

Tuesday

COLLEGIATE TIMES

101st Year, No. 6 • Blacksburg, Virginia • September 2, 2003

An independent student-run newspaper serving the Virginia Tech community since 1903

www.collegiatetimes.com



ROBERT DRAKE/SPPS

Tech running back Kevin Jones (25) is dragged down by a gang of UCF defenders. Jones gained 83 yards on 22 carries. He also scored on touchdown runs of 1 and 18 yards. Jones left the game with a leg injury, but should be ready to play James Madison University next week.

Hokies light up Knights, 49-28

by Rajan Nanavati
Sports Editor

Fortunately for the Virginia Tech Hokies, the "sleeping giant" University of Central Florida team came into the game Sunday having set their alarm clocks a few hours late. The Hokies used nearly flawless execution to jump to a 28-0 lead just 22 minutes into the game and held off a UCF rally to win 49-28.

"Overall, I'm proud of the way our football team played," said Tech head coach Frank Beamer. "We were executing great. It was very pleasing to see our football team come out so sharp."

Tech's offense had a field day with a talented UCF defense, racking up over 530 yards on offense—380 of those through the air. Incumbent starting quarterback Bryan Randall and upstart Marcus Vick threw completed passes to 11 different receivers on the day and had four touchdown passes between the two of them.

Randall finished 22-28 for 278 yards and three touchdown passes, along with no interceptions, while Vick completed his first four passes consecutively, finishing 7 of 10 for 102 yards and a touchdown pass.

Vick saw his first action as a collegiate quarterback early in the second quarter of the game and drove the offense into the UCF red zone, after which running back Kevin Jones capped the drive with an 18-yard run for a touchdown. Vick also played the last few series of the game once the match up was in hand and threw a beautiful 27-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver David Clowney.

Both quarterbacks looked comfortable running the Tech offense and used any outlet receivers they could find to help direct the offense up and down the defense of the Golden Knights.

When either quarterback was in doubt, they

found reliable wide receiver Ernest Wilford, who led the team with nine catches for 96 yards on the day.

Fellow receiver Richard Johnson looked very sharp, catching four passes for 48 yards. This included a short catch where he outmaneuvered most of the Golden Knights defense en route to a 21-yard touchdown in the first quarter. Receiver Justin Hamilton also caught a seven-yard touchdown pass from Randall on a slant pattern, recording his first collegiate touchdown.

"Bryan and Marcus both did a good job of putting the ball where it could be caught," Beamer said. "We strive for balance. I've always wanted to be a good throwing team."

Jones led the Hokies on the ground, gaining 88 yards on 22 carries and two touchdowns. The team suffered a scare when Jones injured his shin in the third quarter, but both Jones and the team believe he'll be absolutely fine for Saturday's game.

After Jones finished off the Hokies' opening drive by scoring a touchdown from one yard out, the Hokies got the ball back quickly, courtesy of their defense, and returned the favor with seven additional points. The team marched 62 yards on nine plays in just under four minutes, capped off by Johnson's 21-yard catch and run that upped the team to 14-0.

After another three and out by UCF, Tech opened the second quarter picking up where they left off, moving the ball 76 yards in four and a half minutes, going up 21-0 as a result of Hamilton's touchdown reception.

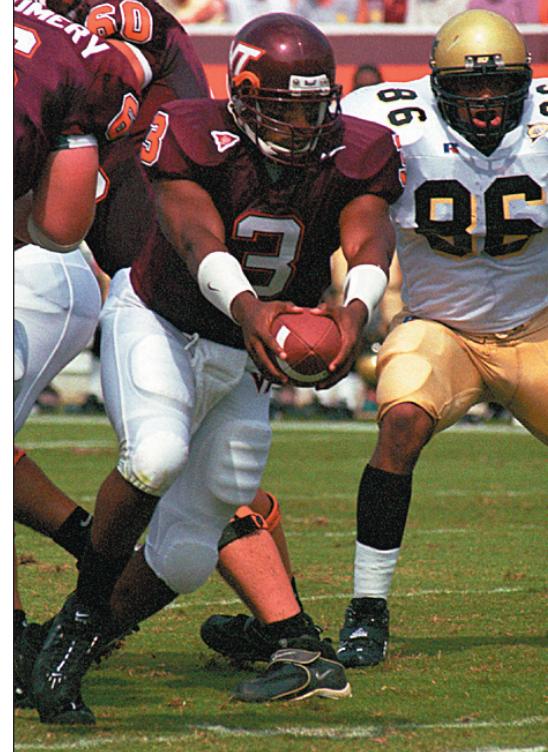
After Jones' second touchdown of the afternoon, which gave Tech a cushy 28-0 lead, the Golden Knights gave the Hokies a scare, outplaying them badly for the rest of the second and most of the third quarter.

UCF quarterback Ryan Schneider, along with

running back Alex Haynes and receiver Tavaris Capers harassed the Tech defense, helping the visitors fight back to cut the score to 28-21, with momentum seemingly in their favor.

At perhaps the most critical moment of the game, with Tech nursing their seven-point lead, Randall

See **HOKIES**, page 8



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPPS

Bryan Randall completed 22 of his 28 passes for 278 yards and 3 touchdowns.

Latino group suing universities

■ The suit will challenge the use of immigration status in admission policies for several Virginia schools

by Eric Beidel
News Assistant

A Latino civil rights group based in Washington, D.C. will announce a lawsuit this week against several officials from Virginia universities. The suit challenges the use of immigration status in admission policies.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund along with co-counsel from Arnold and Porter's Washington, D.C. law firm, will hold a press conference at 10 a.m. Wednesday at the U.S. District Court in Alexandria to announce the lawsuit.

According to a MALDEF press release, the lawsuit will target various public universities and colleges, "which deny qualified students the right to attend . . . based on the student's perceived immigration status."

No information was given as to which universities MALDEF's lawsuit will target.

Karen Torgersen, director of undergraduate admissions at Virginia Tech, said she was not aware of the impending announcement and she has seen nothing to suggest Tech will be part of the suit.

Tech receives applications from students of undocumented immigration status very rarely, Torgersen said, who could not remember any in the recent past.

When an application containing questionable citizenship comes through, it is treated like any other at

See **SUING**, page 2

Tech grad one of America's sexiest

by Kate Lynch
Editorial Assistant

"No one can be the sexiest man in America," said Andrew Springer laughing. But whether he believes it or not, the public has spoken.

Springer, a 2002 Virginia Tech graduate, is one of five finalists in ABC's "All My Children's Search for the Sexiest Man In America."

Twenty-five men were picked from around the country and placed in groups of five for the public to vote from. The winner from each group made it to the group of five finalists that will appear on the soap opera in two weeks. The ultimate winner will have another appearance on "All My Children."

A native of Burke, Springer gradu-

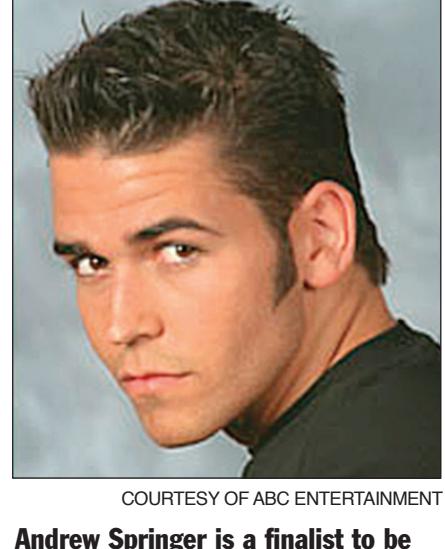
ated on the dean's list with a degree in business information technology. He currently works as a substitute teacher and a bartender; before this acting opportunity, he had hoped to become a firefighter.

Springer said he does not see his future including sitting at a desk and views fire-fighting as a job that has both mentally and physically rewarding aspects, where the ultimate goal is to help people.

Springer, who has no previous acting experience, entered the contest at the urging of his mother. After he was selected, he made a thirty-second television promo, which included what he found sexy in a woman.

"I'd say one of the sexiest things you

See **GRAD**, page 3



COURTESY OF ABC ENTERTAINMENT

Andrew Springer is a finalist to be the Sexiest Man in America.

Beamer suspends Vick, Manning

■ Redshirt freshman quarterback Marcus Vick and junior linebacker Brandon Manning are suspended for violating team policy

STAFF — Marcus Vick and Brandon Manning have been suspended by Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer for Saturday's game against James Madison University.

Both Vick, a redshirt freshman quarterback, and Manning, a red-shirt junior linebacker, were suspended for a violation of team policies.

Bryan Johnston, assistant sports information director, would not comment on if the suspensions were related.

He also would not comment if the suspensions were related to the suspension of right tackle Jon Dunn from Sunday's game against the University of Central Florida.

