

Supercomputer goes online

by **Bryan Nieder**
News Assistant

The planning of Virginia Tech supercomputer specialists and the anticipation of computer enthusiasts will pay off as the Tech supercomputer becomes operational today.

The 1,100-computer cluster containing 4.4 terabytes of memory will hit its target of starting operations by Oct. 1, allowing it to be ranked for the next contest of the world's top supercomputers.

Srinidhi Varadarajan, the director of the Terascale Computing Facility, said he cannot make any comment on the ranking without seeing the numbers, but he's optimistic.

"We expect it to rank pretty highly," he said.

The computer cluster composed of Apple G5 machines will not only rank highly in computing power but also with the economically minded.

The supercomputer will cost \$5.2 million as opposed to the \$80 to \$100 million other projects of this size would usually cost, Varadarajan said.

He said one reason for the reduced price is the project was completed in about three months rather than the yearlong process it would normally take. This allows purchases to be made at present-day prices rather than inflated future costs.

Mike Heffner, a graduate student in computer science, said the Tech Association for Computing Machinery helped recruit volunteers to help with construction of the cluster, but that few members of the group knew specific details about the project.

"Most of the details and news surrounding the new cluster was kept 'hush hush' for a very long



PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNN NYSTROM

The supercomputer, housed in the Corporate Research Center, is comprised of 1,100 Apple G5 computers, and will be eligible to be ranked in the next contest of the world's top supercomputers.

time," he said. "The ACM was informed in late July when we were asked to help recruit volunteers for the project."

How was it built so fast?

"Sleepless nights," Varadarajan said. "We were

working 16 to 18 hour days, seven days a week."

The cost will be spread out over five years, paid for in a cost-sharing venture through vari-

See **ONLINE**, page 2

Tech unveils helmet sensors

■ Sensors in football helmets, first used in the Texas A&M game, will measure the force of impact from a hit

by **Rajan Nanavati**
Sports Editor

When the offensive and defensive lines of two football teams collide, the impact in the trenches is sometimes taken for granted by onlookers.

Common fans in the stands usually don't see how intense these impacts are, or how much wear and tear they can produce on the player's head, neck or spine. The impact these players endure for roughly 60 to 100 plays a game is equivalent to 100 times the impact of running into a brick wall, head first.

The Virginia Tech College of Engineering, in coordination with the College of Osteopathic Medicine and the school's athletics department, have undertaken a groundbreaking endeavor to measure the forces of impact football players absorb on given plays. Six accelerometer sensors placed in helmets measure the G-forces, or forces of gravity, each impact brings.

Each impact the helmet receives is sent to a computer with a radio-type receiver attached to it. The location and force of each impact, ranging from anything like a tap on the head to game impact, are recorded by this computer, and the data is researched by a specialized team.

Gunnar Brolinson from Tech's sports medicine department, heads the study along with Stefan Duma of the mechanical engineering department, who specializes in collisions and the physics of sports safety equipment. In addition, head athletics trainer Mike Goforth, along with two graduate students from the Impact BioMechanics Laboratory at Tech also oversee the research.

Research in this field has never been conducted by any collegiate or professional football organization, and this collaborative team from Tech said they hope the research will give them valuable insight to make the game of football safer for student athletes.

"What we're trying to do is measure the accelerations that are generated in a player's helmet when they're hit or they hit somebody," Goforth said. "It's never been done

See **SENSOR**, page 2

Va. schools still feel effect of Isabel

by **Christina Peña**
News Assistant

Despite debris, a lack of clean water and cancellation of fall break, students

of Virginia Commonwealth University and the College of William and Mary are slowly recovering from Hurricane Isabel.

Classes at VCU started yes-

terday. Power was restored to campus buildings Sunday. The Medical Campus never lost power and continued classes Monday.

Many VCU commuter students, however, are still without power.

Up to 215,000 Dominion Virginia Power customers are still without power in the Richmond and Tri-Cities areas and traffic signals at nine key intersections around the campus are still not functioning.

Campus officials suggested commuter students give themselves extra traveling time due to the malfunctioning traffic signals.

No VCU campus buildings had significant damage, said Paul Timmreck, senior vice president for finance and administration on the online hurricane update.

Eight of the 161 buildings did suffer minor wind

and water damage, the majority of which is already repaired.

Debris is also a problem, said VCU freshman nursing major Melanie Guzman. She said a large tree was blocking one of the main entrances to the dining hall.

Students are asked not to use water unless it is boiled until Wednesday.

Bottled water was made available on the two campuses at student housing, dining facilities, recreational facilities and student commons.

"We couldn't drink the water and they didn't want us showering or drinking fountain drinks in the dining hall," Guzman said.

