

Thursday

# COLLEGIATE TIMES

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## Dance group steps into Squires

▪ Step Afrika shared the history and importance of step dancing during last night's performance

by Erin Zlomek  
News Assistant

More than 300 people witnessed the evolution of stepping as performed by Step Afrika last night in Squires Commonwealth Ballroom.

The Washington, D.C.-based dance company opened with a skit depicting modern stepping affiliation with African American fraternities and sororities. With audience interaction, the group's six dance professionals demonstrated the similarity of stepping to both African Zulu and Gumbot dancing.

"Our performances are what we call explosive dance. It's a kind of dancing that uses all of your energy at one time," said Kirsten Ledford, artistic director of Step Afrika. "There is no pacing (yourself) — it is a very high energy production."

The company is currently rounding out a four-month tour stretching from Maine to Florida. "Our mission is to familiarize (stepping) — to have it respected as an important art form,



JAMES BERKELEY/SPPS

Members of Step Afrika performed a skit pretending to be fraternity brothers who were kicked out of the group because of their involvement with "stepping."

See STEP, page 2

## President signs ban on type of abortion

by Jennifer Loven  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush signed legislation Wednesday banning a certain type of abortion, handing the disputed procedure's opponents a long-sought victory even as a federal judge at least partially blocked the new law from taking effect.

"For years, a terrible form of violence has been directed against children who are inches from birth while the law looked the other way," Bush said as he signed the ban on a procedure called partial-birth abortion by its critics. "Today at last the American people and our government have confronted the violence and come to the defense of the innocent child."

The White House staged the ceremony, before about 400 cheering lawmakers and

See ABORTION, page 2

## Navajo speaker enriches audience

▪ Joy Harjo shared her poetry as a guest for American Indian Heritage Month and related the kitchen table to all aspects of her life

by Anne-Henley Beck  
Staff Writer

Standing at the podium, a woman dressed in a dark velvet shirt, satin capris and brown cowboy boots began to speak. Joy Harjo, a poet and singer, gave a special presentation of her poetry last night in Colonial Hall Auditorium as a part of American Indian Heritage Month.

She began her speech by remarking how Blacksburg's smell reminded her of home, and talked about her American Indian heritage, once very prominent in this region of America. She said it is still very much alive, with over 500 tribes.

Telling of her real home, in Oklahoma, where her tribe invites the community yearly to a cookout, she came to the focus of her speech: the kitchen table.

By relating the kitchen table to all aspects of life, she voiced her poetry. As the center, the kitchen table "teaches just about anything. It's the place you take in nourishment, not just food. Spirits need to be nourished by company we keep, stories..."

She went on further to explain that it's important to ask who is sitting at our kitchen table, relating it to the many homes where parents are unable to eat with children because of other responsibilities. She then broke into a rhythmic beat of her poem, "Kitchen Table."

Her second poem, spurred by an eagle she saw

after a sweat (a cleansing ritual), was given rhythm and beat.

"I like her poetry, but you don't get the emphasis on the words," Alicia Gear, a freshman interdisciplinary studies major said. "When you get to see her, you hear how she feels about it and (she) expresses herself. You don't get it completely until you hear her voice, hear her sing."

Using her melodic voice, the fluctuations and intonations pulled the audience into her words and the meaning she wanted to convey. Between poems, Harjo went back to the idea of the kitchen table relating it to learning that is involved in life and the meaning of life.

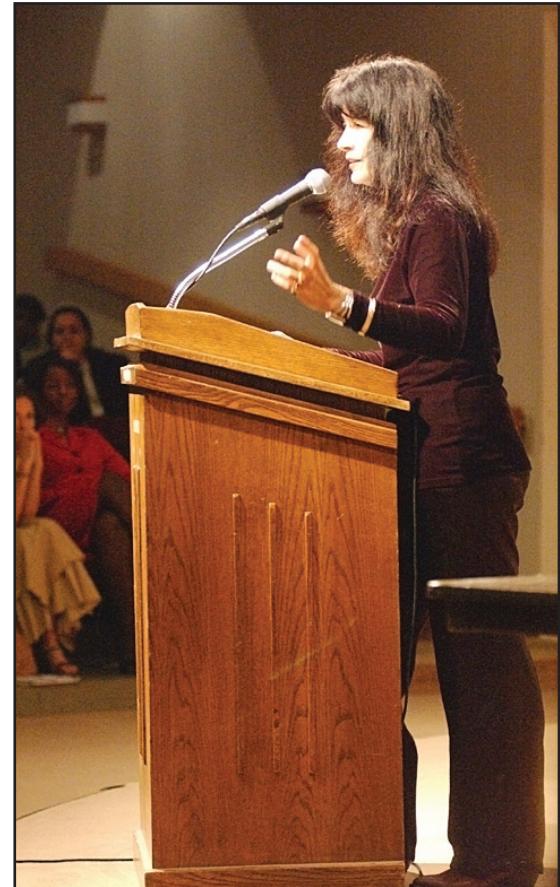
She reminded the audience that life is what "we take away with us." "We're given a gift in one hand, and difficulties. It comes down to what you take with you," Harjo said.

Closing her performance with a song, "Mourning Song," Harjo left the audience with the thought of love, saying that every poem was a love poem and if people devote themselves to love, they can stand up and tell the truth.

"She has an amazing ability to speak from a minority stand point," said Kara Haggard, treasurer of the American Indian Cultural Association and a senior English major.

"It is a lot of downtrodden subjects, but she pulls it around in the end to give you hope. Her poetry includes a lot of imagery," Haggard said.

A member of the Tiger Clan in the Muscogee Nation, Harjo has won many awards for her poetry, books and music. Formerly a part of the band Poetic Justice, she has now formed a new band, Native, that has a new CD release, Native Joy, coming out within the year.



Joy Harjo closed her presentation by singing "Mourning Song" and left the audience with thoughts about the concept of love.

TED MARTELLO/SPPS

## Fall's bright colors dulled by wet, windy summer

by Bryan Nieder  
Editorial Assistant

Fall foliage enthusiasts have experienced a departure from the expected variety of colors adorning trees this season, and unusual weather during the summer months may be to blame.

John Peterson, a research specialist for the Virginia Tech forestry department, said a wet summer and a windy fall have led to this year's less than spectacular fall colors.

"This is a particularly drab year," he said.

As a result of the wet weather, fungal diseases spread, causing trees to drop their leaves during the summer, Peterson said.

Also, younger trees grew faster with the increased rainfall and lost their leaves faster.

Blacksburg experienced a very early hard freeze, which put the trees in a suspended animation, hindering a consistent fall coloring for all of the trees, he said.

Leaves usually reach their peak coloring between Oct. 15 and Oct. 20.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported 6.14 inches of rainfall

above average for the months of May through August. However, the increased precipitation during the summer did not continue into the fall season.

Robin Reed, chief meteorologist for WDBJ in Roanoke, said rain totals for September were 0.6 inches above normal, but October experienced a bit of a rain deficit.

He said temperatures appeared normal since the fall season began.

"The idea that this has been an unusual fall season does not seem supported by the numbers," he said.

Climatologically, the fall season runs from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30.

The amount of wind we get in the fall has the most immediate effect on the fall colors, Peterson said.

He said the fall leaves may look unimpressive, but it is no indicator of the health of the trees.

"All of the hardwood trees are done growing, so all of the leaves are contained in the buds," Peterson said.

The changing of the trees' leaves is dependent on a lot of factors. According to Peterson, there



Though many of the trees are lacking their vibrant colors this year, it is no indication of the health of the trees. The colors mostly depend on changes in the weather.

See COLORS, page 4

## News in Brief

### State police to help Richmond combat murder

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Virginia state police will join Richmond officers on the streets for the next two weeks to help combat a murder rate in the capital city that continues to outpace that of New York, Los Angeles, Baltimore or Atlanta.

Richmond has had 83 homicides this year, compared with 59 at this time last year. Last weekend alone, the city tallied 12 shootings resulting in two deaths.

Although final details have yet to be worked out, the state's Counter-terrorism and Criminal Interdiction Unit was expected to help round up and guns and drugs, focusing on areas of the city that have experienced recent outbreaks of violence.

### Court debates roadblocks

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court debated Wednesday whether police may set up "informational" roadblocks to collect tips about unsolved crimes, hearing arguments in a case involving a drunken driver caught as authorities sought clues in a hit-and-run.