Vick, making his collegiate debut, completed 7 of 10 passes in Sunday's game, for 102 yards and a touchdown.

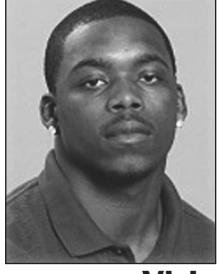
During his first drive behind center, Vick engineered a seven play, 80-yard drive that was capped off by an 18-yard touchdown run by Kevin Jones. Vick did not see action again until early in the fourth quarter, where he led the Hokies on an 11-play, 80-yard drive, culminating with a 27-yard touchdown reception by freshman David Clowney.

Manning, who started 13 games in 2002, led the Hokies with 8 tackles and assisted Vegas Robinson on one of the defense's three sacks against UCF.

Chris Clifton, who saw limited playing time in Sunday's game, will backup Bryan Randall.

Clifton was recruited as a quarterback out of high school, and has since converted to wide receiver.

Redshirt freshman Aaron Rouse will start at linebacker, and be backed up by redshirt junior James Anderson.



Vick

Technology helps curb auto accidents

■ The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute shared in an event on intersection collision avoidance

by Bryan Nieder
News Assistant

A summer demonstration presented by a nationally-recognized Virginia Tech research group will lead to additional research that may impact signalized intersections across the country.

The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute shared a demonstration focusing on intersection collision avoidance with transportation experts at The National Intelligent Vehicle Meeting and Demonstration in June.

The event, held in Washington D.C., was covered by 184 local and national media outlets, including CNN, NBC and CBS International.

Because of the meeting, VTTI is now targeting research into intersection crashes caused by stop-sign and traffic-signal violations — specifically "straight crossing path" crashes resulting from drivers continuing through a red light and colliding with a crossing vehicle, said Vicki Neale, leader of VTTI's

safety and human factors engineering group.

Neale said research is showing 27 percent of police-reported crashes around the country are the result of intersection accidents.

She said the major cause of these accidents is distracted drivers, with some estimates reporting up to 58 percent of the crashes resulting from them.

Tech is looking at infrastructure solutions rather than in-vehicle approaches to combat the problem, Neale said.

One of the prevention possibilities is outfitting signalized intersections with technology allowing it to determine a vehicle's location and speed.

After recording the information, it will warn the driver by using a specialized LED stop sign with strobe lights if it predicts the driver will cross the intersection during a red phase.

Also, intelligent rumble strips are being considered as a possibility to draw a driver's attention to the imminent red-light violation by raising to street level when necessary.

Through VTTI's Intersection Collision Avoidance (ICAV) project, an in-vehicle system is being researched that will allow vehicles to communicate with these inter-

See **TRAFFIC**, page 4

News in Brief

Three Outback employees slain at restaurant

TEXARKANA, Texas (AP) — Three employees were found shot to death inside an Outback Steakhouse early Monday, police said.

Officers were sent to the restaurant at about 3 a.m. after receiving a call from the wife of manager Matt Hines.

The woman, whose name wasn't released, said her husband hadn't come home and she wasn't able to contact him at the restaurant, Presley said.

Police identified the victims as Hines, 31, Chrissy Willis, 23, and Rebecca Shifflet, 24.

Israelis criticize treatment in U.S.

A groundbreaking Israeli commission of inquiry found police used excessive force in quelling Arab riots three years ago and said in a stinging report released Monday that the Jewish state has systematically neglected its Arab minority.

The document — the product of three years of investigation — was based on the testimony of 377 witnesses and only the fifth probe of such scope in Israel's history.

The panel's findings came as Israeli-Palestinian violence flared anew Monday.

Charity increases money to victims

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — A

Libyan charity said Monday it would increase payments to families of those killed in a 1989 terror attack on a French airliner, a gesture Libya hopes will persuade France to agree to lift U.N. sanctions.

States go to court over water rights

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — After failing to reach a water-sharing agreement with Alabama and Georgia, Florida said Monday it will ask the courts to decide how much water each state should receive from the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin.

The issue concerns the water needs of metropolitan Atlanta, farms in southwest Georgia and the oyster-rich Apalachicola Bay in Florida, which supplies 90 percent of Florida's oysters and 10 percent of the nation's.

Labor Day used against Arnold

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Gov. Gray Davis and the candidates seeking to replace him in California's recall election used the Labor Day holiday to cross-cross the state and take their shots at front-running Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Davis accused Schwarzenegger on Monday of being a stand-in for former Republican Gov. Pete Wilson, who had been an opponent of labor during his eight years in office.

Israeli helicopters fire missiles at car

by Ibrahim Barzak
Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli helicopters fired four missiles at a car carrying Hamas militants Monday, killing at least one of them and wounding 26 on a crowded Gaza City street in the sixth such attack in two weeks.

Three men were in the car, witnesses said, and at least one got away.

Israel has been waging war on Hamas in retaliation for a deadly suicide bombing that killed 21 people on a Jerusalem bus Aug. 19. With Monday's attack, 14 Palestinians, including at least 10 Hamas members, have been killed in missile strikes.

A cease-fire declared June 29 by Hamas and other militant

groups collapsed shortly after the bus attack, when Israel killed a senior Hamas leader, Ismail Abu Shanab, in a helicopter missile strike.

Hoping to arrange a new truce, Egyptian leaders staged talks Sunday in Cairo between Hamas representative Osama Hamdan and Palestinian Authority legislator Ziad Abu Amr, a Palestinian official close to the talks said Monday.

It was the first known meeting between the two sides since the Palestinians broke contact with Hamas after Aug. 19 suicide bombing. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the contacts would continue and that both sides have presented ideas for a renewed cease-fire.

Hamas leaders have gone into hiding with the Israeli

strikes and could not immediately be reached for comment.

In Monday's attack, missiles hit the small car as it moved along a crowded side street in downtown Gaza City.

Salman Abu Nour, 42, said he was working in his printshop when the missiles hit. "I rushed outside, and saw a car like a ball of fire. I brought my fire extinguisher and helped people to fight the fire," he said.

The man killed was identified as Khader Houssre, a 36-year-old Hamas member, said hospital spokesman Gomma Saka.

The missile strike came as army chief Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon was quoted as telling Cabinet that Israel is prepared to send an infantry brigade into the Gaza Strip to stop Hamas rocket fire.

Troops also critically wounded a 15-year-old Palestinian in a clash with stone-throwing youngsters Monday, as more than 1 million Palestinian students in the West Bank and Gaza returned to classes. The Israeli military eased restrictions in some of the reoccupied West Bank towns to allow Palestinians to get to school.

In the city of Nablus, hundreds of students threw stones at tanks and jeeps in several locations. Troops fired tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to disperse the crowds, witnesses said.

A Palestinian threw a firebomb at a tank near the main square, where about 70 stone-throwers were assembled. The top of the tank caught fire, said Palestinian rescue worker Ala Ararat, who saw the incident.

Suing: Admissions' investigations are limited

Continued from page 1

first, Torgersen said.

"We go ahead and process the application, and we might offer them admission," she said.

However, before the university can go through with the enrollment process, Torgersen said they would need to see documentation such as a green card or a visa.

"It's not really a policy, it's a law," Torgersen said. "If anybody were to sue me in the capacity of admissions director, they would be suing the state."

Additionally, if an illegal immigrant were to check "U.S. citizen" on his college application, Torgersen said the admissions office doesn't jump to investigate the situation.

"What I assume sometimes happens at schools is that students who are not citizens may be checking 'U.S. citizen,'" she said. "But there is no way to tell at that point."

MALDEF said the admission policies being challenged are the result of a Sept. 5, 2002 memorandum issued by Virginia Attorney General Jerry Kilgore.

According to MALDEF's press release, the memorandum called for public institutions to deny enrollment to Virginia residents perceived to be undocumented and to report such cases to the newly formed Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, formerly the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The attorney general's office was unavailable for comment.

"Many of the students affected by these

admission policies have lived most of their lives in Virginia, having been brought to the United States by their parents through no choice of their own," MALDEF said in a press release.

MALDEF's announcement comes as Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, plans to push the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors, or DREAM Act in Congress, which could possibly make citizens of 50,000 children of undocumented workers in the United States.

"These children have lived the American dream and they deserve the opportunity to realize their potential through a college education and give their talent back to their local communities," said MALDEF staff attorney Jim Ferg-Cadima.

MALDEF's Washington, D.C. office was also unavailable for further comment.