William and Mary students will not return to class until Monday of next week and all residence halls and academic buildings will open this Sunday so

students can be prepared for class the following day. According to the William and Mary Emergency Information Center, students are asked not to return to campus until 8 a.m. Sunday.

"No one knows what's going on or what's happening," said Rianna Barrett, a freshman university studies major.

"My roommate had to go back to her hometown in Ohio, and the only reason I'm still here is for soccer."

Debris is a problem because of the many hundred-year-old trees that were torn out of the ground from Isabel's winds.

Power lines and crosswalks around campus were also impacted by the uprooted trees. The Delta Gamma sorority house

See **ISABEL**, page 3

Virginia Outage Summary		
Area	Customers Assigned	Customers Out (as of 9:23)
Northern Virginia	724,816	33,740
Shenandoah Valley/Western Piedmont	164,395	7,508
Richmond Metro/Tri Cities	442,598	215,237
Southside Virginia	66,133	7,908
Gloucester / Northern Neck	56,454	31,265
Tidewater	645,549	259,956
System Total	2,099,945	555,614

SOURCE: Dominion Virginia Power

CHRIS HEUBERGER

U.S. airman faces espionage charges

by **Matt Kelley**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An Air Force translator at the U.S. prison camp for suspected terrorists has been charged with espionage and aiding the enemy, a military spokesman said Tuesday.

Senior Airman Ahmad I. al-Halabi is being held at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, facing 32 criminal charges, spokesman Maj. Michael Shavers said.

Al-Halabi worked as an Arabic language translator at the prison camp for al-Qaida and Taliban suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Shavers said. The Air Force enlisted man knew the Muslim chaplain at the prison arrested earlier this month, but it's unclear if the two arrests are linked, Shavers said.

The translator was arrested more than six weeks before the chaplain, Shavers said.

Al-Halabi is charged with nine counts related to espionage, three counts of aiding the enemy, 11 counts of disobeying

a lawful order, and nine counts of making a false official statement.

Al-Halabi was based at Travis Air Force Base in California and assigned to a logistics unit there, Shavers said.

Pentagon officials said an investigation into possible security breaches at Guantanamo Bay continues.

About 660 suspected al-Qaida or Taliban members are imprisoned at the U.S. Navy base. American officials are interrogating them for information on the terrorist network.

The military has classified many details about the prison camp and the detainees and has not identified any of the men being held there. Military officials have said the fight against terrorism could be hampered if terrorist groups got such information.

The Muslim military chaplain who ministered to the inmates at the camp, Army Capt. Yousef Yee, was arrested Sept. 10 in Jacksonville, Fla., after getting off a flight from Guantanamo Bay.

Global travelers make stop at Tech

■ Two students from Europe have travelled the country selling posters, and are at Tech for a sale this week

by **Tiffany Hoffman**
Managing Editor

Since the middle of August, Marcus Rohlfing and Iveta Hronova have been selling posters and sightseeing across the United States.

Rohlfing, a 27-year-old student from the Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences in Germany, said the two have been to Boston, New York, Chicago, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Michigan and Virginia during their tour.

"When we work we get to know people for who they really are," Rohlfing said. "It's so nice to see so many different (personalities) in such a big country — it's not all big cities like New York."

Rohlfing and Hronova are in America with a program called Work and Travel. Each received a J-1 working visa, allowing them to visit the country for up to three months and make as much as \$5,000. Once they were accepted, they applied to work for Global Prints selling posters at college campuses.

"You see how important big universities are to small towns," Rohlfing said. "In Germany, you always have only big buildings, but here I see what I expected — a

campus atmosphere.

"I'm in places I'd never normally come to — I'd never come to Blacksburg or Tennessee on a visit."

Hronova, a 25-year-old student at the University of Frankfurt in Germany, said she too liked visiting American campuses.

"Usually European university dorms aren't part of campus," she said. "Here everything is all together. Student life has a better atmosphere here."

Both Europeans and Americans are

allowed to participate in the Work and Travel program, Rohlfing said, and participants are required to have a good understanding of languages. However, Rohlfing said he noticed there was less of an interest in languages and international issues in America than there is in other countries.

"People know about their area, they know about their state, but they don't know much about the world," he said.

See **GLOBAL**, page 3



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPFS

Marcus Rohlfing and Iveta Hronova (right, behind table) have visited Boston, New York and Chicago selling posters for Global Prints.

News in Brief

Rally at Duke denounces theme party

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Protesters at Duke University rallied against a fraternity that promoted a party with fliers that looked like expired green cards, T-shirts with the image of a drunken Mexican and a mock border patrol checkpoint at the door.

