their SAT scores at 33 test-optional institutions. The students who chose not to submit their scores were primarily women, first-generation, minority or low-income students.

“This might be a mildly interesting point of research, except that the economic health of our society will significantly depend on how many students develop professional and cultural skills through demanding educations,” Bates’ report stated.

Closing these doors creates injustice not only within VCU’s campus but also throughout the professional world and society.

A report from the National Action Council for Minorities and Engineering found that African-Americans and Hispanics make up just five and six percent of employed engineers, respectively.

Wake Forest University became the first top-30 national university to announce a test-optional policy in 2008 and the New York Times reported that follow-up studies of Wake Forest found the average incoming GPA actually increased after implementing the new standard. Furthermore, the 2012 freshman class consisted of 20 percent more students who were in the top 10 percent of their high school class than before the test-optional measure took effect in 2009.

“We’re recruiting high-achieving, high-GPA students,” Schultheis said last spring in reference to several new marketing and data analysis techniques his department is utilizing.

Rao similarly said in last year’s State of the University address that in the last four years, VCU’s graduation rate has increased by 9 percent in addition to a 20 percent increase in freshmen who are enrolled in a full course load. Last year, Rao emphasized VCU’s average GPA

increase over the last decade — from 3.2 in 2004 to 3.6 in 2014.

“I think that’s going to continue,” Schultheis said. “And now we’ll be able to help transform the lives of students and families and the economy because of the GPA indicator of success, not a standardized test score.”

But first-generation college students may still be discouraged by the high levels of student debt currently riddling headlines and savings accounts across the country. Less privileged students who actively pursue higher education in a competitive STEM field risk a competitive advantage by being forced to work full-time in order to successfully meet basic living expenses, let alone test prep courses or tutoring that can easily total to thousands of dollars.

This disparity will remain uncorrected with the implementation of test-optional policies that only apply to a certain demographic of students. Students in poverty would also be more willing to pursue higher education if they were to receive scholarships awarded by the university and the Honors College.

These score requirements are even more ludicrous considering the inability of the SAT or ACT

to represent skills that are crucial to success in engineering or the Honors College. A strong work ethic allows students to meet their personally defined goals; intrinsic motivation and a sense of purpose helps them reach that full potential. In professional settings, employers generally do not reward exceptional test-taking abilities and consider other personal characteristics to be much more valuable.

As a public research university, the administration of this school must actively engage the forces that foster social injustice. Student and community input must be solicited in crafting the specifics of admissions policies, especially those that restrict participation in especially valuable opportunities. In spite of the fanfare that accompanied Rao’s announcement, these exceptions show that many VCU officials are still apathetic toward the economically and socially disadvantaged.



Dear Editor,

I commend your staff for wonderful photographs and talented reporting. However, I wish to clarify that my group - featured in the second photo (protesters)- is not affiliated with VCU. We are graduate students at Union Presbyterian Seminary, one clergy member, and friends from my church, East End Fellowship. We were there with a positive message of #RVALovesLatinos in response to a personal attack against my family from a Trump supporter. Last week, my 1-year-old and 3-year-old sons were called "rapist drug-mules" simply for their Mexican heritage.

We commend the courageous VCU students who brought injustice to light inside the rally, and only hope to amplify the movement by adding that protests were also held by Seminarians and other mem-

bers of the community.

Mostly, we are just so thankful for the many different groups of advocates all doing our part to raise awareness of marginalized communities. We hope to build a local immigrant rights coalition in the coming months so feel free to share my contact info with anyone who might be interested.

As an aside, I attended VACOLAO's Immigrant Rights Summit last month and hate speech was the number 1 concern of those in attendance. I also work at the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy where our Muslim members have identified Islamophobia as their number 1 concern.

Thank you for your work.

Best,
Lana Heath de Martinez
Public Policy Fellow
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Subject: AGD is NOT happy

I don't know what you usually do on the paper, but I was under the impression it was your job to be journalists, not to repeatedly insult our sorority for the "crime" of raising money for sick children, something we do every year, and have done successfully every year.