STOCK MARKET REPORT

— 9/01/2003 —

DJIA	9415.82	▲ 41.61
NASDAQ	1810.45	▲ 10.27
S&P 500	1008.01	0.00

WEATHER



TODAY
Cloudy with chance of showers
Highs: 80° - 85°



TONIGHT
Partly cloudy with chance of t-storms
Lows: 60° - 65°



WEDNESDAY
Mostly cloudy with chance of showers
Highs: 75° - 80°



WEDNESDAY NIGHT
Mostly cloudy with chance of showers
Lows: 60° - 65°



THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with chance of showers
60°/80°



FRIDAY
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60°/75°

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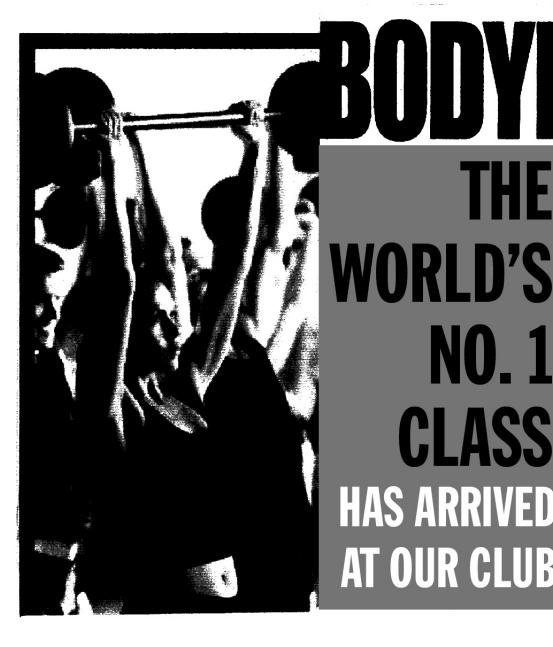
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Cassell Coliseum



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Tape: Saddam denies bombing

by Steven Hurst
Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — As a huge funeral procession for a beloved Shiite cleric marched to the holy city of Najaf, Arab TV broadcast an audiotape Monday purportedly from Saddam Hussein denying any involvement in the bombing that killed the moderate ayatollah.

The U.S.-picked Iraqi Governing Council, meanwhile, named a new Cabinet in a step toward reclaiming some powers from the American occupiers. The new government mirrors the ethnic and religious makeup of the 25-member council.

The voice on the tape appeared to be that of Saddam and employed his well-known rhetorical flourishes in urging Iraqis not to believe those who blamed him and his followers for Friday's attack on the sacred Imam Ali shrine in Najaf that killed Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim and 124 other people.

"Many of you may have heard the snakes hissing, the servants of the invaders, occupiers, infidels, and how they have managed to accuse the followers of Saddam Hussein of responsibility for the attack on al-Hakim without any evidence," said the tape, broadcast by the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera satellite television station and the Lebanese Broadcasting Corp.

"They rushed to accuse before investigating," the voice said.

While denying a role in the Najaf bombing, the voice made no mention of the Jordanian Embassy bombing on Aug. 7 or the U.N. headquarters attack 12 days later, which investigators

suspect may have also been committed by Saddam followers.

It was impossible to immediately authenticate the tape. The CIA said Monday it was reviewing the recording.

Al-Hakim, killed in Friday's huge blast shortly after delivering a sermon calling for Iraqi unity, was a longtime opponent of Saddam and spent more than two decades in exile in Iran, returning only in May.

His remains are to be buried in Najaf on Tuesday when the funeral procession reaches the ayatollah's hometown. It started in Baghdad on Sunday and passed through the second holiest city of Karbala on Monday.

Masses of Iraqi security forces were present Monday throughout Najaf, the country's holiest Shiite city, with 400 police preparing to take up positions around the mosque. U.S. forces could not be seen in the city proper and were believed manning checkpoints on roads into Najaf.

Black banners of mourning, some 150 feet long, were draped across the gold-domed mosque. People could be heard crying inside the shrine.

Some Iraqi police officials leading the investigation of the bombing have said they believe al-Qaida linked Islamic militants were behind the attack — not Saddam loyalists. The FBI said it would help investigate the bombing after receiving a request from local officials.

Also Monday, Iraq's 25-member Governing Council announced a Cabinet, which mirrored exactly the council's ethnic and religious breakdown with 13 Shiites, five Sunni Arabs, five Kurds (also Sunnis), one ethnic Turk and an Assyrian Christian.

"Many of you may have heard the ... occupiers, infidels, and how they have managed to accuse the followers of Saddam Hussein ... for the attack on al-Hakim without any evidence."

audiotape purportedly from Saddam Hussein

Convicted sex offender captured

ROANOKE (AP) — A convicted pedophile who disappeared in mid-July and has been hunted by the U.S. Marshals Service ever since was taken into custody Saturday in Haiti, U.S. Attorney John Brownlee said.

Authorities said Sunday that they expect Mario "Tony" Leyva, 56, to serve the remain-

der of his 20-year federal prison sentence, about nine years, for conspiring to molest dozens of boys across the south.

U.S. Marshals began hunting for Leyva, 56, after he apparently fled his temporary home at the Jefferson Motor Lodge in Roanoke on July 14.

He was discovered missing by a probation officer who

came to check on him the next day.

Leyva told the manager of the motor lodge that he had been given permission by police to travel to Hendersonville, N.C., to visit his ailing mother, Brownlee said, adding that he did not know if Leyva actually went to North Carolina.

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Traffic: VTI weighs options

Continued from page 1

section-based systems and further reduce human error by alerting a driver of a stop sign or signal using an audible alarm within the vehicle.

Neale said VTTI would develop the intersection-based system, while car manufacturers would have to provide the vehicular aspect once the system is in place.

Presently, passive signs such as flashing and non-flashing intersection signs are the only warnings available to drivers.

Neale said these signs present trouble when drivers speed up in hopes of crossing the intersection before a red phase.

"We have to make sure we aren't causing more accidents by giving too much information," Neale said.

The demonstration displayed what kind of options were out there for preventing intersection collisions by giving a "proof of concept," Neale said.

"Our attempt is to say that the technology is there, and we just need to know how and when to do it."

It is VTTI's hope that within five years the technology will be available and that once completed, the systems will probably be placed at intersections with high crash rates rather than at every signalized spot due to budget constraints, Neale said.

VTTI partnered with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Transportation Research Council in the collision-avoidance study.

The Federal Highway Commission has funded the research through 2005, which will cost approximately \$2 million, Neale said.

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Rev. Jesse Jackson arrested

by Matt Apuzzo
Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The Rev. Jesse Jackson and 13 people were arrested Monday after they blocked traffic on the Yale University campus in support of striking university service and clerical workers.

Jackson led more than 1,000 people on a Labor Day march and rally in support of the striking workers before he was arrested.

"This is the site of national Labor Day outrage," Jackson said. "This is going to be for economic justice what Selma was for the right to vote."

The march ended in a rally at Yale's Beinecke Plaza and Woodbridge Hall, which houses university President Richard Levin's office. Police said 1,000 to 1,500 people marched with Jackson, including Connecticut Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz, who graduated from Yale, and state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, a Yale Law School graduate.

Jackson and about 30 others then blocked traffic. To the cheers of protesters, Jackson was the first to be handcuffed. The demonstrators were expected to be charged with disorderly conduct.

Intermittent rain dampened the Yale demonstrators, part of a band of wet, stormy weather that stretched southwestward to Texas. Rain also put a damper on holiday beach outings in parts of Hawaii, which was on the northern edge of Tropical Storm Jimena, downgraded from a hurricane early in the morning.

In Detroit, union members and supporters faced the rainy weather to march downtown to celebrate Labor Day and call attention to the chal-

lenges faced by American workers in a struggling economy.

The parade ended at the recently unveiled Michigan Labor Legacy monument in Hart Plaza, which symbolizes the continuing spirit of organized labor and the importance of unions to the region's history.

"We're very concerned about this economy," said Patrick Devlin, secretary-treasurer of the Greater Detroit Building and Construction Trades Council. "People talk about the economy picking up, but we don't see it."

The biggest celebration in New York City was the annual West Indian Day parade, which this year honored slain Councilman James Davis as marchers wound through his district in Brooklyn. Davis was shot to death in City Hall on July 23 by a one-time political rival.

The parade is famous for outrageous and colorful costumes, and bodies painted in colors representing the flags of the various countries of the West Indies. One woman, wearing a short dress, had her face and arms painted in the colors of Jamaica — yellow, green and black.

At Yale, the service and clerical workers from two Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International locals walked off the job Wednesday in a dispute over wages, job security and pension benefits.

The unions represent about 4,000 clerical, technical and service and maintenance workers, but an undetermined number had crossed picket lines.

University negotiators and leaders of striking unions agreed to return to the negotiations on Wednesday.

"This is the site of national Labor Day outrage. This is going to be for economic justice what Selma was for the right to vote."