Such roadblocks can be used in all sorts of investigations. For example, police set up a checkpoint in Utah to try to produce leads after Elizabeth Smart was kidnapped in 2002, justices were told.

But court members seemed

sharply divided over whether roadblocks for non-emergency investigations intrude on the constitutional rights of innocent people.

### Cities may raise minimum wage

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Advocates for the poor hope city voters' approval of a minimum wage well above the federal minimum marks a precedent that spreads beyond this liberal bastion.

Sixty percent of San Francisco voters Tuesday endorsed a citywide \$8.50-an-hour minimum wage affecting virtually all employers, not just those receiving municipal contracts. The passage of Proposition L makes San Francisco the nation's third city with its own wage threshold.

### Fla. school allows Saddam float

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - A high school avoided a lawsuit Wednesday after administrators agreed to allow a homecoming parade float that depicts the toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue and another that urges students to "Let Jesus Rock Your Night Away."

Earlier this week, school officials at Dr. Phillips High School had raised concerns that the floats might offend some students. The Hussein float is being sponsored by the Young Republicans Club and the religious float is being sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

## Step: Show entertains, educates

### Continued from page 1

such as ballet and tap are," Ledford said. "We especially want people to realize it is an American art form, and to celebrate it as such."

Ledford said that the first stepping was not the same as the styles of today, but rather a culmination of things that developed by the 1980s.

"Stepping began as circle songs and other rituals done within fraternities and sororities around pledging," Ledford said. "Then things that were popular in culture were added to enhance the art form." The group used short dialogues to accompany their traditional South African Zulu and Gumboot routines, so that audience members made a clear connection between the different forms of dance.

"I think people can identify with the fact that this is a representation of actual ritual that has taken place in history ... and still does in some places," Ledford said. "Everybody can see themselves in the show in one form or another."

The group also gave audience members a brief moral lesson.

"We encourage people to continue community service; we emphasize the fact that stepping in general was used to raise scholarship money," Ledford said. "To earn the right to step, you must first help your community in some way."

The night's performance was a joint effort of the Virginia Tech Union and Black Student Alliance. Pam Divine, special events director of the VTU and a junior communication major, said that representatives from Virginia Tech saw Step Afrika in a regional performance and were so impressed with the group they scheduled them for a show.

"(They are) a very high-energy, full-of-talent group that is something unique which a lot of students may not get to ever experience — those are the type of (shows we like to put on)," Divine said.

Levi Daniels, co-director of black cultural awareness in the BSA and a senior in accounting information systems, also said that it was important for



TED MARTELLO/SPPS

**The group gave audience members a moral lesson in addition to stepping.**

Step Afrika to come perform at Tech. "This was such an important event for the BSA because it is novel enough that people can enjoy themselves, yet become educated at the same time," Daniels said. "They show through stepping what black people have been able to do in America."

## More marines may go to Iraq

by Robert Burns  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps, which played a central role in toppling Saddam Hussein last spring, will return to Iraq as part of a U.S. troop rotation next year, officials said Wednesday.

Since the Marines' departure from Iraq in September, the military effort to stabilize and rebuild Iraq has fallen almost entirely to the Army, plus multinational units led by Britain and Poland.

The 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit recently began anti-smuggling operations in the Persian Gulf coastal area in southern Iraq. But no Marines have been doing stability operations, such as working with Iraqi civilians on rebuilding projects or hunting for fugitives loyal to Saddam, since the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force departed south-central Iraq in September.

Also included in the next U.S. rotation will be thousands of newly mobilized National Guard and Reserve troops as well as active duty Army units such as the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, and the 1st Infantry Division in Germany, according to officials who discussed the matter on condition of anonymity.

## Grenade attacks kill two Iraqis

by Robert Reid  
Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces in the northern city of Mosul came under attack Wednesday as insurgents fired rocket-propelled grenades at a convoy and barracks, and a hand grenade exploded near another military convoy in the city center.

Two Iraqi civilians were killed

when a rocket-propelled grenade struck their car after apparently missing a military convoy, Sgt. Chris Ryder said. An American soldier also was wounded.

An Iraqi teenager was also killed in a hand grenade blast near Mosul's city hall, hospital sources said. Two other teens and a U.S. soldier were wounded.

No casualties were reported in the earlier attack on the barracks,

the U.S. military said.

Separately, a U.S. soldier died of wounds sustained from a "non-hostile gunshot" at a Baghdad checkpoint, the military said.

Also, soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division captured two former Iraqi Army generals in an early Wednesday raid in Fallujah, the military said.

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S&P 500 1051.81 ▼ -1.44

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#### TODAY



Cloudy, showers likely

Highs: 55°–60°

#### TONIGHT



Partly cloudy, late showers

Lows: 40°–43°

#### FRIDAY



Partly cloudy

Highs: 53°–57°

#### FRIDAY NIGHT



Partly cloudy, breezy

Lows: 30°–35°

#### SATURDAY



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# Abortion: Judge questions constitutionality

**Continued from page 1**

abortion opponents, at a federal building named for former President Ronald Reagan, a strong supporter of anti-abortion groups. An "Amen" was heard from the audience as Bush sat down at a desk, before a row of American flags, to sign the bill passed last month by Congress.

But less than an hour after Bush put his pen to paper, a federal judge in Nebraska sharply questioned the law's constitutionality and issued a limited temporary restraining order against it. U.S. District Judge Richard Kopf said he was concerned that the ban contains no exception if the woman's health is at risk as he issued an injunction applied only to the four doctors who brought the suit.

"While it is also true that Congress found that a health exception is not needed, it is, at the very least, problematic whether I should defer to such a conclusion when the Supreme Court has found otherwise."

Kopf said.

Besides Nebraska, hearings were also being held in San Francisco and New York City Wednesday on similar challenges.

Fully aware of the impending legal obstacles, Bush said, to a standing ovation and the longest round of applause during his brief remarks: "The executive branch will vigorously defend this law against any who would try to overturn it in the courts."

The president's signature represented an end to a legislative crusade that began after Republicans captured the House in 1995.

Former President Clinton twice vetoed similar bills, arguing that they lacked an exception to protect the health of the mother.

The law, approved by the House and Senate late last month, prohibits doctors from committing an "overt act" designed to kill a partially delivered fetus and allows no exception if the woman's health is at risk, or if the child would be born with

ailments. The procedure, which usually involves puncturing the fetus' skull, is generally performed in the second or third trimester.

Aware of its backing among the religious conservatives that make up a key portion of his base of political support, the president declared himself pleased to sign legislation he said would help him and others "build a culture of life" in America.

To that end, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said the president supports additional legislative moves — which he did not specify — to further restrict abortion.

"This right to life cannot be granted or denied by government, because it does not come

from government — it comes from the creator of life," the president said, receiving another lengthy standing ovation.

But Bush is also mindful of the more moderate voters he cannot afford to alienate, and last week repeated a position he offered during his 2000 campaign.

He said he would not seek a total ban on abortion because public opinion had not yet shifted to support such a move.

The new law is similar to a Nebraska statute struck down by the Supreme Court three years ago and imposes the most far-reaching limits on abortion since the high court in 1973 established a woman's right to end a pregnancy.

*"Today, at last, the American people and our government have confronted the violence and come to the defense of the innocent child."*

George W. Bush  
President, United States

# Smokers working to renew lawsuit

■ The lawsuit against tobacco companies was the first of its kind in the country

by Lawrence Messina  
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Lawyers for some 270,000 West Virginia smokers asked the Supreme Court on Wednesday for a new trial after a 2001 jury rejected their lawsuit demanding the tobacco industry pay for lung cancer-type screenings.

The justices were told the industry "hijacked" the first-of-its-kind class action case by shifting blame from the alleged defects of cigarettes to smokers who fail to quit.

"The focus is on the product," Charleston lawyer Scott Segal argued. "They didn't care about safety. They cared about delivering a specific amount of tar and a specific amount of nicotine in their product."

Segal and co-counsel Deborah McHenry said the four tobacco companies named in the lawsuit admitted that the risks of smoking outweigh any benefit and that cigarettes have no practical use.

"The defendants said, 'We make it, we put it out there, but don't use it, just quit,'" McHenry argued. "That makes a mockery of product defect law."

A lawyer for defendant R.J. Reynolds urged the justices not to second-guess the Ohio County jury that heard weeks worth of evidence before reaching its verdict in November 2001.