Several speakers told about 75 students, professors and administrators that the Sept. 13 Sigma Chi party inflamed their long-held belief that Duke has ignored its Latino students, who make up about 7 percent of the school's enrollment.

Driver convicted of kidnapping

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A school bus driver who stashed a rifle behind his seat and set out for the nation's capital with 13 children on a bizarre, unauthorized field trip was sentenced Tuesday to four years in prison.

Otto Nuss, 65, pleaded guilty to federal kidnapping charges in June.

Nuss' trip in January 2002 touched off a frantic six-hour search and alarmed parents at the Berks Christian School in Birdsboro. None of the children was harmed.

Nuss was said to be agitated by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Postage stamp honors D.C.

WASHINGTON (AP) —

When the U.S. Postal Service unveiled a series of stamps honoring the 50 states last April, the nation's capital was nowhere to be found.

But District of Columbia leaders — already smarting from a lack of congressional voting rights and other perceived slights — refused to take it lying down.

On Tuesday, they won, as a new 37 cent D.C. stamp debuted.

The diamond-shaped multicolored stamp features a montage of monuments and an engraving of portions of Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 design for the city.

There are also blooming pink cherry blossoms and colorful brick rowhouses from the city's Shaw neighborhood.

Court sides with tobacco companies

ATLANTA (AP) — A federal appeals court has sided with the nation's largest tobacco companies in a price-fixing lawsuit brought by tobacco wholesalers.

The wholesalers wanted to file a class-action lawsuit alleging a conspiracy to fix wholesale tobacco prices by Philip Morris USA and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Last summer, a U.S. District Court judge threw out the wholesalers' lawsuit, saying they had no proof that the big tobacco companies were working together.

The wholesalers appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta, which ruled against them Monday.

Online: Cluster gives research opportunities

Continued from page 1

ous academic departments, the provost office and information systems, said Lynn Nystrom, director of news and external relations for the College of Engineering.

Nystrom said the supercomputers will bring in millions of dollars in research money, benefiting all of Tech.

She said 46.2 percent of every dollar in research money contributes to operating costs at Tech.

"It will be a great addition to

the existing scientific computing resources on campus and will attract many new grants and research opportunities," Heffner said.

The Tech Transportation Institute receives \$10 million annually in research money, and the supercomputer will be an opportunity to meet or surpass this amount of research money, Nystrom said.

"(The goal is) to develop a cadre of research centers that will be at that level," she said.

Varadarajan not only helped build the supercomputer, he developed the software package employed in the cluster, "Déjà vu", helping bring stability to the computers.

Varadarajan said most quality computers fail about once per year and clustering 1100 computers together creates a multiplied failure rate that would be unacceptable.

The software transparently transfers a failed application to a new place without the knowledge of the computer, preventing the application

from being altered in any way.

With the addition of the supercomputer, the Tech community is open to receiving funds from a proposed National Science Foundation program called The Cyberinfrastructure Funds.

The program is scheduled to have a \$1 billion annual budget and will offer \$100 million to centers like Tech, which house large supercomputer centers supported by the National Science Foundation.

Sensor: Coaches stopped system in game

Continued from page 1

before to the point where we can measure, real time, the forces that are being generated (during impacts)."

The main objectives of the program are determining how the impacts taken during regular game play affect a player's head and neck physiology, and whether these impacts have an effect on the likelihood of players suffering head, neck and spinal injuries.

The ultimate goal is to gain sufficient knowledge of how these impacts affect those body parts, and develop technology to help lessen the damage these impacts cause.

Concussions and neck strains are among two of the more common and dangerous injuries players sustain in the high-impact game of football. Until now, there have been no preven-

tive measures for injuries of this nature and the only real remedies have been rest and reducing the strain on these body parts.

Instead of developing reactive measures to dangerous injuries of this nature, the study is looking to develop preventive measures to ensure the chance of these injuries occurring will be greatly reduced.

"We want to figure out what it is that causes concussions," said Bill Bussone, one of the graduate students leading the project. "That's really sort of the holy grail of head injuries. We really don't know what it is that causes concussions."

The study is in its early pilot stages so far, roughly only two weeks old. The team has developed eight helmets with sensors, and has begun monitoring every impact each helmet takes during two football practices a week and during football games.

The study saw its first game-

time research last Thursday evening during the game against Texas A&M; it shut down after only eight minutes, however, because the Tech coaching staff worried the impact signals transmitting from the helmets to the sidelines were interfering with the radio signals between coaches and players.

It was later determined there was no such interference, and the research team said they hope to gain more extensive game-situation data during this Saturday's game against the University of Connecticut and beyond.