Rev. Jesse Jackson
political activist

Taliban ambush two Afghan patrols

by Noor Khan
Associated Press

QALAT, Afghanistan — Suspected Taliban fighters attacked an Afghan government checkpoint Monday and ambushed soldiers along the main road linking the south with the capital, killing at least eight soldiers and taking two prisoner, Afghan officials said.

The attacks came a day after two U.S. soldiers were killed in a 90-minute gunbattle with insurgents in Paktika province, in the east near the border with Pakistan.

Four suspected Taliban were killed in that fighting.

In Kabul, meanwhile, Afghan authorities supported by international peacekeepers arrested several suspected terrorists Monday, a spokeswoman for the International Assistance Force said.

Since Saturday, U.S. troops have been staging "Operation Mountain Viper" in the Dai Chupan district of southern Zabul province, said Col. Rodney Davis, a spokesman for the U.S. military.

He said U.S. special operations forces and 10th Mountain Division ground forces with close-air support have been deployed but did not say how

many were involved in fighting.

A local religious leader, Mulvi Abdul Rahman, told The Associated Press that the provincial government in Zabul was trying to negotiate a cease-fire with the Taliban through tribal elders.

"Both sides — the present government and the Taliban — are all Afghans. We are all the same people and we have been fighting for 23 years," he said. "Now, I would rather we negotiate rather than fight, so these (Taliban) fighters can go home and help rebuild Afghanistan."

Afghan presidential spokesman Jawid Luddin said more than 500 troops of the fledgling Afghan national army had been deployed in Zabul. So far, most of the fighting on the government side has been done by provincial militia forces.

Backed by U.S.-coalition forces, the government has engaged in a week of bitter fighting against suspected Taliban in the province.

The latest attacks on Afghan soldiers, both near the mountains of Dai Chupan, appeared to be an attempt by the insurgents to distract government forces from the larger battle, said Khalil Hotak, the provincial intelligence chief.

N. Korea refuses to scrap nuclear program

by Vladimir Isachenkov
Associated Press

MOSCOW — Keeping up its bellicose rhetoric, North Korea on Monday dismissed U.S. demands that the communist nation scrap its nuclear program as "a game even kids won't play."

North Korea took an angry, hard-line stance following last week's landmark talks in Beijing with the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia about its nuclear programs.

"Despite our goodwill and generosity, the United States has shown no readiness to drop its hostile policy toward the DPRK during the latest talks and blatantly put forward new gang-style demands," the Foreign Ministry said Monday in a statement from its Moscow embassy, according to the Interfax news agency.

"That means ... they promise not to shoot and we are supposed to lay down weapons first," the North Korean statement said. "It's a game even kids won't play."

North Korea says the United States must first provide security and aid guarantees before it will consider abandoning its nuclear programs.

North Korea on Saturday said there was no need for more talks.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed Monday in a phone call to keep pushing for more six-nation talks to end the nuclear standoff, the Kyodo News reported from Tokyo.

Governor candidates test campaigns

BUENA VISTA (AP) — The two likely candidates for governor in 2005 tested what could be some early campaign themes at the Buena Vista Labor Day Parade, an event that traditionally signals the unofficial start of Virginia's political season.

Lt. Gov. Timothy Kaine praised the record of Gov. Mark Warner, a fellow Democrat, on fiscal matters and expansion of a children's health insurance program.

Republican Attorney General Jerry Kilgore, a southwest Virginia native, called for more economic development in the region and criticized federal courts for ruling Virginia Military Institute's traditional supper prayer unconstitutional.

Kilgore and Kaine were joined by other politicians, including U.S. Sen. George Allen and several state legislators seeking re-election this year and, in some cases, higher office in 2005. This is a light campaign year, with only local and state legislative seats on the ballot.

Kaine praised Warner's stewardship of the state's tight finances, noting that Virginia ended the last fiscal year with a \$55 million surplus.

"We're showing we can fiscally manage our state in a responsible way," Kaine said. "By putting this team in place, you're getting some results. The federal government now has massive deficits and virtually every state government in the union

has massive deficits."

He also credited the Democratic administration with enrolling more children in a state health insurance program. The number of insured children from low-income families has increased by about 50,000, to more than 340,000, during Warner's term.

"We're not just being fiscally responsible, we're showing compassion for those most in need, and isn't that a Virginia tradition we can be proud of," Kaine said.

Kilgore reminded voters that he fought to preserve VMI's supper prayer. He has appealed the ruling striking down the prayer tradition to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"I want to remind you today that I think the courts are wrong when they say we cannot open VMI's supper time with a prayer," Kilgore said.

He also suggested economically struggling regions of the state need more help from Richmond.

"The answer is not to impose more taxes on hardworking Virginians, the answer is more economic development for southwest and Southside Virginia," he said.

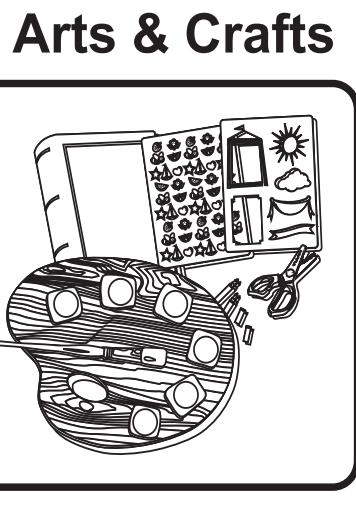
Allen, who rode a quarter horse in the parade, also touched on the economic issue, saying foreign trade agreements must be enforced to protect jobs in the textile and furniture industries.

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Consolidation of two deaf, blind schools underway

STAUNTON, Va. (AP) - A task force studying how to consolidate services at Virginia's two schools for deaf, blind and other disabled children has selected three options for debate.

They are: closing one school and consolidating programs at the other, closing both schools and building a single, new facility or keeping both open, but with revised programs.

The task force met at one of the two schools, located in Staunton, last Wednesday to collect public comments on the issue.

The panel is scheduled to visit the second school, located in Hampton on Oct. 2.

Task force members said they have not reached a consensus about how to move forward with the consolidation.

Therefore, specific details haven't been sorted out, such as which school is likely to remain open if the task force suggests closing one.

The task force defines consensus as an agreement among nine of its 12 members.

The task force culled its current three recommendations from a list of seven.

That whittling process came after they conducted nine focus groups in July.

The discarded options included shifting responsibility to public schools and closing high school programs

at both the Staunton and Hampton schools.

"We have to come up with a workable recommendation that is politically doable, and this group has shown that they can do that," said state Sen. Emmett Hanger, R-Augusta and a member of the task force.

The task force includes lawmakers, the superintendents of both schools, parents and other state officials.

Nearly two dozen students, alumni, teachers and parents visited the task force to voice support for the Staunton school during last week's visit, despite the lack of specific information so far about the consolidation.

"If you want one school, make it here in Staunton," said Race Drake, a graduate of the facility's blind program.

Task force member Ron Lanier said such public input would be a major factor in future consolidation decisions.

He directs Virginia's Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

"I hear people's concerns not only at these meetings, but on the job, too, so it's not difficult to keep those comments at the forefront," he said.

The task force is scheduled to make its final recommendations Dec. 1.

Virginia's General Assembly will then consider them when it reconvenes in January.

OPINIONS COMMENTARY

NASCAR vital to small-market sports' economies

Nick Pascale

ing has been part of Southern tradition and has grown into a large market for the owners of racing teams.

NASCAR's success at marketing racing has started to distance the sport from the region in which it was born. The removal and rescheduling of races from Southern small town tracks is a nightmare to local economies that started the tradition and supported stock car racing during its early days into a multimillion-dollar industry.

Though NASCAR is in the business to make money, it should not alienate a fan base of those who depend on races for their livelihood. Expansion is natural for business, but holding true to tradition and civic responsibility is essential to the continued success of NASCAR.

NASCAR should learn to expand like other professional sports in the United States. Imagine the NFL moving small market teams like Green Bay or Charlotte. It just wouldn't happen.

NASCAR should continue racing in its original setting before it leaves behind small-town fans. Given the nation's opinion of corporations overlooking the community good, it would be proof of the viability and respect NASCAR has for its tradition and the community, while promoting stock car racing.

Nick Pascale is the opinions editor for the Collegiate Times.

Letter to the Editor

Secular buses needed in Blacksburg

As a student living off campus, I frequently use Blacksburg Transit. I must say the service is great.

However, I was sitting on the bus at a time check earlier today and started looking around at all the advertising by student organizations and the like.

I then noticed one ad sponsored by the Campus Crusade for Christ. I myself am not a very religious person, but after reading this ad I wanted to vomit.

In such an open and educated environment as the one here at Virginia Tech, our public transportation system is preaching to us about how Jesus died for us and that we should praise him.