"What the plaintiffs are really complaining of is, despite their best efforts, they were unable to gather up a panel of West Virginia jurors who had absolutely no sense of responsibility and common sense about

smoking," Jeffrey L. Furr said.

In West Virginia, people can petition for medical testing under a six-step standard set by a 1999 court ruling. Among other elements, people must prove they have been "significantly" exposed to a "proven" hazardous substance, that misconduct is to blame, and that they run an increased risk of contracting a "serious" latent disease.

Furr noted that the jury believes the plaintiffs proved only four of the six elements. That mixed finding reflects the ongoing dispute among doctors over the specific tests requested in the lawsuit, he said.

"The jury was able to appropriately weigh the medical and scientific evidence as to whether medical monitoring is reasonably necessary," Furr said.

Segal and McHenry argued that the verdict shows the jury was misled.

"Quitting may be an excellent thing. Half of the class had quit," Segal said. "But we all know that if you have a latent disease, quitting is not going to help you diagnose it."

Segal is married to Justice Robin Davis. She recused herself from the case, leaving the four other justices to hear the arguments.

Besides R.J. Reynolds, the lawsuit targeted Lorillard, Philip Morris and Brown & Williamson. The appeal addresses the verdict as well as several rulings by Judge Arthur Recht before and during the trial.

The lawsuit, essentially structured as a product liability case with medical monitoring as the proposed remedy for wronged consumers, was the first of its kind to be tried in the United States.

Since then, a New Orleans jury in July said cigarette-makers should finance smoking-cessation programs, but rejected a claim for industry-paid medical monitoring for 1.5 million Louisiana smokers and former smokers.

# Green River Killer suspect pleads guilty

■ Gary Ridgeway was arrested in 2001 for allegedly murdering 48 women

by Gene Johnson  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Gary Ridgeway, the former truck painter long suspected of being the Green River Killer, admitted in court Wednesday to 48 murders. "I killed so many women I have a hard time keeping them straight," he said in a confession read aloud by prosecutors.

"I wanted to kill as many women as I thought were prostitutes as I possibly could," Ridgeway said in the statement.

Some relatives of victims wept quietly in the courtroom.

Ridgeway, 54, struck a plea bargain that will spare him from

execution and result in a sentence of life in prison without parole. The agreement signed June 13 would put more murders on his record than any other serial killer in U.S. history.

Since signing off on the deal, Ridgeway has worked with investigators to recover still-missing remains of some victims in the case.

The deal would all but close one of the most baffling and chilling serial killer cases the nation has ever seen.

The Green River Killer's murderous frenzy began in 1982, targeting women in the Seattle area, mainly runaways and prostitutes. The first victims turned up in the Green River, giving the killer his name. Other bodies were found near ravines, airports and freeways.

The killing seemed to stop as suddenly as it started, with prosecutors believing the last victim

had disappeared in 1984. But one of the killings Ridgeway admitted to occurred in 1990 and another in 1998.

In court Wednesday, Ridgeway was presented with the details of each slaying, one by one, and was asked to confirm them. After that, he was expected to plead guilty.

He said in his statement that he killed all the women in King County, mostly near his home or in his truck not far from where he picked them up.

"In most cases, when I killed these women, I did not know their names," Ridgeway said in the statement. "Most of the time I killed them the first time I met them, and I do not have a good memory of their faces."

He said he had several reasons for preying on prostitutes.

"I hate most prostitutes and I did not want to pay them for sex," he said. "I also picked prostitutes as victims because

they were easy to pick up without being noticed. I knew they would not be reported missing right away and might never be reported missing. I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught."

Ridgeway, of the Seattle suburb of Auburn, was arrested in 2001 as he left his longtime job as a painter at a truck company. Prosecutors said advances in DNA technology had allowed them to match a saliva sample taken from Ridgeway in 1987 with DNA samples taken from the bodies of three of the earliest victims. In many cases, the killer had sex with his victim and then strangled her.

Ridgeway had been a suspect as early as 1984, when Marie Malvar's boyfriend reported that he last saw her getting into a pickup truck identified as Ridgeway's.

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# Colors: Upcoming months may be stormy

**Continued from page 1**

has not been much research done to determine the reason for the difference in some years' fall colors.

Maggie Beal, co-president of the Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech, said it has still been enjoyable to see the leaves change this fall because the colors are present in a burgundy tone.

"The colors aren't as bright as they have been in the past," she said. "But it's still beautiful."

If current weather trends are a predictor, the upcoming winter months may produce stormy weather.

Reed said according to the NOAA climate center's predictions, there is no strong tilt in either direction for a departure from normal in the realm of temperatures or precipitation for this winter.

However, he said past weather can be a good indicator of the next season, if the overall pattern has been persistent.

"Essentially, the computer models will show no skill in the long range forecast," Reed said, "but given the return to a wetter pattern, it increases the chances for cold rain, sleet or snow this winter."

# N. Korean nuclear project suspended

by Sang-Hun Choe  
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and its key allies agreed Wednesday to suspend construction of two nuclear power plants in North Korea, saying that the energy-starved communist state won't get them unless it gives up its nuclear weapons program.

The move seems likely to kill the \$4.6 billion power plants project, because the Bush administration opposes it and officials from the United States, South Korea, Japan and the European Union have agreed that a unanimous decision would be needed to resume construction.

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, a U.S. based consortium, has been building two light-water reactors as part of the 1994 accord between Washington and Pyongyang in which North Korea promised to freeze and eventually dismantle its suspected nuclear weapons development.

But the deal went sour in October 2002 when U.S. officials said North Korea admitted to running such a weapons program. The deal had been part of U.S.-led international efforts to persuade the impoverished communist nation to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions in return for energy aid and other economic benefits. But the Bush administration says the project has lost its tactical merit because Pyongyang has been running a secret nuclear weapons program flouting the agreement.

The four-member executive board of the KEDO met in New York on Monday and Tuesday and discussed suspending the project. The board said it would make its final announcement before Nov. 21 after consulting with the member nations' governments. Halting the project looked inevitable Wednesday, as the board members favored pulling out hundreds of workers who have been working to build the reactors in the northeastern corner of North Korea.

# Gun residue found in Muhammad's car

▪ Previous testimony also indicates the snipers sought a \$10 million payment to end the shooting spree

by Matthew Barakat  
Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Chemical residue found in the trunk of John Allen Muhammad's car suggests the gunman in last year's sniper attacks fired from inside the compartment, a federal agent testified Wednesday at Muhammad's murder trial.

In other testimony, another agent said only Lee Boyd Malvo's fingerprints were found on the high-powered rifle allegedly used in the spree. But the prints showed Malvo's hands were not in a firing position at the time, the witness said.

Edward Bender, a forensic chemist for the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, said nitroglycerine and other

chemical residues were "consistent with a firearm being fired inside the trunk."

Prosecutors began the forensic part of their case against Muhammad on Wednesday after 2 1/2 weeks of presenting evidence of 16 shootings and detailing the arrests of Muhammad and Malvo on Oct. 24, 2002, at a rest stop in Maryland.

They introduced evidence in shootings in Maryland, Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana and Washington in an effort to show that Muhammad had a role in multiple slayings and terrorized the public necessary conditions for the two death penalty charges against him in Virginia.

Charles Colman of the ATF testified that he found prints from Malvo's left ring finger and palm on the rifle, but found none of Muhammad's prints.

Malvo's prints were on the weapon in such a manner that he would have been holding it upside down at the time, Colman said.

"It wasn't any type of firing position," he said.

It has long been known that

only Malvo's prints were found on the weapon, but there had been no previous public discussion about the position of the prints.

Prosecutors have argued it is irrelevant who actually fired the weapon, portraying Muhammad as the "instigator and moving spirit" of the spree. Defense lawyers have argued that identifying the triggerman is crucial in determining whether Muhammad is eligible for the death penalty.

Malvo has admitted firing the shots in many of the attacks, but Malvo's lawyers say their client gave a false confession to protect Muhammad.

FBI fingerprint expert Mitchell Hollars said that he found Malvo's fingerprints on items left behind at a Sept. 21, 2002, shooting in Montgomery, Ala., and an Oct. 19 shooting in Ashland. He said he found Muhammad's fingerprints only on two items that had been in Muhammad's car. Muhammad's fingerprints were also found on a map book found at the scene of the Oct. 9 shooting of Dean Harold Meyers near Manassas.

The jury also heard testimony about the contents of a laptop computer found in Muhammad's car when he was arrested.