We don't do it for recognition, we do it for the kids, but imagine my shock when I see an article from your website on my Facebook feed insulting

the work we do in an outright condescending and unprofessional tone, before going on a rant about a barely related topic. Oh, and you didn't put your name on it. Classy.

You don't like the way we raise money for kids. Well we can't all be drug dealers, eh Sarah?

Jail or Bail? We did that for sick kids. Raising a stink until your fired or quit? We'll do that for our own pleasure.

Kathleen Lau (sic)

Subject: A riddle for you

What kind of person could take issue with a sorority raising money for diabetic children?

A criminal.

Don't worry, maybe next year, we'll reach out to you before hand (sic) to make sure the prison jumpsuits look more realistic.

Taylor Gleeson (sic)

Dear editor,

I'm writing in response to the article "Reinforcing the prison-industrial complex is not 'philanthropy'" posted today. I'm usually not one to express my feelings on something that seems to be begging for attention; but as an alumna of VCU and of the Alpha Gamma Delta fraternity—and with many errors in the article—I felt the need to write.

The article slams Alpha Gamma Delta for a philanthropic event that we hold every year to support the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation; this is the leading global organization that funds type one diabetes and relentlessly searches for a cure. The writer mentioned them as the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, and this is incorrect. Does the Commonwealth Times have a fact-checker on staff? The writer called this even a "bake sale" that was worse "profiting by belittling others' pain" when in reality it's one of our largest events funding our foundations (The Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation and The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) with over 1,500 dollars. I have had the pleasure of interning for this organization's Central Virginia Chapter, and continue to do design work for their annual galas. It's a shame that The Commonwealth Times has decided to put their name in bad lighting when they truly do amazing work.

It's also a shame that this writer has chosen to label sorority women as "a gaggle of girls, privileged enough to attend an institution of higher education..." Sure, attending college is a great honor; but who ever said some of these women didn't have to fight hard to get here? University students all over the world make grave sacrifices to get where they are. This does not exclude those of the greek community. The writer also insinuates that sorority women have been groomed to ignore those in jail because it does not affect us; even going

Subject:

My kid sister has Type I Diabetes. Glad you feel like slandering a sorority raising money for kids like her so you can remember your jail yard days.

If you're going to write the slanderous article like you ran in the CT, have the integrity to put your damn name on it and take your licks rather than hide behind anonymity.

I wager concepts like "integrity" and "ethics" are a funny thing for a drug-dealing ex-con like yourself, so show you actually have some as a journalist and resign.

Trey Griffith

Big ups to the staff at CT for calling out AGC on their recent attempt at philanthropy! I agree that no disrespect was intended by their portrayal of jail inmates although, it is in much the same negligent disrespect American sports teams portray Native peoples as mascots. I can assure you that none of my cellmates would take kindly to being misrepresented as a fundraising mascot by people who have no idea of the exploitation taking place via the prison industrial complex. For those of us who made the mistake of committing a crime in the Commonwealth the outlook is particularly bleak due to stiff sentencing guidelines and the absence of parole. Many incarcerated here are victims of their own addiction, locked up for petty drug offenses. The numbers indicate at least someone in your sorority will experience

You're going to love it here.®

American Campus Communities gives you the college experience you'll love.

8 1/2 CANAL STREET

1200 WEST MARSHALL

Apply online today at

RICHMONDSTUDENTHOUSING.COM

RAMZ APARTMENTS ON BROAD

THE LOFTS AT CAPITAL GARAGE

College communities to fit your lifestyle, and your budget. All just steps to campus.

- Great locations to campus—walk or bike to class
- Private bedrooms & bathrooms available
- Fully furnished apartments
- Amenities for a fit & healthy lifestyle
- Academically oriented environments
- Professional, on-site management & maintenance
- All utilities included
- Garage parking available
- Individual liability leases
- Roommate matching available

AMERICAN
CAMPUS
COMMUNITIES

Where students love living.®

Amenities & utilities included are subject to change. Electricity up to a monthly cap. See office for details.