After shaking it off, I continued looking around at the ads on the bus, only to find another preacher — pardon me — poster from the same organization.

This one was preaching the same

thing: Jesus this and Jesus that.

Is this politically correct, especially in a university atmosphere? I think not.

Perhaps it has been my recent similar experiences with patriotism that have all come together to ignite today.

I'm proud to be an American, don't get me wrong. But in society's recent patriotic state, those who lack the same nationalistic fervor just seem to be wrong and communist, or something.

You never see anyone who is anti-war or anti-Jesus throwing it in people's faces.

They have no posters in hallways comparable to those saying "support our troops," "support our war blah blah blah" or for that matter, "support Jesus, he died for you," like those who are pro-war or pro-Jesus.

Support what you want and don't pressure others to think like you just because you think it's right — we all have minds of our own for a reason.

Gerald Glickman
junior, economics

Labor unions ensure fair treatment

Kate Lynch

In light of Labor Day, it is important to remember the role that labor unions play in today's corporate America.

Thousands of workers are members of a union in their company. Unions protect the rights of the worker and prevent against discrimination and loss of benefits in the work place.

Many people would argue that there is no need for labor unions because they are outdated and a danger to the economy. However, anytime there is a situation where there is management and employees, the employees need to have a voice.

Unions provide bargaining power where employees and management can sit down as equals and discuss concerns.

The labor movement during the

late 1800's began because of poor treatment of workers and the lack of representation of the majority. When people work together change occurs.

"For those who are concerned with the corrupt union leaders endangering our economy, they need only look so far as the CEO's and certain companies in the United States."

Unions are a way of ensuring this. Even though, for the most part, there are standards and common practices of treating employees, doing away with all unions simply because things are going well now, would leave employees vulnerable.

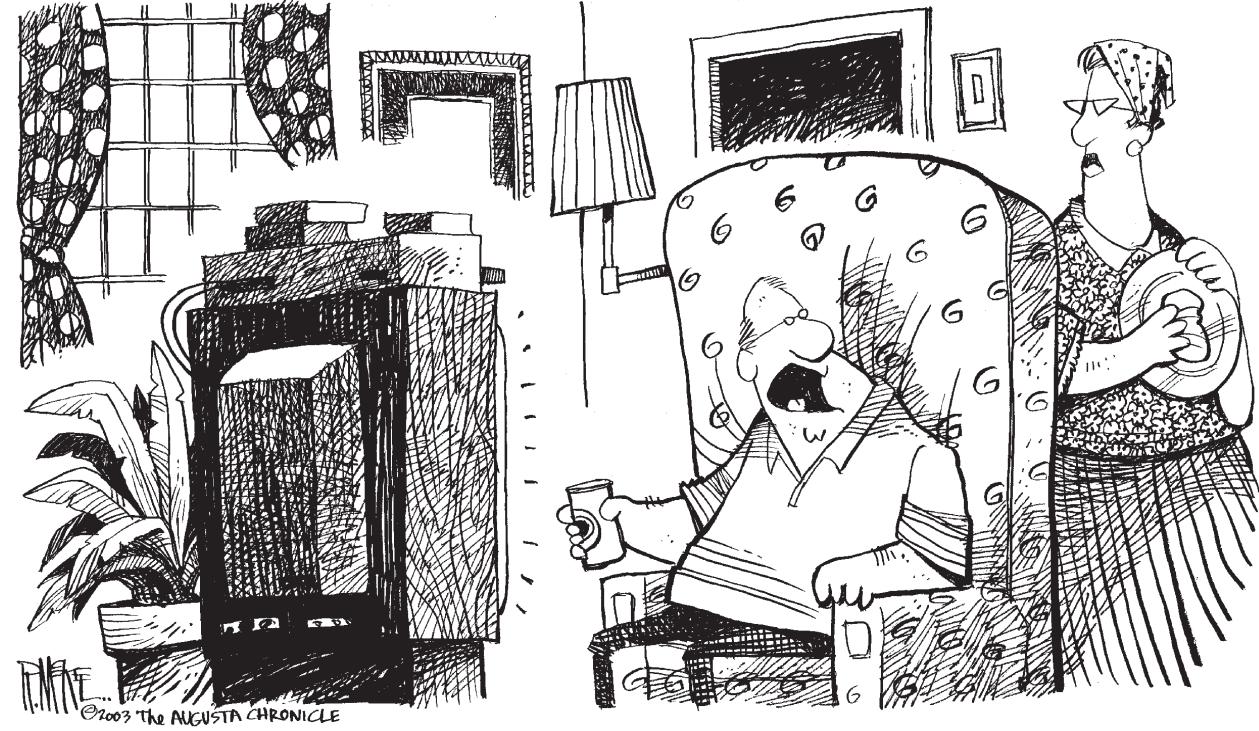
The little people in society, who actually make the majority of the work place, need a voice and a way of protesting when they are being taken advantage of.

They need a united front to receive better wages and benefits. If there are disheveled employees nothing will flow smoothly up the chain of command.

It is shown that women and minorities who are part of labor unions are paid more than those who are not. In general labor union workers are paid more than those who are not. Those who are paid more pay more taxes and this larger tax revenue leads to the betterment of family and communities.

For those who are concerned with the corrupt union leaders endangering our economy, they need only look so far as the CEO's and certain companies in the United States.

Kate Lynch is the editorial assistant for the Collegiate Times.



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Harley-Davidsons, hogs on parade

by Melissa McCord
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Ten thousand Harley-Davidsons, their riders wearing anything from Hog masks and feather boas to black leather, roared through the city Saturday on a parade celebrating the company's 100th anniversary.

The event was as much a tapestry of red, white and blue as the motorcycle icon's signature orange and black. One Harley rider festooned his bike with two dozen American flags.

Willie G. Davidson, a grandson of Harley-Davidson's co-founder, and his wife, Nancy, led the eight-mile parade, followed

by riders on bikes toting large Harley flags representing riders' clubs from all over the world.

"The route was absolutely jammed, which made us feel like heroes of some sort," said Davidson, who rode a black Electra Glide.

Harley fan Bob Boyd, 67, rode his 2003 Dyna Wide Glide Harley from his farm in London, Ontario.

"This Canadian feels part of the American spirit. We're family," Boyd said.

Riders gunned their engines, honked their horns and waved to onlookers. Many riding on the backs of bikes held video cameras. A few stretched out their arms to slap the palms of

spectators.

One wore a Santa suit and had Mrs. Claus perched behind him.

"The route was absolutely jammed, which made us feel like heroes of some sort."

Willie Davidson
rider, grandson of Harley-Davidson co-founder

Others wore Viking horns, jester hats, animal-skin caps and Uncle Sam top hats.

"It was the coolest thing I ever did in my life," said Dennis Smith, 52, from Gurnee, Ill., who rode a 2002 teal-and-silver Deuce.

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson, who also is former governor of Wisconsin, rode a borrowed Harley because his bike was in Washington, D.C. Actor Larry Hagman, of "Dallas" fame, rode a Road King.

Near the end of the route, riders passed under a banner picturing Harley's four founders, who began manufacturing motorcycles in Milwaukee in 1903. Four black-and-orange semis bought up the parade's rear.

Burning Man festival ends, returns to dust

by Don Thompson
Associated Press

BLACK ROCK DESERT, Nev. — Artists, spiritualists and old hippies at the annual counterculture Burning Man festival decamped from their temporary desert community following a peaceful gathering marred by a series of accidents.

A record 30,500 people turned some of the nation's remotest real estate into a hedonistic utopia where everything is recycled and where drugs, clothes and inhibitions are optional.

The festival, which combines wilderness camping and an eclectic mix of art and music, started in 1986 and is held each Labor Day weekend on a dry lake bed in the Black Rock Desert, about 120 miles north of Reno, Nev.

This year's festival was not without its accidents.

On Saturday, Katharine Lampman, 21, of Belmont, Calif., was killed when she accidentally fell under the wheels of an "art car," which is similar to a parade float.

Five people were hospitalized following two plane crashes at the festival's temporary air strip. Two festival-goers involved in a Saturday crash were listed in critical but stable condition at Washoe Medical Center in Reno, while two others were in serious but stable condition. Both crashes, which involved Beechcraft BE-35 airplanes, were under investigation by the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board.

On Friday, another small plane crashed at the airstrip while attempting to take off,

authorities said. One person involved in that wreck suffered back injuries and two other people sustained minor injuries, officials said.

The creation and destruction of what for a time was Nevada's seventh largest city was part of the annual ritual that evolved from a spontaneous San Francisco beach celebration of the 1986 summer solstice.

That year, an 8-foot wooden effigy was burned. The one ignited late Saturday towered eight stories: a 40-foot stylized wooden man highlighted in blue neon, atop a 40-foot-tall Aztec-style wood and canvas pyramid.