Goforth said offensive and defensive linemen endure the most severe and frequent impacts during football practices and games, stemming from the impact each player takes from the battle at the line of scrimmage.

Linebackers and running backs comprise the second tier of impact severity, suffering

slightly less harsh impacts than the linemen. Quarterbacks, along with wide receivers and defensive backs, suffer the least intense impacts during game and practice situations.

While the study is concentrated on impacts from football, the research team said they hope the data obtained can be used to help redesign things such as motorcycle and bicycle helmets — helping promote safety in those areas as well.

The project has no defined time frame. The research team said they hope to increase the number of helmets with sensors from eight to 64 next season, effectively giving every player who sees significant playing time a helmet with sensors. The data will be researched more extensively during off-seasons to determine the quality of impact (incidental versus actual), to help streamline the accuracy of the study.

STOCK MARKET REPORT — 9/23/2003 —		WEATHER		TODAY	TONIGHT	THURSDAY	THURSDAY NIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DJIA	9576.04 ▲ 40.63	WEATHER	 Mostly sunny Highs: 73°–78°	 Mostly clear Lows: 52°–57°	 Partly sunny Highs: 70°–76°	 Cloudy with a chance of showers Lows: 50°–55°	 Partly sunny 55°/75°	 Partly cloudy; a chance of showers 60°/85°	
NASDAQ	1901.72 ▲ 27.10								
S&P 500	1029.03 ▲ 6.21								

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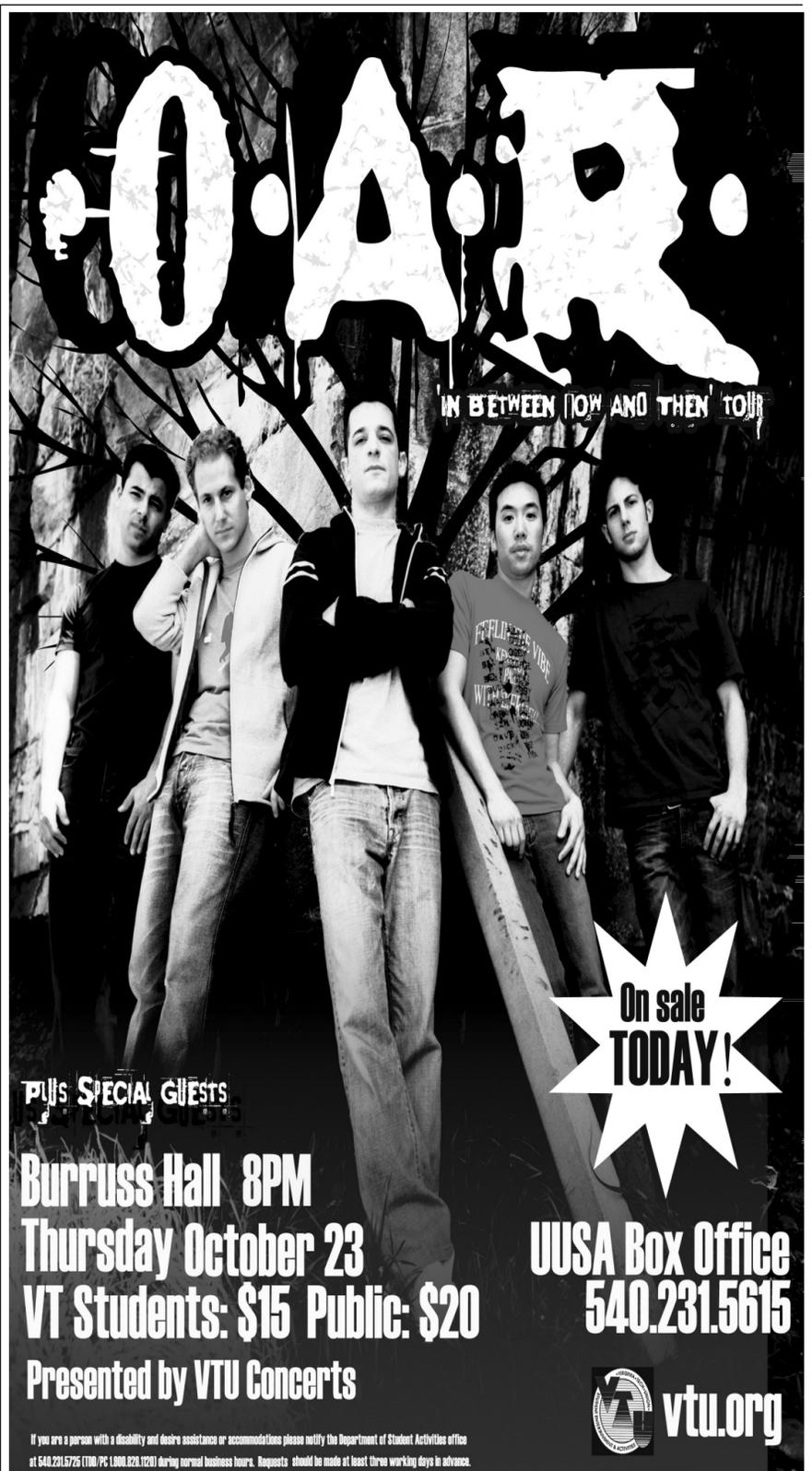
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Global: Poster sale ends today