THE
CT

comics

Blue Ridge Mountains by Hanna Bechtle

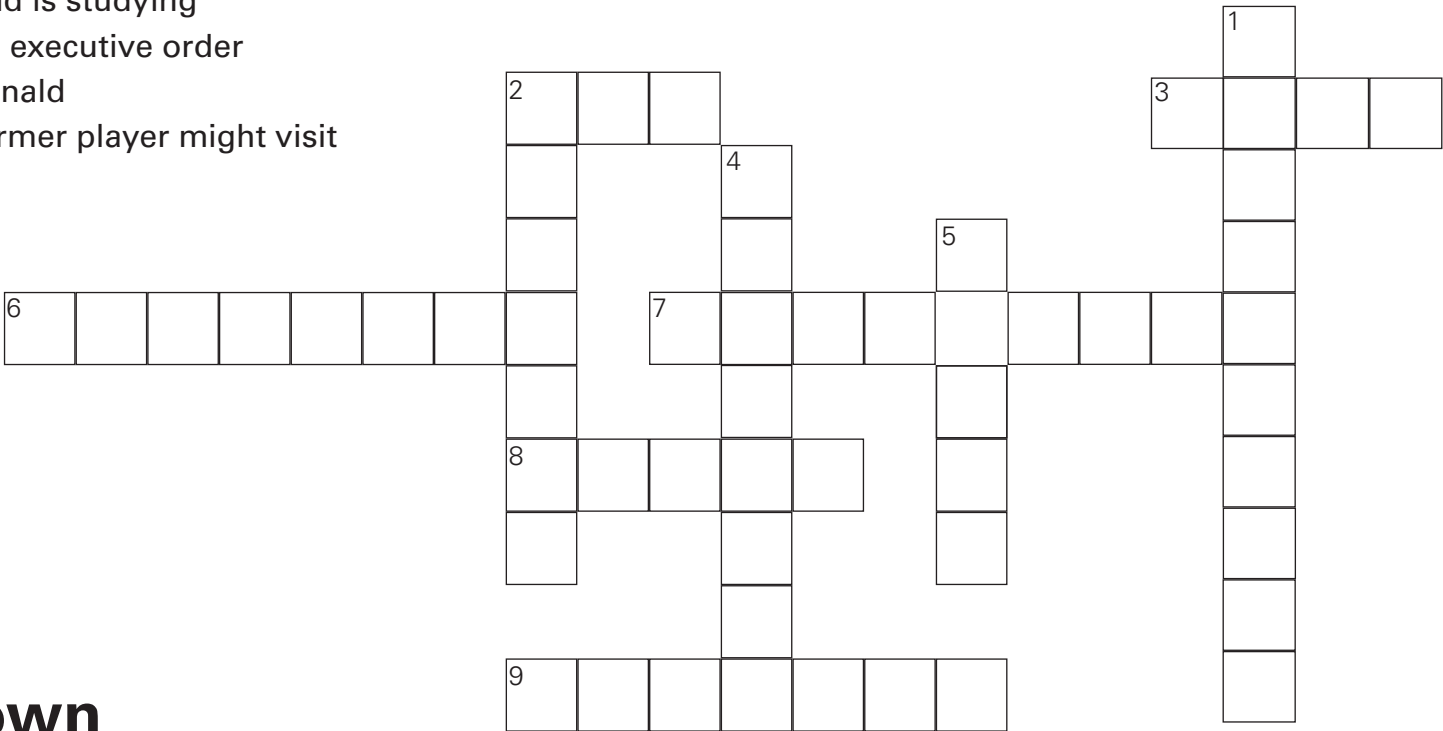


The Democratic Debasement by Gareth Bental



Across

- 2. Test-optional
- 3. Lindsay
- 6. Lind is studying
- 7. Va. executive order
- 8. Donald
- 9. Former player might visit