The torching ceremony included dozens of dancers, twirling flaming hoops and chains to the frantic beat of dozens of drums. Flame-belching bicycles and fantastic vehicles passed.

Today's Crossword

ACROSS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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DOWN

29	Fruit ice	nish	counterpart	cedar
31	Call	54 Swiss canton	7 Sharpen	32 Scuttle
34	TV host	55 Like some	8 That lady	33 Tramcar contents
	Fuentes	vbs.	9 Infuriation	10 Postal Creed
35	Vile	56 Moist	11 USNA grad	36 Hideaways
37	Stitch	57 Perch	12 Uppercase	37 Jungle trek
38	Impression	58 Beige	21 Bamboo eater	tennis
39	"Uncle Tom's Cabin" name	23 Bench clearer	42 Fess up	
41	Indolent	1 It's full of shish	43 Football official	
45	Crocodile	2 Representation	maybe	44 Long
	Dundee prop	3 Blender setting	24 Sapporo sash	45 Recognized
47	Billy - Williams	25 "Absolutely"	46 Send forth	
48	2003 news-making golfer	26 Pigs' digs	48 Show sorrow	
52	Biz sch. deg.	28 Waikiki neck-wear	49 Flamenco cheer	
53	Martini gar-	30 Keatsian opus	50 Disenumber	
6	Demeter's	31 Omega pre-	51 Leading lady	

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Sports

Tech takes Hokie Classic tournament

■ Coming off a 20-win season, the Lady Hokies had high expectations going into their home opener

by Jin-Gak Bae
Staff Writer

Red Hawks 30-21, 30-17, 28-30 and 30-17.

Leading the way for the Hokies was junior outside hitter Spicer. She recorded a career high 25 kills in the match. Freshman middle blocker Allie Kupec contributed with a team high of five blocks.

The team fed off their first win, carrying the momentum into their next match against Campbell.

The Hokies started out strong, scoring nine consecutive points as they swept the Campbell Camels, 30-15, 30-17 and 30-13.

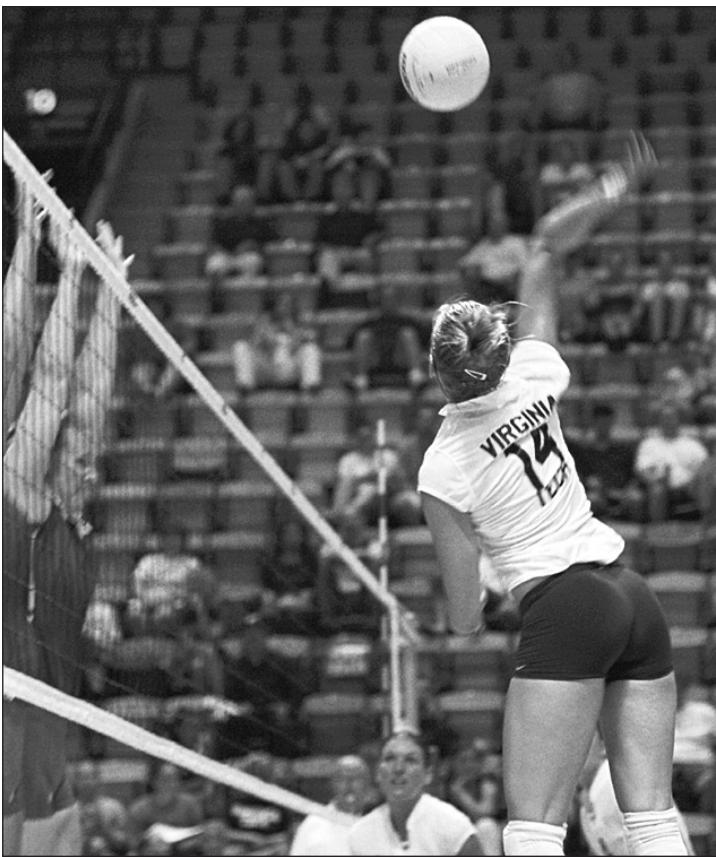
Freshman middle blocker Katie Esbrook led the way for the Hokies, in her first ever start. She recorded 12 kills and 18.5 points, both team highs. Markowski contributed with four service aces and Spicer placed 10 kills in the match.

The highlight of the tournament came in game one against the Camels. Tech dug six consecutive attacks, which led to a roof block by Esbrook. The Hokies increased their lead 20-8 in game one.

Tech continued its solid play, sweeping East Tennessee State University, 30-25, 30-15 and 30-21.

Spicer continued her consistent play with 15 kills. Kupec and Esbrook each chipped in with six kills and Jenny Hill contributed with five kills in the match.

The Hokies struggled for a brief moment in game three of the match. East Tennessee rallied back as Tech struggled with their passing, taking the



Junior outside hitter Annie Spicer goes up high for a kill. Spicer was named MVP of the Hokie Classic.

lead 18-17.

East Tennessee could not take advantage as Kupec had one of her six aces in the match.

The Hokies rallied to take the lead and match with a 13-3 run.

The Hokies started the year 3-0 and won the Hokie Classic.

"We were just excited to play this weekend," Markowski said. "We came out strong and I am pleased how we played the

first match of the season."

Spicer was named MVP with 50 kills, 28 digs, eight blocks and hitting .340. Kupec was named to the all-tournament team.

The volleyball team will be back in action, at 7 p.m. tonight on the road in their match against Charlotte.

They return home for a match against Radford at 7 p.m. on Sept. 16.

Steelers linebacker Porter shot outside bar

by Ben Kieckhefer
Associated Press

DENVER — By all accounts, Joey Porter was simply minding his own business.

That changed when the Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker was shot just before 2 a.m. Sunday outside a bar following the Colorado-COLORADO State football game.

"He was an innocent bystander," police spokesman Sonny Jackson said. "There was no confrontation or altercation that we know of at this time."

One man was killed and five seriously injured after the shooting outside the All Sports Bar & Grill in northeast Denver. Porter, whose injuries were not life-threatening, had gone to the bar following the football game. The All-Pro linebacker played at Colorado State.

"The bullet entered his left buttocks and is lodged in his right thigh," Pittsburgh coach Bill Cowher said Sunday. "All the preliminary tests are being done and, at this time, it looks as though the bullet did not hit any vital organs. He is resting comfortably in the hospital and we are in the process of ... trying to fly him back here (Monday)."

Cowher did not speculate how long Porter would be out but did say the team wouldn't place him on injured reserve, which would sideline the linebacker for the season. Losing Porter for a substantial period would be a major blow to a defense that was the NFL's best in 2001 and ranked seventh overall last season.

"Joey's going to be fine; he'll be back," Cowher said. "He's a special guy and he'll be back."

Clark Haggans, who played mostly as a rush end in the Steelers' dime defense last

season, likely will start Sunday's opener against Baltimore. Haggans also is a former Colorado State player.

Cowher talked to Porter on Sunday and said the linebacker was distraught over getting hurt with the season about to start. The Steelers otherwise came through the preseason with no serious injuries.

"He's as well as can be expected. He feels like he's let the football team down. He was really emotional," Cowher said.

Porter was standing outside the bar in northeast Denver when he was shot. The bar, open since May, sits between an area of heavy industry and a residential neighborhood about 1 1/2 miles from Coors Field and the popular Lower Downtown neighborhood.

The area is high on the city's ranking of high-crime neighborhoods, a list generated by crime statistics from 2001.

Sports Notes

Football: Bryan Randall wins Big East offensive player of week honors

Bryan Randall's solid performance at quarterback Sunday earned him Big East offensive player of the week honors.

Randall's stat line included 22 completions on 28 attempts for 278 yards and three touchdowns. Randall also displayed his ability to flex the Hokies' playbook by throwing to nine different receivers.

He also was not sacked and did not turn the ball over while accumulating 18 yards rushing on the day.

Randall completed nearly 80 percent of his passes Sunday and led the Hokies on scoring drives of 80, 62 and 76 yards on his first three possessions of the day. Randall and the rest of the offense set a Virginia Tech record of 36 first downs in the game Sunday.

Men's soccer: Hokies win Radford Highlander Classic tournament

The Virginia Tech men's soccer team wrapped up the Radford Highlander Classic this weekend, bringing the title home to Blacksburg. A win Sunday over Mercer sealed the victory for the Hokies, who went 2-0 in the tournament.

Bobby O'Brien scored two goals, one of which was scored 2:40 into the match against Mercer. Ben Nason notched his first collegiate goal 17 minutes later, giving Tech a 2-0 lead.

Goalkeeper Chase Harrison allowed Mercer's lone goal with just four minutes left in the match. Harrison, along with stellar defense from the Hokies, allowed only one goal in the 180 minutes of play over the weekend.