Continued from page 1

Other differences Rohlfing noticed were personalities of Americans unlike those in Germany.

"People here are more superficial, but are much more friendly," he said. "It's nice. We've never really had problems, we just ask if we need help."

Global Prints is a small company based out of Boston touring through Virginia Tech twice a year in a partnership with the Tech radio station, WUVT. Today is the last day they will be selling posters until next fall. A percentage of the profits are donated to WUVT for equipment expenses.

"It helps overall with income for the year," said Michelle DiFilippo, WUVT business manager and a junior communication major.

Last year, DiFilippo said the organization made approximately \$500 from the sales.

WUVT is a division of the Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech, as is the Collegiate Times.

Iraqi police: three killed in U.S. air, ground attacks

by Hamza Hendawi
Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq — Iraqi police said U.S. forces carried out a combined air and ground attack north of Fallujah early Tuesday, killing three people and wounding three others. The military said it knew of only one death.

The fight involved the 82nd Airborne Division and started after U.S. soldiers were attacked, said Spec. Nicole Thompson. She said the attackers ran into a building and ground troops called in air support. One guerrilla fighter was killed.

The incident occurred in the village of al-Jisr, north of Fallujah, one of the

most dangerous cities in the so-called "Sunni Triangle," the region where support for Saddam Hussein runs strongest and where U.S. troops have met stiffest resistance.

"At 2:10 a.m., we heard three explosions at different times. About 20 minutes later, two martyrs arrived at the hospital. They died before they arrived. The third died in the hospital. There were three injured," a police lieutenant at the Fallujah General Hospital, who gave his name only as Nabil, told Associated Press Television News.

Helicopters could be seen over the region of the fight at dawn Tuesday. There were two big craters in court-

yards of the houses that were involved, indicating bombs of some sort had been dropped.

In Baghdad Monday, the U.S.-picked Governing Council voted to evict two Arab satellite broadcasting companies from Iraq, said Iraqi National Congress spokesman Entifadh K. Qanbar. The Qatar-based Al-Jazeera and Dubai-based Al-Arabiya have given blanket coverage of events in Iraq, often highly critical of the U.S.-led occupation.

American administrator L. Paul Bremer, who chose the 25-member council, holds a veto over its actions, but he is in Washington testifying before Congress about the Bush Administration's request

for \$87 billion next year to support the military and reconstruction effort in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We have not been advised officially of such a decision. Our office is still open, our people are still working. It's business as usual," Al-Jazeera spokesman Jihad Ballout said in Qatar.

In Dubai, an Al-Arabiya spokesman said he had heard nothing about the vote and would have no comment until the network received official notification.

On Tuesday, President Bush was to address the U.N. General Assembly to urge the international community to support his plan for steady transition to democratic rule in Iraq.

U.S. soldiers detain photographer

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — U.S. soldiers detained an Associated Press photographer and driver on Tuesday, handcuffing them, forcing them to stand in the sun for three hours and denying them water or use of a telephone.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division detained photographer Karim Kadim and driver Mohammed Abbas, both Iraqis, near Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, and kept their guns trained on them, despite repeated attempts to explain they were journalists.

The troops were looking for explosives planted in the area.

"We identified ourselves from the very beginning as press, even before we approached the troops. I was asked not to take any pictures and I didn't. We were told to leave and we walked away, and then one of them shouted at us to come back," said Kadim.

An armored personnel carrier arrived moments later. Three soldiers disembarked and aimed their guns at the two men.

"A sergeant ordered us to raise our hands and face an APC. We were searched, and they took

away all my camera gear. Then our hands were tied behind our backs, first with rope, and then with plastic handcuffs," said Kadim, extending his wrists to show marks left by the cuffs.

The two were made to stand for three hours in temperatures of 110 degrees.

Abbas said the soldiers accused them of being part of the insurgency attacking U.S. troops.

"You know about the explosives here, you are part of the people who put them here," Abbas quoted one soldier as saying.