Down

- 1. Black and Gold
- 2. Advanced media certificate
- 4. Budget report
- 5. John

- Answers to last week's puzzle:
- Across

Down
6. Gender neutral

1. Confederacy
8. Paris Prince

2. Goldrush
10. Duquesne

3.Red flag
4. McLetchie
5. Textbooks
7. Draw
9. Autumn

THE CT STAFF

- Executive Editor**
Sarah King
kingsa@commonwealthtimes.org
- Print Managing Editor**
Matt Leonard
leonardmt@commonwealthtimes.org
- Online Managing Editor**
Audry Dubon
dubonah@commonwealthtimes.org
- Copy Editor**
Meagan Dermody
dermodymb@commonwealthtimes.org
- Print News Editor**
Maura Mazurowski
mazurom@commonwealthtimes.org
- Online News Editor**
Muktaru Jalloh
jallohmm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Sports Editor**
Bryant Drayton
draytonbo@commonwealthtimes.org
- Spectrum Editor**
Austin Walker
walkerav@commonwealthtimes.org
- Opinion Editor**
Monica Houston
houstonm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Illustrations Editor**
Shannon Wright
wrightsn@commonwealthtimes.org
- Photography Editor**
Brooke Marsh
marshba@commonwealthtimes.org
- Multimedia Editor**
Margaret Carmel
carmelm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Social Media Specialist**
Jasmine Roberts
robertsjm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Writers**
Fadel Allasan
allasanfg@commonwealthtimes.org
- Sophia Belletti**
bellettisr@commonwealthtimes.org
- Marcus Blackwell**
blackwellm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Photographer**
Julie Tripp
trippjm@commonwealthtimes.org
- Staff Illustrators**
Erin Bushnell
bushnell@commonwealthtimes.org
- Christine Fouron**
fouronco@commonwealthtimes.org
- Distributor**
Grace Hoffman
distribution@vcustudentmedia.com
- Graphic Designers**
Miranda Leung
Anya Shcherbakova
Ashley Moody
Sarah Butler
designers@vcustudentmedia.com
- Advertising Representatives**
Katie Gallant
Taylor Hankins
Shaun Jackson
Abigail Keatinge
advertising@vcustudentmedia.com
804-828-6629
- Outreach Coordinator**
Nicolas Desouza
smc_outreach@vcustudentmedia.com
- Student Media Director**
Greg Weatherford
goweatherfor@vcu.edu
804-827-1975
- Production Manager**
Mark Jeffries
mjefriesVCU@gmail.com
- Business Manager**
Jacob McFadden
mcfaddenjc@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.

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 houstonm@commonwealthtimes.org, by mail or in person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220-2806.

RAMAWAY



Providing free transportation during designated VCU holidays and semester breaks to and/or from the Richmond International Airport, Greyhound Bus Station and Amtrak at Main Street Station and Staples Mill Road.

**Reserve your ride at parking.vcu.edu/vcupark/RamAway.htm*

Taking Reservations	Rides	Pick-up/Drop-off Times
Thanksgiving 2015		
11/9/15 to 11/23/15*	11/24/15 & 11/25/15	5:00 am to 5:00 pm
11/9/15 to 11/24/15*	11/28/15 & 11/29/15	11:00 am to 9:00 pm
Winter Break 2015		
11/30/15 to 12/7/15*	12/9/15 to 12/16/15	5:00 am to 5:00 pm
Spring Semester 2016		
1/4/16 to 1/11/16*	1/12/16 to 1/17/16	11:00 am to 9:00 pm
Spring Break 2016		
2/22/16 to 2/29/16*	3/3/16 to 3/6/16	5:00 am to 5:00 pm
2/22/15 to 3/9/16*	3/11/16 to 3/13/16	11:00 am to 9:00 pm
Summer Break 2016		
4/25/16 to 5/4/16*	5/6/16 to 5/13/16	5:00 am to 5:00 pm

* Reservation requests will be accepted until 12pm on the last reservation day.
Please allow 2 hours minimum prior to scheduled departure time to ensure that you are on time for your transportation.
Please allow 1 hour minimum after your scheduled return to ensure you do not miss your ride back to campus.
You must have your VCU ID to board the RamAway bus.

For questions, email ramtransit@vcu.edu or call 828-7882.