The team returns to action 7 p.m. Friday against Wake Forest. This will be Tech's first game on their new field, located behind McComas Hall.

Capriati advances to U.S. Open semifinals

by Howard Fendrich
Associated Press

It was the only match completed as of 9:30 p.m., when rain was falling.

Just one other encounter even began by then: No. 29 Francesca Schiavone won the first game against No. 15 Ai Sugiyama before they left the court after only six minutes.

More than 60 matches — including all four in men's singles, plus some from doubles, junior and senior tournaments — were postponed without a shot being hit.

Organizers were holding out hope of being able to get more women's singles competition in at night.

The last time an entire day at the Open was rained out was Sept. 4, 1988.

Because of the lack of play, people who had tickets for either the day or night session can exchange them for day sessions Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday — or for 2004 seats.

Among the fourth-round matches put off until Tuesday: top-ranked Andre Agassi against unseeded American Taylor Dent, and No. 5 Guillermo Coria against Jonas Bjorkman.

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Hokies: Tech moves up in rankings

Continued from page 1

once again moved the team 67 yards in under three minutes, throwing a 29-yard touchdown strike to a streaking DeAngelo Hall, giving the Hokies a 35-21 lead.

Hall's catch was the proverbial nail in the coffin for the Golden Knights.

On the ensuing possession, the Hokies' defensive tackle made an excellent mid-air grab of a Schneider pass and blew past the entire UCF offense while returning the interception 45 yards for a touchdown. Vick's pass to Clowney later put the icing on the cake for the Hokies.

"It was a good game for us," Beamer said. "When the heat was on, our kids responded for us, and that makes it a great win."

With the victory, Tech moved up one spot in the latest ESPN coach's poll to a No. 9 ranking. The team remains home this weekend, hosting their I-81 rivals, James Madison University, at 1 p.m. Saturday.



Richard Johnson dives into the corner of the end zone to put the Hokies up 14-0 over the University of Central Florida. Johnson had 4 catches for 48 yards.

ROBERT DRAKE/SPPS

VIRGINIA TECH BOX SCORE					
	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Final
UCF	0	14	0	14	28
VT	14	14	0	21	49
STATS					
					UCF VT
First Downs					16 36
Rushing Attempts					19 43
Net Rushing Attempts					76 152
Net Passing Attempts					259 380
Passes Attempted					36 38
Passes Completed					24 29
Total Net Yards					335 532
Penalties: Number - Yards					5-42 5-46
Possession Time					22:19 37:41
Third-Down Conversions					4 of 12 10 of 14
Fourth-Down Conversions					1 of 1 0 of 0
Red-Zone: Scores - Chances					4-4 3-4

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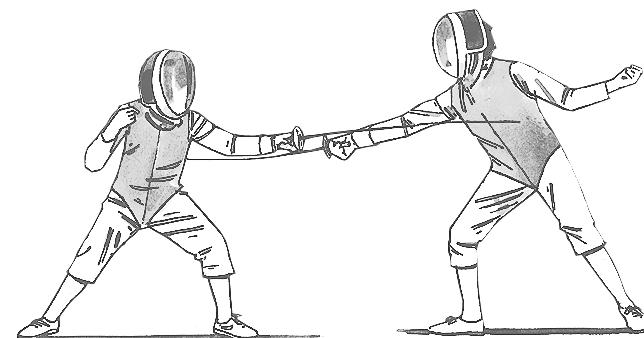
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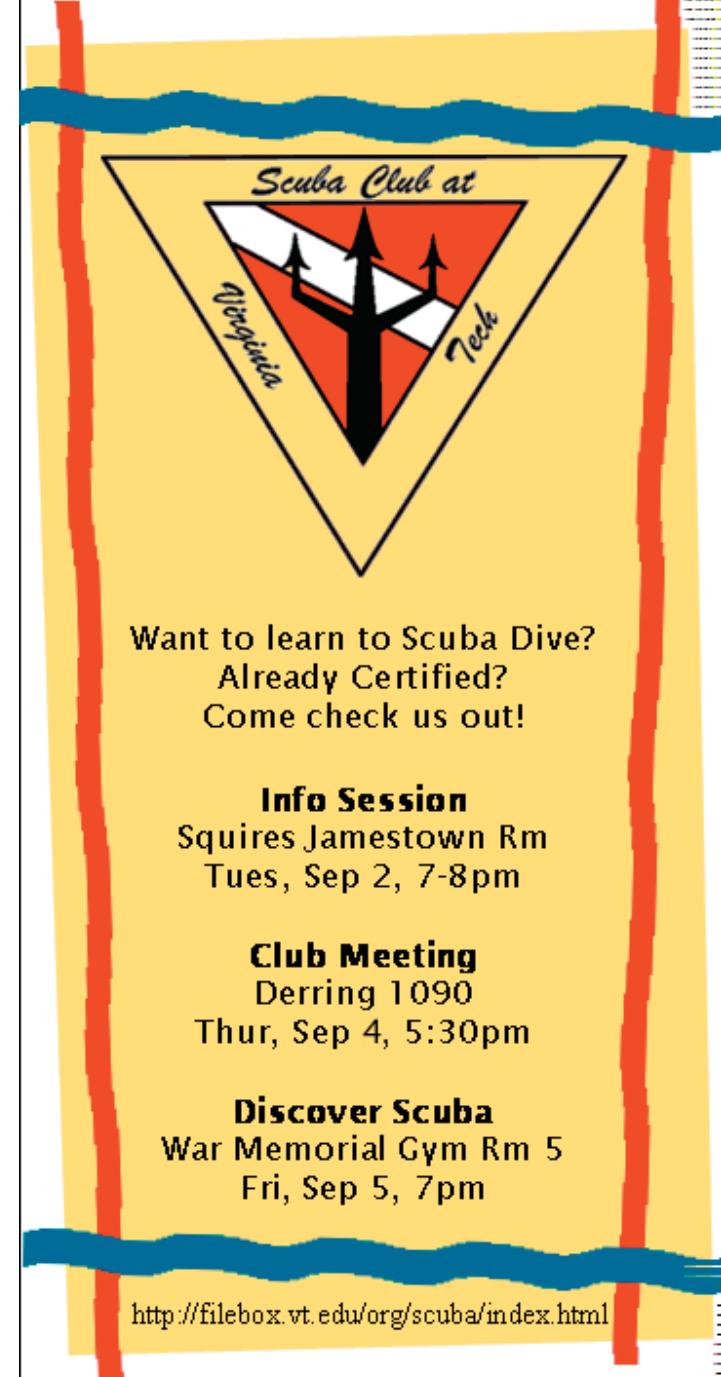


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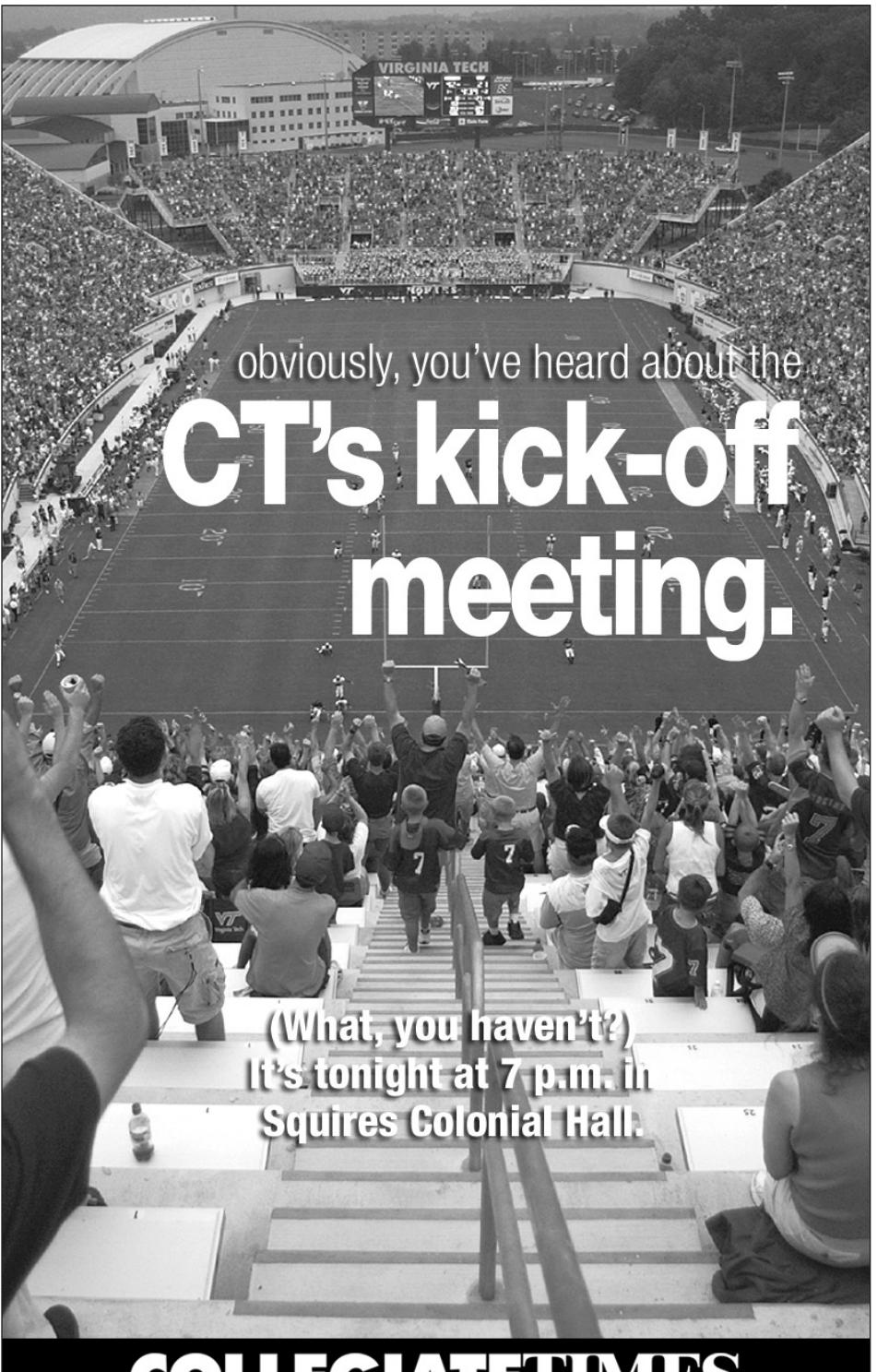
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New players fill unlikely roles in win against Knights