Maps of six shooting scenes were marked with skull-and-crossbones icons, said FBI computer expert John Hair. A caption next to the symbol marking the slaying of FBI analyst Linda Franklin included the words "Good one."

Another file contained text that was apparently designed to be telephone dialogue with the police. It included the code words "Call Me God" and the following instructions: "We are offering you a way out. These are our terms. You will prepare 5 million dollars and place it in this account ..."

Previous testimony has indicated that the snipers sought a \$10 million payment in exchange for an end to the shooting spree. There is no evidence that the text found in the computer was ever uttered to police.

The file was created eight days before a note demanding \$10 million was left at the scene of a shooting in Ashland, Va.

# Tech: Virginia 21 raises political awareness

**Continued from page 1**

Ferguson said that drives like these are important so that officials know that college students are paying attention to politics.

"This sends a message to elected officials that young people are going to speak with their votes," Ferguson said. "I think we started doing that this year."

Puraj Patel, SGA vice president and a junior business information technology major, said students should register to vote in order to be heard in Richmond.

"Students need to realize that their voices aren't being heard," he said. "This is one way to do

it."

Bull attributes Tech's success to having a more active approach this year rather than waiting for students to approach the SGA.

Representatives from the SGA went out to various classes, fraternities, sororities and other organizations and handed out registration forms, Bull said.

However there are plans to make the drive even more successful next year.

"We will definitely start a little earlier," Patel said. They also plan on going to more classes and organizations and handing out applications, he said.

Since this is the first year of Virginia 21's existence, plan-

ning for this fall's voting drives didn't start until the fall.

"We will have the ability (next year) to start planning in the spring, rather than putting it together in the fall," Ferguson said.

Other schools that had successful drives include George Mason University and the College of William and Mary. William and Mary actually had the highest percentage of newly registered voters, Ferguson said.

Virginia 21 has also worked to make young people more aware of where candidates stand on various issues.

A few months ago the organization sent questionnaires out to

various candidates asking them about key issues. This information is available on the Virginia 21 website, Ferguson said.

Ferguson said it is important for college students to talk directly with those working in Richmond. Virginia 21 has arranged various meetings between students and politicians so they know the importance of funding for higher education, Ferguson said.

"If we can get students talking to legislatures, that's where we're really going to see change," Ferguson said.

Virginia 21 describes itself as the state's first generational advocacy group for 18- to 24 year-olds.

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# OPINIONS COMMENTARY

## About time for a living wage

**Justin Krometis**

Recent discussions concerning the low wages paid to Virginia Tech housekeepers and bookstore employees once again highlight the less-than-equitable pay structure many workers suffer under. Many other employees in the New River Valley area and millions more throughout the United States barely earn over the antique \$5.15 per hour federal minimum wage.

Considering the escalating costs for housing, food, transportation, child-care and medical coverage, public employers as well as corporate executives are long overdue to recognize the plight of poorly paid American workers. The current minimum wage would need to be raised to \$8.20 an hour simply to meet the federal poverty level.

The low wages currently paid by many employers do not provide sufficient income for workers to support their families with a minimum level of comfort. Thus, many of our community members must often work multiple jobs just to stay above water, depriving them of much-needed family time.

Taking into account the cost of living, a recent study titled "The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Virginia" calculated the income level necessary to adequately meet basic needs without the help of public assistance.

This study reports that for a couple with one child to maintain a decent standard of living in Montgomery County, both wage-earning parents must make at least \$8.33 an hour.

Many New River Valley community members are still not receiving this basic level salary. Retail businesses in the Route 460 corridor and staff positions at institutions such as Radford University and Virginia Tech provide plenty of \$6- to \$7-an-hour jobs. However, we face the

unfortunate reality that there are not any \$6-an-hour apartments or doctors or cars available.

Our political and corporate leaders often counsel low-paid Americans that "they need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps." However, wage and tax laws are currently written to help the high-income earners buy new boots while the least paid must settle for slippers.

In a recent article highlighting the campaign for a living wage, a Tech economics professor discounted the need for a fairer wage policy, stating that such measures would harm commerce and ultimately lessen employment opportunities.

The implicit message from such a stance is that our current economic system cannot function profitably without a surplus of workers who are paid below the poverty level. It does not take an economist to realize that such economic policy touts indentured servitude rather than American ingenuity.

Such rhetoric is an insult to American values of fairness, equal opportunity and competitiveness and just serves as another alibi for unconscionable top-end salaries and bonuses to continue. Obviously, businesses that cannot survive without the availability of cheap labor are either poorly managed or not viable.

Fortunately, most warm-hearted American citizens will agree that a person who works full time should be able to meet the basic costs of living (i.e. a living wage). When hard-working community members are provided with adequate salaries to support their families, the need for public assistance such as welfare, housing subsidies, food stamps, medical assistance and other social services diminishes. Practically speaking, other hard-working taxpayers end up subsidizing employers who decline to pay fair, reasonable wages.

*Justin Krometis is a graduate student in mathematics*

## Wasting our lives by watching them

**Scott Gayzik**

Recently, some friends asked me to come over and check out their new television. It was worth the trip, the thing is monstrous. It towers over the room like a false idol with a flat screen the length of my arm span.

But it was more than just the latest in HDTV technology; it was a symbol of our society's love affair with television. I recently picked up a book called "Amusing Ourselves to Death" by Neil Postman. Although it is nearly 20 years old, I was fascinated by how poignant its message still is. Postman asserts that by replacing the printed medium as the main source of communication, television has permanently altered, for the worse, the way Americans view and influence the world we live in.

Unlike written discourse, television only strives to entertain. It tries to stimulate our senses and emotions, disassembling the cohesive and rational thoughts we have with a barrage of incoherent, bite-sized packets of information. I'm not writing this article from an ivory tower, I watch my share of television, including the new one at my friend's place.

My goal is merely to spark interest in the deleterious effect that television is having on our society and to motivate people (including myself) to spend a little less time in front of it.

Today, television's influence on reality has become so ingrained it is nearly impossible to separate the two. From sports to news to education to religion, the bias of television has penetrated every facet of our world.

This bias is a result of not being in control of the stream of messages we are receiving while watching. A person reading a news story has the freedom

to pause, to reflect and to challenge what he or she is presented. But on television, the story's pace is dictated by the speaker and there is absolutely no break between one story, however joyous or tragic, and the next.

With no time to reflect or question the content provided, broadcasters are able to show anything they want, with little regard for insight or even truth.

There is no better arena to illustrate this point than modern politics. When television hit the mainstream, politicians saw it as the perfect means to spread their message without getting mired down in detail. Thanks to television's knack for blending the serious with the trivial, the role of the modern politician has gone from public servant to public performer.

Examples of this conversion are painfully obvious. In perhaps the biggest political circus of all time, Arnold Schwarzenegger recently ousted Grey Davis in the California recall election.

In the end, Davis lost, not because he was a bad governor (it takes more than one man to sink a ship the size of California), but because people didn't like him as much as the movie star Schwarzenegger.

This was an election with all the serious debate and contemplation of issues of a high school popularity contest. The influence of the television becomes even more obvious when one takes the image-based politics of today and applies them to the past.

Can you imagine George Washington smiling ear to ear for his portrait with an American flag pin on his lapel? Or better yet, picture Abe Lincoln out for a jog in his top hat giving the thumbs up to the cameras.

Yes, the influence of television on reality is everywhere, but just recently the role has reversed. Over the last few years, people have become content

viewing reality through television's periscope. The networks have realized that people would rather experience life vicariously through others than going through it themselves.

After all, why fall in love when you can watch others go through its trials and tribulations? Why play sports when you can watch them on television with a beer in one hand and the remote in the other? If you are averse to simply being a spectator, that's no longer a problem.

Today we are asked to participate directly while we watch by answering irrelevant questions over our mobile phones and Internet connections.

"Will Joe chose the blond or the brunette?" "Who will win tonight's game?" Who cares? The results of these idiotic polls are thrown up on the screen minutes later, giving those who responded their nanosecond of fame.

When the telegraph was first invented, Henry David Thoreau commented, "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing to communicate." While the medium is different, the quote provides some insight about television's importance in our society.

It has filled the airwaves with nonsense while constructing a world that exalts triviality and amusement. Then again, perhaps my argument is nothing more than paranoia. It could be that new means of communication create different societies which are no better or worse than their predecessors.