The two were later taken to a U.S. base, where Maj. Eric Wick apologized. Wick also called the AP office in Baghdad, saying it "was a misunderstanding on our part."

On Thursday, U.S. soldiers shot up Kadim's car in Khaldiyyah during a firefight after an American convoy was hit with a remote-controlled roadside bomb. Kadim was in the car, along with another driver, and both jumped out and ran for cover after they saw a tank had them in its sights. They were fired on as they ran and the car was badly damaged. Neither man was hurt.

The AP sent a letter of protest to the U.S. military in Baghdad.

Isabel: Activities, classes cancelled

Continued from page 1

suffered major damage when a tree fell into the house.

Wren building, one of the oldest campus buildings where Thomas Jefferson once studied, did not suffer any major damage, although a tree barely missed hitting the building.

Students helped pick up debris in Wren Yard after the storm.

All activities on campus, including meetings and sporting events are canceled until classes resume Monday.

Fall break is cancelled for William and Mary, and VCU

has cancelled two reading days in October because of the large number of school days missed.

As of yesterday, more than 550,000 Dominion Virginia Power customers were still without power in the state — power will continue to be restored throughout the week.

As for any possible hurricane threat in the near future, "there is nothing in the tropical Atlantic region building up right now, but we are at the height of the hurricane season right now and we still have October and November to wait on," said Robin Reed, meteorologist for WDBJ 7.

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Bush: U.N. help in Iraq cannot be rushed

by Terence Hunt
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — President Bush rejected calls from France and Germany for a swift transfer of power in Iraq on Tuesday, urging allies to put aside bitter divisions over the U.S.-led war and help lead a massive reconstruction effort.

French President Jacques Chirac challenged Bush by demanding a "realistic timetable" for granting sovereignty.

In the first gathering of world leaders at the General Assembly since the United States toppled Saddam Hussein, Bush was unapologetic about the war and its chaotic aftermath and unyielding on U.S. terms for creating a democratic government.

"This process must unfold according to the needs of Iraqis — neither hurried nor delayed by the wishes of other parties," Bush said, spurning demands of France and Germany in a replay of the acrimonious year-old debate over Iraq that has shaken

old alliances.

Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder listened to Bush speak in the vast hall where historic debates have echoed for more than a half century. Ahmad Chalabi, the president of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council, took Iraq's seat.

Before Chirac took his turn at the microphone, Bush left the chamber, followed by Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

The French president upbraided the United States for having taken a go-it-alone approach in Iraq after the United Nations failed to sanction the war.

"In an open world," Chirac said, "no one

can live in isolation, no one can act alone in the name of all, and no one can accept the anarchy of a society without rules." France has said it wants power handed over to the Iraqis in a matter of months — a position echoed by Schroeder on Tuesday.

The debate reverberated from the U.N. and private meetings in New York to Capitol Hill and the presidential campaign trail.

In Washington, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle said he thought Bush "lost an opportunity."

"He came before the international community and he could have made the case for more troops, more resources," the South Dakota Democrat said. "He didn't do that. ... It was a missed opportunity and that's very disappointing."

"This process must unfold according to the needs of Iraqis — neither hurried nor delayed by the wishes of other parties."

George W. Bush
United States president

Space station said to be unsafe

by Paul Recer
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A serious accident is waiting to happen on the International Space Station due to poor communications between American and Russian engineers, says one of the nine members of a NASA safety panel who resigned Tuesday.

There have been three separate incidents that could have led to accidents aboard the space station and all were linked to a lack of coordination between the Russians and Americans who operate the orbiting lab, said Arthur Zygilbaum, a former member of NASA's Aerospace

Safety Advisory Panel.

Zygilbaum said safety flaws on the space station are being brushed aside in the same way that NASA ignored problems with foam insulation on the space shuttle. A suitcase-sized chunk of foam insulation that flew off a fuel tank during the launch of Columbia is blamed for breaking a heat shield and causing the loss of the space shuttle and seven astronauts.

"We think we see a trend on the space station that is as significant as the foam," said Zygilbaum. "We have had three incidences of miscommunications ... between the Russians and the Americans that have endangered the space station."

Study: Eight states giving half a million ex-cons the right to vote

by Robert Tanner
Associated Press

Nearly a half-million ex-cons have regained their voting rights since 1996 as eight states eased their restrictions on felons, an advocacy group says in a new study.

Despite the changes, an estimated 4 million citizens remain barred from voting because they are in prison for felonies or have felony records, according to The Sentencing Project, a

Washington-based group that seeks alternatives to incarceration.