■ Redshirt freshman Marcus Vick was among a number of Hokies playing in their first collegiate game Sunday against UCF

by Rajan Nanavati
Sports Editor

Like any other major collegiate football program, the Virginia Tech football team loses quality players to graduation or to the professional ranks each season.

These programs manage to stay on top year after year because younger players and role players step up to fill the shoes of their predecessors. It doesn't matter how good the recruiting class or backups are on paper, but, rather, what they do when finally given their opportunity on the field.

During Sunday's game, the performance of many Hokie players indicated Tech has a bright and productive set of youngsters to rely on. Several different players had their first touchdown during Tech's 49-28 victory over the University of Central Florida.

First and foremost, there was Marcus Vick. For all the hoopla and madness surrounding "little Vick's" entire career in Blacksburg, he certainly responded with excellent passion, demonstrating both on-and-off-the-field poise reminiscent of his older brother.

Not sure how much playing time he'd see during the game, Vick played well in the spot duty he saw, completing 7 of 10 passes for 102 yards, leading two touchdown drives in his first-ever action as a college football quarterback.

"I was pleased with my time," Vick said.

"The coaches told me to be ready, (and) they'd throw me in there. It kept me on my heels."

Several receivers were able to haul in their first career touchdown receptions as a result of the surgically precise passing attack employed by the Hokies this weekend.

Wide receiver Justin Hamilton caught his first touchdown pass on a short strike from quarterback Bryan Randall during the first half.

Freshman David Clowney, who emerged as a big play threat during the spring practice sessions, rewarded Tech head coach Frank Beamer's

decision to dress him for the game by beating double coverage for a 27-yard touchdown reception from Vick.

Much has been said about cornerback DeAngelo Hall's use at wide out on offense, and Sunday he gave Tech fans a small glimpse of his capability at the new position.

Hall burned deep coverage by the Golden Knights on a well-run post route, catching a laser from Randall for the first offensive touchdown of his career.

"It felt real good," Hall said. "I had the easy part — the hard part is the protection and the throw."

The offensive line responsible for keeping both quarterbacks upright had a few firsts as well.

Offensive guard Will Montgomery saw his first start at left guard — the starting left guard had to switch to right tackle after Jon Dunn was suspended for a violation of team rules.

Darryl Tapp and Jason Lallis recorded personal firsts on defense. With defensive end Nathaniel Adibi's knee ailing him, Tapp got his first collegiate start and played well while splitting duty with Adibi.

Lallis' first career interception return for a touchdown sealed the victory for Tech when he blazed past the defense after making an acrobatic grab of a Ryan Schneider pass.

"I was pleased with my time. The coaches told me to be ready, (and) they'd throw me in there. It kept me on my heels."

Marcus Vick
Redshirt freshman quarterback



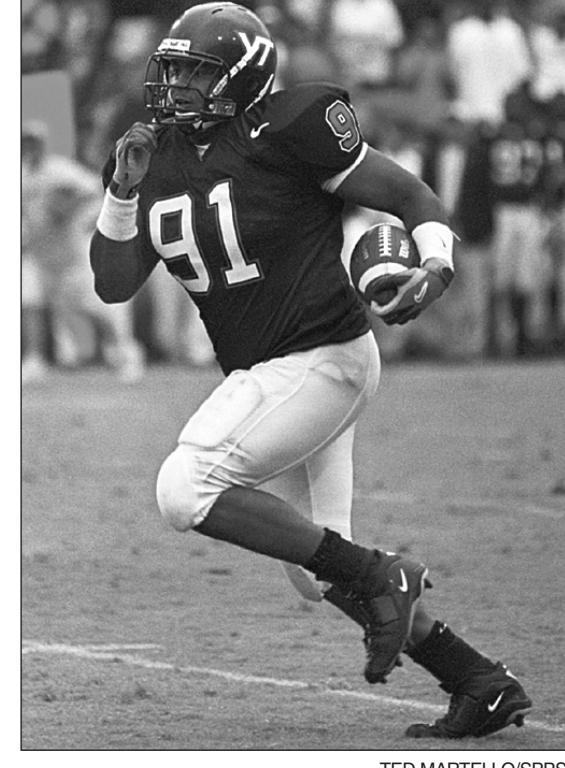
ROBERT DRAKE/SPPS

Marcus Vick completed 7 of 10 passes for 102 yards and a touchdown in his Virginia Tech debut.



ROBERT DRAKE/SPPS

Cornerback DeAngelo Hall celebrates after catching a 29-yard touchdown pass from Bryan Randall. Hall sw his first significant action on offense, catching 2 passes for 41 yards.



TED MARTELLO/SPPS

Defensive tackle Jason Lallis returned a Ryan Schneider interception for a touchdown.

Ex-Jets set to face old team in NFL opener

by Joseph White
Associated Press

ASHBURN — Randy Thomas, Laveranues Coles, Chad Morton and John Hall got together for dinner one night over the summer and contemplated their unique group fate.

"It was more like, 'Can you believe this?' 'Can it really happen like this?'" Thomas said. "It was a warm feeling for us."

They are the JetSkins, the four free agents the Washington Redskins conquered in their offseason raid of the New York

Jets. The NFL, knowing a good story when it sees one, has given the player tug-of-war a bit of extra spice by scheduling the two teams to meet in Thursday night's prime-time, league opener.

"It felt strange when I found out it was the first game of the season," Thomas said. "It couldn't happen in a better way. I'm very excited. This group is very excited. The guys up north are probably excited, too."

Thomas and Hall were snagged on the first weekend of free agency in March, with

Thomas getting \$28 million over seven years to play guard and Hall signing a five-year, \$7 million deal to be the kicker. Receiver Coles followed with a seven-year, \$35 million blockbuster, and kick returner Morton needed to go to arbitration with the Jets before signing his five-year, \$8 million contract with the Redskins.

"I was like, 'Why did they stop there?'" Thomas said. "It was a shock."

Throughout training camp and the preseason games, the ex-Jets quartet have been asked

about their common New York bond nearly as much as they were asked about what they'll be doing with the Redskins. Their tact has been mostly impeccable — although all four turned down requests to talk to New York reporters via conference call on Monday — as they've mostly praised their former teammates and the city they left behind.

Hall, in particular, took it hard at last week's exhibition game when he heard on the sidelines that news about Jets quarterback Chad Pennington's broken wrist.

CT Sports Picks begin Friday.



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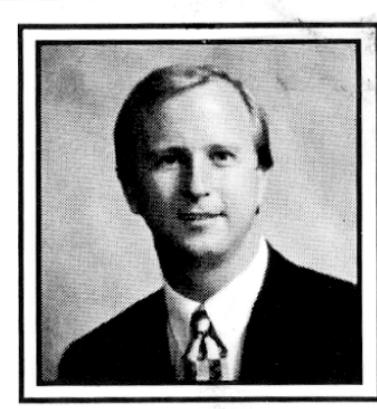
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