But to quote another famous American, I believe it was Homer Simpson, who shrugged his shoulders and said, "I grew up watching TV and I turned out TV."

*Scott Gayzik is a regular columnist for the Collegiate Times.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Bible should not be used for definition of sins

The trouble with these religions in the 21st century is the following: The majority of Earth's population which practice those religions are based (in the Hollywood sense of the word) on an ancient, 2,000 year-old text. These populations no longer speak the language of the original text.

Most modern religious texts are comprised of multiple levels of translations (and the translator's prejudices) and a preacher's interpretations (and the preacher's prejudices).

Unfortunately, these texts are used to define the many, many, many cults and branches of such a religion.

Oh yeah, then there are people like King James and Hitler who go around declaring, "This is my religion; believe it — or die."

Don't deny this doesn't happen in today's world. To do so would show

your isolation.

As far as homosexuality being a sin is concerned, there are two problems.

First, nobody ever references the original 2,000 year-old text. Ever. This is because the common population majority no longer understands the language.

Second, this nation is supposed to be mature enough to respect the religious points of view of anyone, whatever their views may be.

So, if I religiously believe that my sexual orientation, who I have sex with and the obvious pre-marital sex are blessings given to me by my God, then everyone in this country is obligated to respect me for those beliefs — as much as I am forced to respect theirs.

This is, after all, why so many people moved to this island in the bloody first place — to get away from religious prejudice, tyranny and dictatorships.

My friends, we've come full circle, and Europe and Canada are now the lands of equal opportunity.

Grow up, United States of America.

**Matthew Poast**  
graduate student,  
computer engineering

### More pay is not the answer

In response to the column "Custodians deserve more respect, pay" (CT, Nov. 4), I'd like to point out a few problems in the arguments for better pay for the custodial staff at this university.

The first thing I'd like to point out is the author does a pretty good job defeating his own argument himself with the following two quotes: "The annual pay of the custodians, along with many state workers, will increase 2.25 percent in December," and "Currently, the excuse for not raising salaries may be the budget crisis."

How can someone tell you that salaries for some group should be higher in one breath, that they are being raised in the next breath, and follow it up with a statement like, "The current excuse for not raising salaries may be the budget crisis?"

This seems just a little preposterous. I'd like to counter some of his other arguments, the first being the difficult hours the custodial staff supposedly has to work. There are two parts to this argument: first, the earlier workday is

inherently worse than a 9-5 workday and second, the university is simply being mean by making their workday start at 5 a.m.

I'm sure that's not the case. Wouldn't it be much more plausible that the university is thinking about the classroom atmosphere and that having floor buffers running through your room in McBryde Hall during a history lecture is going to be more than a little disrupting?

As for those of us who work regular jobs at restaurants and bars downtown and who swipe our Hokie Passport at West End, well I'm pretty sure all those jobs are open to qualified applicants, not just students. Furthermore, I know my cooking/dishwashing job is no ivory tower compared to a custodial job, and I don't get government benefits — no health care, no dental, no nothing. Don't try to convince those of us who work we all have a bunch of slacker jobs for big dollars.

To further the author's unfair compensation claim, he makes the following arguments: "In order to sustain oneself, one needs to purchase food, clothing and shelter. Often simply to meet these needs, the custodians take on multiple jobs, thereby increasing the stress in their lives," and "Several of the custodians are the sole income-earner in moderately sized families."

To be blunt, this sounds a whole lot

like Karl Marx's "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Where is it your right to earn a suitable income from a single job?

I only have one job, should my wages be increased to an amount at which I could support a "moderately sized family?" I could demand this of my employer, at which point he would laugh and hire someone else.

The way the job market works is this: employers increase wages when they need more or better-qualified employees on their staff. They are not increased because someone else believes that one job is so crummy those holding the position simply deserve more money. Especially when the money is coming from the public sector, as it is for university employees.

The call for higher wages was a nice gesture, but ignorant all the same. Especially since, as the author originally stated, they are already getting a pay increase, despite the budget crisis.

In all seriousness, will the next column be an impassioned plea for more construction on this campus, because if we don't start building a new hall soon, we might never see cranes and scaffolding around here again?

**Jonathan Schlegel**  
senior, political science

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## Features

# Small town faces possible loss of city hall

by Mark Thiessen  
Associated Press

MASKELL, Neb. — Maskell's city hall is so small, board members have to go outside to change their minds. Pah-dum-DUM.

It's so small, not even this tale of woe could fit inside.

Joking aside, at 10 feet-by-10 feet — about the size of a large walk-in closet — Maskell likely has the nation's smallest city hall. It's the only public building this tiny northeast Nebraska village can afford, and it's fallen into disrepair through years of neglect.

The four men and two women who make up the Maskell town government are trying to secure grants to finish the two-year project to refurbish the 70-or-so-year-old structure and get a little recognition in the process by promoting their smallest-city-hall claim.

"I don't blame them — it's a good angle," said Betsy Bean, editor of the Acworth, Ga.-based Small Cities Publishing, which produces "best practices" publications for communities under 50,000 people.

Neither her organization, nor apparently any other, tracks the size of city halls. Officials with the National League of Cities and the International City/County Management Association said they don't keep those statistics.

## Birthday of Rock celebrated in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Memphis will mark the 50th anniversary of rock 'n' roll in 2004 with a yearlong celebration, city officials announced Wednesday.

Memphis, considered the birthplace of rock 'n' roll by many musicians and historians, is where Elvis Presley recorded the hit "That's All Right" at Sun Studio on July 5, 1954.

The city will host a series of events beginning New Year's Eve, and organizers are asking radio stations to simultaneously play "That's All Right" on July 5. Organizers hope it will mark the largest playing of a single song at the same moment in history.

Mayor Willie Herenton appointed musicians Isaac Hayes, B.B. King, Scotty Moore and Justin Timberlake to serve as "musical ambassadors" for Memphis.

Hayes is the Academy Award-winning composer of the musical score to the movie "Shaft." Moore played lead guitar for Presley on

all of his Sun Records recordings and Timberlake, a solo vocalist and 'N Sync member, is a Memphis native.

"Rock 'n' roll began in Memphis and the city continues to be a focal point of enormous musical creativity today," Hayes said.

"The blues and rock 'n' roll have always been closely connected, feeding off one another," said King, winner of five straight W.C. Handy Blues entertainer of the year awards. "It's that mixing of styles that has made Memphis such a fertile ground for musicians."

Other musical landmarks in Memphis include the Stax Recording Studio where Otis Redding recorded "Dock of the Bay," Presley's home Graceland, the Orpheum Theatre, the Gibson Guitar Factory and Beale Street, the music entertainment district and home to King's blues club.

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## The Strokes light it up with "Room of Fire"

**Alice Husak**

If you thought the buzz surrounding The Strokes has died down, get ready to be stung.

All five band members have returned with a refreshing sophomore release, Room on Fire, filled with the same raw and edgy sound that thrust these musicians into the mainstream two years ago.

Rolling Stone refers to them as, "the best young band on the planet," and this album does such a strong opinion great justice. Noticeably armed with a more mature array of compositions, the new album is contagious; think of Rolling Stones meets The Cars — this is going to blow the first album, Is This It?, away.

Filled with simple melodies, infectious bass lines and the same scratchy vocals, it's refreshing to finally have a rock band focus on simply playing the instruments, not so much the technological aspects of recording music. This is exactly what a follow-up album should sound like.

The best aspect of this album

could very well be that the band resisted the temptation to grow up and refine a sound that doesn't need changing. Room on Fire is truly a title that depicts the music on this record; it's fast, furious and full of excitement.

Nick Valensi's and Albert Hammond Jr.'s twanging guitars bounce and float above the head-bobbing rhythms of bassist Nikolai Fraiture and drummer Fabrizio Moretti.

Singer-songwriter Julian Casablancas resembles a young Mick Jagger parading his voice throughout the album as if it's got a strut all its own.

There's a lot of attitude in his alto efforts as he sings, in a key all his own, lyrics such as, "I'm not your friend, I never was" and songs such as "You Talk Way Too Much."

The songs are about as blunt and in-your-face as their titles, with no hints of a middleman on this record.

Cuts such as "The Way It Is" and "Meet me in the Bathroom" are filled with catchy rhythms and matching vocals as Casablancas' voice seems to lead the guitars in every which way, switching rhythms and

measures with practically each breath.