"Americans have traditionally believed that once you paid your debt to society, you're free to rejoin the community. This clearly conflicts with that," said Marc Mauer of The Sentencing Project. "Support for reform is growing very broadly."

From 1996 to 2003, states took a variety of approaches, the study found.

Nevada and Wyoming

repealed lifetime bans for first-time, nonviolent felons; Delaware repealed a lifetime ban but now requires a five-year waiting period; Texas dropped the two-year waiting period that had earlier replaced a lifetime ban.

Other states that eased restrictions were Connecticut, Maryland, New Mexico and Virginia.

Overall, those changes meant that at least 471,000 former prison inmates have had their

voting rights restored, according to an analysis cited by the project.

But states did not always make voting easier for felons. In Massachusetts and Utah, voter referendums took away the right of felons to vote behind bars. The move affected about 23,000 inmates. Now, only Maine and Vermont allow such voting.

Some conservatives said the push to let felons vote is misguided.

"People who violate the rights of others and have harmed others should still be excluded," said David Muhlhausen, a senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation.

The Sentencing Project is part of a larger campaign involving civil rights organizations and advocacy groups for the poor. They are seeking to press states to ease restrictions on felons, emphasizing the harm that prohibitions do to the black community.

Of 4 million disenfranchised voters, blacks make up one-third, researchers estimate.

Overall, some 13 percent of all black men are barred from voting because of such laws.

"I've been relegated to the same status as my ancestors when they were in slavery," said Joseph "Jazz" Hayden, a community organizer in New York who served 13 years of a 20-year manslaughter sentence.



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Tornado heaps more misery on Va.

by Bill Baskerville
Associated Press

RICHMOND — The East Coast's recovery from Isabel was dealt a setback Tuesday by another round of storms that caused renewed flooding, flattened trees that had withstood the hurricane and knocked out power to thousands of customers, some for the second time.

A tornado with winds of nearly 70 mph touched down along a four-county path that crossed Richmond.

"Isabel was gravy compared to this guy," Richmond resident James Whitaker said. "We went down and got in the closet downstairs and stayed in it."

No injuries were reported from the twister, part of a weather system that also caused damage in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Isabel was blamed for at least 38 deaths, 23 of them in Virginia.

Some 40,000 customers lost power in Virginia on Tuesday, some for the second time since Isabel struck last week.

"I just restocked my refrigerator last night. This is just so unreal," said Renee Knight,

whose neighborhood lost power during Isabel for about 20 hours.

Before the storms arrived, Virginia's main utility, Dominion Virginia Power, said it had restored electricity to two-thirds of the 1.8 million customers who lost service during Isabel.

Weary of living without electricity for five days, Joy Melvin had taken her 20-month-old daughter and moved in with a friend, Keisha Gilchrist, in a section of Richmond that was little affected by the hurricane.

On Tuesday, a tree slammed onto the roof above the bedroom where they slept.

"We ran from upstairs," Melvin said. "Thank God for her (Gilchrist) yelling."

The storms dumped about 4 inches of rain in parts of Maryland, where some of the same roads flooded by Isabel were under water again, and some schools closed.

Baltimore-area power outages had been reduced to about 133,000 customers since Isabel but went up again by about 50,000, said Rob Gould, spokesman for the Baltimore-

"Isabel was gravy compared to this guy. We went down and got in the closet downstairs and stayed in it."

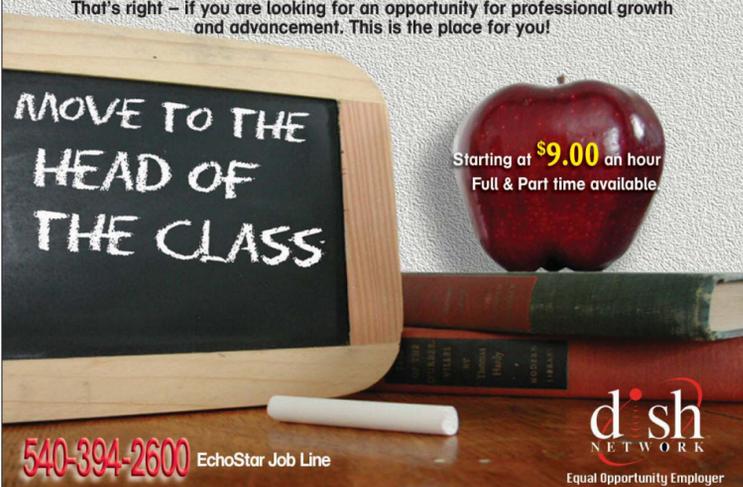
James Whitaker
Richmond resident

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Editorial LOCAL ISSUE

County tax rate must be cut

If you go car shopping Jan. 1 in Montgomery County, you may not find a decent selection of cars.