This is a CD that is sure to get things started, especially with anthems such as the first track, "What Ever Happened," which begins with Casablancas' pleading against the backbeat of Moretti's drums, "I want to be forgotten."

With this album about to hit stores and speakers everywhere, there is little chance of being forgotten anytime soon; The Strokes are here to stay. Tracks such Between Love and Hate are infectiously catchy rock/pop crossovers (picture Blondie with Iggy Pop on vocals) displaying a fine arrangement of punk aggression and a flagrant modernized sensibility.

One thing this band has left us waiting for is a ballad and surprisingly enough, 'Under Control' sneaks into the latter half of the album providing that room-temperature, mellowed out feeling; a nice contrast to the rest of the record.

The sound is far from the cries of meaningless thrashing guitars, it's clean and solid — a true display of the regeneration of rock music, which The Strokes has been credited to

re-vamping. Often compared to The Vines or The White Stripes (both whom also jumped on this retro-rock bandwagon), with its release of this album it's clear who the last band standing will be. Room on Fire is an infectious crowd-pleaser.

Whereas other bands in this genre have fans standing on one side of the fence between anarchy and art, The Strokes would probably much rather burn the entire thing to ashes and write a song about it. And if the past ever repeats itself, the whole nation would probably be singing along with them, torches in hand.

This is far from a bad thing, largely because The Strokes seem to be pathologically unable to write a song that isn't immediately catchy. They have achieved something many bands find impossible: to not sound like another phase or trend of music out there at the moment.

Is This It? proved this, and Room on Fire carries on that tradition in the same unique way.

*Alice Husak is a staff writer for the Collegiate Times*

## Show allows contestants to live out fantasies

■ The episodes will be broadcast on pay-per-view channels, with outtakes appearing on the special DVD release

by Anthony Breznican  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A new reality TV show asks the question: "Can YOU Be a Pornstar?"

Mary Carey, the porn actress who ran for California governor in the recent recall election, is among the hosts, joining fellow adult-film stars Tabitha Stevens and Ginger Lynn.

Silhouette Productions announced plans

Monday to shoot seven one-hour shows, with plans to start broadcasting on iN DEMAND Networks and other pay-per-view channels Jan. 8.

A group of 28 women will compete for a one-year contract with a major adult video distributor and a cash prize of \$100,000.

"It's going to be an R-rated version for pay-per-view," Silhouette Productions chief executive officer Harry Feingold told The Associated Press. "Obviously, there will be outtakes that will be hardcore," which will likely turn up on DVD release later.

"It's like 'Paradise Hotel,' when they go behind the scenes. Everybody wants to know what's going on. Well, here you see it," he said, referring to the Fox network reality series about young people trying to seduce each other.

In each episode, four women arrive at

a house in Los Angeles for photo shoots, interviews and "surprises," according to Silhouette. Viewers will help pick eight finalists for a 90-minute finale.

The statement promised "uninhibited nudity and sizzling sexuality," while the show's official website said it would feature "Real people having real sex!"

"Pay-per-view gives us the freedom to take reality television where it has never gone before," Feingold said. "The last stigma today for audiences isn't renting adult films, it's admitting it, and this series offers viewers a fun, behind-the-scenes look at the star-making process in a multi-billion dollar industry."

He added that the show is designed "not just for men, but for wives and girlfriends who enjoy both reality TV and adult entertainment."

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# How much more can Ramsey take?

by Joseph White  
Associated Press

ASHBURN — Patrick Ramsey was quick with an answer when asked what the Washington Redskins need to do to win Sunday's game against Seattle.

"I think we have to beat the blitz," he said with a chuckle.

Ramsey's constant pounding is no laughing matter, though, and there is growing concern it could mar the development of a promising young quarterback.

Ramsey has taken 26 of the Redskins' NFL-high 29 sacks allowed this season and hasn't gone start-to-finish for three straight games. He had to leave the 21-14 loss to Dallas twice — once to have his bruised forearm X-rayed and once to have his dislocated pinkie popped into place. Both injuries were on his non-throwing arm, so he was able to return to the game.

But at what cost? The second-year quarterback, according to coach Steve Spurrier, has developed a case of happy feet.

"He is sort of running around in the pocket at the times when he should be a little comfortable there," Spurrier said. "I think that's from guys coming free at him. Hopefully, we can get him more trusting the pocket, trusting the protection. To do that, we've got to give him protection."

The maturation of Ramsey is a key not only to this season, but the franchise also expects him to be the long-term solution to the quarterback turmoil of the last 10 years. Although he is young, he has earned respect for his strong arm, intelligence, levelheadedness and his ability to take a hit.

"I think around the league if you would ask who some of the tougher quarterbacks are, you might get Brett Favre and Patrick Ramsey," Seattle quarterback Matt Hasselbeck said.

But, sooner or later, the punishment has to take a toll. Even if Ramsey is physically able to run onto the field, at what point does he mentally become a skittish quarterback who looks more at the rushing linemen than his receivers when he's back in the pocket? And what kind of long-

term effect could that have?

"You're watching that," Seattle coach Mike Holmgren said. "If you even think that's beginning to happen, then you change your protections or you go to different plays. Instead of him getting him hit so much, I'd take the ball out of his hands. I'd run the ball."

Much blame has been levied on Spurrier for not taking that approach, for sticking to a pass-oriented offense that hasn't sufficiently accounted for blitzing linebackers and defensive backs. The Cowboys sent just about everyone, a pattern of success they copied from previous Washington opponents — and one sure to be emulated by Seattle this week.

"We're trying to protect him," Spurrier said. "We're trying to find a little scheme or two here or there that will help him."

Spurrier has been saying that every week for nearly two months, but left tackle Chris Samuels said this week the schemes haven't changed much at all.

Many NFL offenses beat the blitz by using the "hot read" — a quick throw to an advantageous one-on-one matchup. But that's not Spurrier's style.

The topic is so sensitive that the coach told his players not to discuss it Wednesday.

Still, Ramsey professes unqualified support for Spurrier's system, even though conventional wisdom now has the coach not lasting beyond this season. The Redskins (3-5) have lost four straight and are ranked 22nd in offense.

"You can't question it," Ramsey said. "We're running the system. It's been successful. We've just got to find a way to make that happen."

Ramsey also denied he is becoming tentative.

"I can't play the game that way," Ramsey said.

The only backup on the active roster is Tim Hasselbeck, who threw his first three NFL passes when Ramsey left the game temporarily against the Cowboys.

If he hopes to save the season, Spurrier has no choice but to stick with Ramsey.

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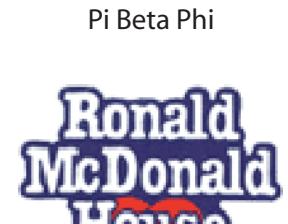


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# Fitzgerald: a tall order for the Hokies

by Rajan Nanavati  
Sports Editor

He stands 6 feet 3 inches, 225 pounds and he's not even 21 years old yet. He's being mentioned as the top wide receiver in football, if not the best player overall in all of college football. He is considered the clear-cut front runner for the Heisman Trophy, almost always reserved for seniors, and he's still a true sophomore.

This Saturday, he will be playing in just his 20th regular season game in his entire college career, but he's already scored 28 career touchdowns. He just set the NCAA record for most consecutive games with a touchdown pass, having caught one in 14 games in a row, including two or more touchdowns in six of the University of Pittsburgh's

eight games this season.

He is Pittsburgh's wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, and the mission for Virginia Tech cornerbacks Eric Green and Vincent Fuller, should they choose to accept it, is to try and stop the wide receiver which no corner in the nation has had success in doing so far.

Like the Tech secondary, Hokie fans remember Fitzgerald very well. Just a freshman then, Fitzgerald came into Blacksburg and terrorized the Tech defense to the tune of five catches, 105 yards and a career-high three touchdowns, including two on cornerback Fuller.

His great height advantage over the Tech corners made him an easy target for Pittsburgh quarterback Rod Rutherford to lob fade passes to in the red zone, which Fitzgerald caught



ALLISON JARNAGIN/SPPS

Fuller and the rest of the secondary will look to stop Fitzgerald, who burned the Hokies for three touchdowns last year.

for two touchdowns.

"He scored two touchdowns on me last season. Since that night, I've been looking for the opportunity to play against him again," Fuller said. "Hopefully, the outcome will be different this time. There's time where Rutherford just throws it up there and expects Fitzgerald to make the play so we have to try to stop that from happening."

Fuller and Green draw the unenviable task of having to stop Fitzgerald because cornerback DeAngelo Hall will not be playing the first half of Saturday evening's game. Hall was suspended after he and Miami cornerbacks Antrel Rolle got into a scuffle during Tech's 4th quarter win over the Hurricanes.

Even though Fitzgerald has single-handedly shredded entire defenses this season, let alone single coverage, Coach Frank Beamer does not plan to employ any types of double coverage on him. With his jumping ability, double coverage may not necessarily help the Tech defense cover Fitzgerald.

His lack of foot-speed, which is often described as pedestrian at best, will allow Tech's fleet corners to be able to stay stride for stride with him. However, not any corner or coverage scheme in the nation has been able to stop Fitzgerald's ability to out-leap opponents when the ball is in the air.

"I've never faced any one (like him) as far as a receiver that will go up and get the ball and catches everything. He's like a Randy Moss," Green said. "You throw the deep ball, Fitzgerald is going to go up and get it. Everything you look at, he does it excellent. He has no weaknesses."

This season alone, Fitzgerald

already has over 1,170 yards receiving in just eight games and leads the nation in both receiving yards per game and touchdowns by a single player. He has scored three touchdowns in two separate games this season, including Pittsburgh's 35-31 loss to the University of Toledo. In fact, in six of Pittsburgh's eight games, Fitzgerald has scored more than one touchdown.

He also provides a stark contrast to the dangerous receivers Tech faced and shut down, for the most part, in their victory over the University of Miami. Miami's receivers were more diminutive and possessed elite speed, relying on these assets to make plays after the catch.

Pittsburgh quarterback Rutherford, in contrast, loves to let his bigger receivers find a crease in the defense and let his receivers attack the ball as he places it where only his teammates can catch it.

He has 25 touchdown passes for the year, with over 60 percent of them going to Fitzgerald. To combat this, Tech would like to put the same kind of pressure on Rutherford that they were able to put on Miami's Brock Berlin.

"If we can get our defensive linemen to put pressure on Rutherford like we did last week against Miami, he's going to have some trouble throwing the ball to (Fitzgerald)," Green said.

"We can use anything to help us limit this guy catching the ball."

But one thing has become very apparent to the Tech secondary after watching hours of film on Fitzgerald.

"He's the best receiver in college football," Fuller said. "Definitely."

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# Tattoos, jewelry part of Kobe Bryant's new image

by Beth Harris  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES, CA — Kobe Bryant built an image on and off the court as clean-cut and well-mannered and quickly became a role model who earned millions in endorsements.

As his eighth and most scrutinized NBA season begins, he is expressing himself in ways fans and teammates hadn't seen. He has new tattoos and a diamond earring the size of a marble, and he rides a motorcycle. He's also constantly surrounded by security guards and frequently refers to God.

The changes to Bryant's appearance and persona came during a tumult-filled offseason, when he was charged with sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman in Colorado.

Teammates say they don't know whether Bryant's new image is related to his legal trouble or just part of growing into adulthood for a player who entered the NBA straight out of high

school.

"What you've seen is just a continual understanding of himself and his likes and dislikes and a willingness to be a little more true to himself and not so concerned about what every one else thinks," teammate Rick Fox said.

Derek Fisher, a rookie with Bryant in 1996, sees the tattoos as a way for Bryant to assert himself outside the tightly controlled world in which he lives.

"I think he also wants to let people know that he is an adult, that he can make his own choices and people have to respect that," Fisher said.

Bryant's tattoos on his right arm extend from his shoulder to the elbow: a crown, his wife Vanessa's name, a halo and angel wings above Psalm XXVII. His daughter Natalia Diamante's name is in script inside his lower left arm.

"This is a crown for my queen," he has said of his wife. "She's my angel. She's a blessing to me, her and Natalia."

He has worn an earring in the past, but his current one is so big his earlobe practically droops, and it's comparable to the \$4 million diamond ring he gave his wife shortly after he was charged in Colorado.

The Lakers say they have no problem with Bryant riding a motorcycle, something many NBA contracts prohibit.

"Kobe grew up in Italy, so fast cars and racing, we always knew he had a fetish for that," Fisher said. "Definitely no fear of high speeds."

Bryant was raised in a religious, upper middle-class household in Italy and later in suburban Philadelphia. He's always been polite and respectful, qualities that worked against him in an unsuccessful venture into rap music a few years ago with lyrics that were considered too clean.

His longtime position as a role model and product pitchman worth millions in endorsements hasn't allowed him room for much individual growth, his teammates and marketing experts say.

"He's growing up," said Michael Sands, a media and marketing consultant in Los Angeles. "He's learning to be his own person by not being emotionally tied to his parents."

Only one of Bryant's sponsors — Italian hazelnut-chocolate spread maker Nutella — has dumped him since the sexual assault charge, but none currently airs his commercials. He has a multimillion-dollar sneaker deal with Nike and contracts with Sprite, McDonald's and Spalding.

"I don't think this is really going to hurt him that much," Sands said, assuming Bryant is acquitted at trial of the charges. "He's coming clean, he's showing up. He's respectful of the law, and that's important to a sponsor."

Since his arrest in July, Bryant has frequently cited God as one of his guiding principles.

He has recited some of the words of the scriptures inscribed on his arm, among them the Psalm of David, which reads in part: "Teach me Your way, O

Lord, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me."

"I'm sure he's always had those beliefs or that faith, but sometimes it takes something bad happening or something you wish didn't happen to get you back to a point where you put that first again," said Fisher, a devout Christian. "Maybe that's what he's going through."

Fox believes Bryant is leaning on the foundation on which he was raised as he searches for answers during a chaotic time in his life.

"Obviously, something is working for him because he's been able to come out here and continue to push through the pressure that's mounted outside the court as well as on the court," Fox said.

Despite the turbulence in his life and his new look, Bryant doesn't seem to have lost much support among long-time Lakers fans, who still cheer him loudly at home games.

## No. 23 Hokies extinguish Flames, 7-1

by Jana Renn  
Sports Assistant

After getting off to a slow start, the No. 23 Virginia Tech men's soccer team came back to pick up a 7-1 win over the Liberty University Flames Tuesday at the Tech Soccer Stadium in their regular season finale.

The Hokies couldn't seem to muster up any offense in the first period, taking only three shots on goal out of 18 total shots. The lack of precision allowed the hustling Flames to jump out to a 1-0 lead when David Guillen scored off of a pass from Marko Parenta in the 27th minute of play.

"We were rusty in the first because we weren't as concentrated," said Tech head coach Oliver Weiss. "(At halftime), I appealed to their integrity and said 'Look, you need to do the things that we always do which make us good, which is working hard.' (Liberty) outworked us in the first half and they deservedly went up. We needed to start doing the little things: be crispier on passing, be more alert and focus better."

The Hokies took Weiss' words to heart and lit the Flames' defense up for seven goals in the second period.

Tech tied the score at 1-1 in the 52nd minute of play when Dustin Dyer took an indirect penalty kick to the net. Brent Dillie got the assist on the score. The goal created a bit of controversy because the score

came on a retry, since a Liberty defender stepped across too early on the first kick that was blocked.

Eight minutes later, the Hokies struck again when Scott Spangler scored from the front of the goal off of a header from Ken Jonnaire. Charlie Howe was also credited with an assist on the score.

From that point on, Tech couldn't be stopped. The Flames lost focus and allowed the Hokies to score five more goals, including three in the final 10 minutes of play, to run away with a blowout.

Bobby O'Brien, Ben Nason, Bailey Allman, Peer Rogge and Mohamed Said scored those goals for Tech. The senior O'Brien's goal was his team leading 10th of the season, while the freshman Said's was the first of his career.

"We can score goals in a matter of minutes against anybody," Weiss said. "(Liberty) played a very good match tonight up until the point where the bottom broke. They were probably as uncentered (in the second period) as we were in the first."

Throughout the night, the Flames often got distracted by referee calls they didn't agree with. Both Bo Fisher and head coach Jeff Adler were yellow carded during the game for Liberty when they let their tempers get the best of them.

The Hokies' next game is Sunday when Providence comes to town for a first round Big East Conference championship game. The contest will get underway at 1 p.m. at the Tech Soccer Stadium.

## New Orleans to host all-star game

■ An all-star game, aimed at showcasing players from historically black schools, will start next year

by Brett Martel  
Associated Press

Alabama (except last season because of sponsorship problems).

But all players will be selected from historically black colleges or universities, such as Grambling State, defending champion of the Southwestern Athletic Conference.

About 90 current NFL players — includ-

ing Steve McNair, Jerry Rice, Shannon Sharpe and Michael Strahan — attended historically black colleges or universities, also called HBCUs.

Grambling coach Doug Williams also played at Grambling before joining the NFL and eventually leading the Washington Redskins to a Super Bowl XXII victory.

"The contributions have been there," said Harvey, an HBCU spokesman.

"The goal is for the HBCU to provide the information and knowledge to step into the pro ranks."

Harvey said a number of current or former NFL play-

**"The contributions have been there. The goal is for the HBCU to provide the information and knowledge to step into the pro ranks."**

**Richard Harvey**  
HBCU spokesman

ers have expressed interest in helping put on the HBCU event, and that negotiations are ongoing with several major sponsors.

There are about 105 colleges with HBCU status nationwide, about 43 of which have football programs. Most of the schools are in the Southeast.

Harvey did not attend a historically black college, but spent much of his life in the Southeast. He is a Mississippi native who played in college at Tulane and spent part of his pro career with the New Orleans Saints.

New Orleans, also home to the Bayou Classic involving Grambling and Southern, is the perfect place to host an HBCU all-star game, Harvey said, both because of where the city is and because of how much people enjoy visiting.

"When I talk to NFL guys about participating, the first thing they say is, 'Where's it being held? New Orleans? I'm there!'"

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Tuesday, November 11, 2003

# Hooffest excites fans for upcoming year

■ Tech basketball fans had a chance to interact with members of the 2003-04 men's basketball team last Saturday at Cassell Coliseum

by Erica Hampton  
Staff Writer

Virginia Tech's basketball teams participated in their first annual Hooffest Saturday to kick off the upcoming season. The event had a huge turnout of fans, eager to see what's in store for the future of Hokie basketball.

The High Techs and the Tech cheerleaders were in front of Cassell Coliseum welcoming the fans and giving away pom-poms. The Hokie Bird was also present, taking pictures with adoring fans.

The first 500 fans received free Hooffest t-shirts, and all fans received poster-sized schedules to get autographed by the men's and women's basketball teams.

The players and coaches were eager to meet their fans and to sign autographs.

"It's a great day to be a Hokie," said men's head coach Seth Greenberg.

Many of the athletes held conversations with fans and answered any questions that were asked of them. Concerned fans asked players such as Carlos Dixon and Jamon Gordon about their injury conditions and when they would be back on the court.

The Tech cheerleaders opened up the second half of Hooffest with Hokie pride and the High Techs followed with a performance from Thriller.

To get the crowd even more involved, activities such as a three-point contest were held.

Two Lady Hokies and two Hokie men teamed up with selected contestants to see which team could make the most three-point shots. The winner received a \$25 gift

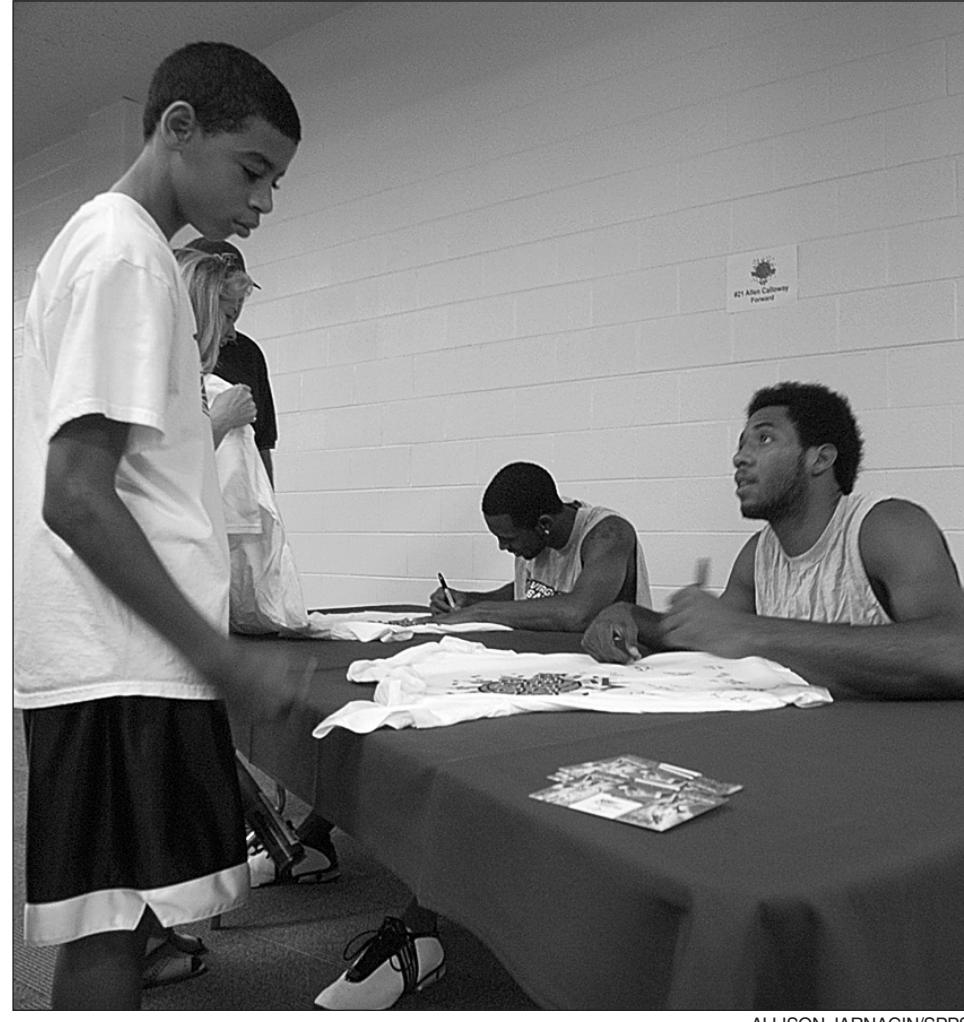
certificate to Famous Anthony's.

The next contest was the Hokie luck shot contest where contestants shot from various spots on the court marked by the word Hokies. Various prizes were given to the contestants that made the shots.

Finally, the men's and women's teams were introduced. Fans showed their

appreciation through cheers and standing ovations for the players and coaches. Both Greenberg and women's head coach Bonnie Henrickson said they are ready to make the season a success.

The Hokies' next exhibition tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. Nov. 17 against Interhoop at Cassell Coliseum.



ALLISON JARNAGIN/SPPS

**Players from both the men's and women's teams spent their Saturday afternoon with Tech hoop fans signing autographs and handing out prizes.**

# Marlins catcher Castro to stand trial for rape

by Charles Sheehan  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Florida Marlins catcher Ramon Castro was ordered Wednesday to stand trial on charges he raped a woman in his hotel room in August.

A magistrate made the ruling after Castro's accuser testified during a preliminary hearing. The 28-year-old woman said she met Castro at the hotel's bar after a game between the Marlins and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

She said she went to his room with another couple in the early morning hours of Aug. 28, and that Castro asked the other couple to leave, then attacked her.

Castro's attorney, J. Alan Johnson, said his client is innocent and that hotel surveillance tapes will eventually prove that. Castro was allowed to remain free until trial, which wasn't immediately scheduled.

Castro, a 27-year-old married father of two, was arrested after the woman went to police with her story. He was charged with rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent assault, sexual assault and unlawful restraint.

The rape charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 to 40 years in prison, though under state sentencing guidelines it's unlikely Castro would receive such a sentence if he were convicted.

Johnson said he has hired investigators to review the case and said the "time element" of the woman's accusations was crucial.

A third-string catcher used mostly as a pinch hitter, Castro hit .283 with 5 home runs and 8 RBI in just 53 at-bats last season.

He didn't play during the World Series, which the Marlins won after beating the New York Yankees.



The Collegiate Times is hiring for associate sports editor and sports assistant for spring semester 2004. Application deadline: Nov. 14, 2003. Visit www.collegiatetimes.com/jobs for more information.

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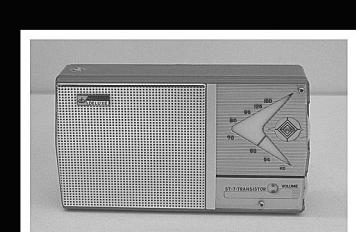
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