The reason for this potential selection crisis is dealers avoiding the county's merchant capital tax. The Shelor Motor Mile, for example, pays to have a majority of their cars moved off the lot, and out of the county.

The merchant capital tax allows the county to collect revenues from business' inventories taken Jan. 1.

Though the county exhausted its efforts to collect accurate revenues from merchants, the Virginia Supreme Court ruled the county could only tax merchants' inventory as of the given date.

The county last year collected \$1.21 to every \$100 of inventory, but now local businesses, lead by Shelor Motor Mile, are working to get the tax cut in half.

Though some feel the tax is playing to the hand of large merchants in Montgomery County, the cut will actually benefit both business and the county.

The county may only be collecting half of the original rate, but they will be collecting on merchants who would otherwise move their inventory out of the county to avoid taxation.

Having larger inventories will not only increase the revenue potential for the county, but also help Montgomery County's business environment — a business environment where taxation will not cripple business or the local government's ability to provide public goods.

It is time to help the community, by helping local businesses. It is time to have a rate that is a win-win situation for Montgomery County and its businesses.

Abortion activists abuse freedoms of expression

Jessica Pritchard

Freedom of speech, religion and press can justify pretty much any and every action done to make a statement. One of those freedoms preached by so many — abortion — is beginning to sound something like a broken record.

There is one question no one seems to be able to answer for me: where do we draw the line? Has society taken this freedom to the point where its original purpose has become but a flash of the past?

This question resurfaced itself when I was heading back from class across the Drillfield last week. There were pro-life activists with gigantic posters of tiny fetuses.

Not only were they shouting their beliefs and doing everything in their power to trigger a passionate response, but they had their kids out there with them.

Little kids were holding gruesome posters of dead fetuses. Have they no couch?

With issues as sensitive as abortion, one of the worst moves special interest groups can make is to anger the youth. Controversial issues generally trigger the emotions of youth, and once you upset them your message becomes much more difficult to convey to their generation.

Coming onto campus and using little kids to make a statement is not only wrong but distasteful.

If they are trying to make a statement, throwing naive children in front of everyone is going to do nothing but place them in a hole they dug for themselves.

Abortion is not the only issue getting everyone up and out of their seats. Try religion.

We have all received those knocks on our doors around six o'clock as we are getting ready to eat dinner asking us to buy a Bible, join a church or donate money to something or another.

It is not so much an effort to pro-

mote faith, but rather the whole idea of promoting in hopes of converting. It has been going on for centuries, but in today's society religion does not play as strong of a role in as many lives as it did at one time.

Even if they came across nonbelievers interested in converting, shoving the Bible in their face is more than likely not going to make the best impression.

What about homosexuality in terms of methods of gaining respect?

I am not one an avid conservative who views everything in black and white, but there is no excuse to flaunt your sexual preference to anyone and everyone in your presence.

That is inappropriate for heterosexual couples, let alone homosexual couples, who are still trying to gain acceptance in society.

Society is not going to open up easily if the first thing they are presented with is an image of two homosexuals kissing, much of the same way a nonbeliever would not take too well to having a bible shoved in their hands.

When fighting a battle with society where you are the odd man out, going straight for the kill is more than likely going to hurt.

You have the right to go for the kill, but it is not the wisest decision to make.

It is not our place to tell others who they should be, what their beliefs should be and whom they should follow. Whatever happened to simply living your own life?

What makes people think the path they tread is the perfect one?

What gives them the authority to tell others, whose path may be different, they are treading in the wrong direction?

They are walking a fine line between freedom of speech and personal dignity, leading me back to my question of where do we draw the line?

How far is too far?

Jessica Pritchard is a regular columnist for the Collegiate Times.

'Sex Talk Live' must realize sex taboos

Daniel Goodman

You might have seen the "Sex Talk Live" advertisements in the Collegiate Times. If you look at the bottom of the ad, you will find the show's sexperts have their very own website for sexually troubled Hokies.

The website provides e-mail contact for students with unanswered "sex and romance questions." And if you really got it bad, the sexperts will discuss your embarrassing sexual issues with you in front of a live student audience Sept. 24 in Squires Colonial Hall. What's more, it's only \$3. Talk about the deal of the century, huh?

"Sure, here's three bucks. Does the live student audience want to hear about my venereal warts?"

Most people don't even talk to themselves about personal sexual issues, let alone a live student audience. Sexual issues and/or discomforts are a definite "don't-go-there" zone.

If you have a raging case of herpes, you're going to keep it intensely private. You'll talk to a doctor and then attempt to permanently erase it from your memory. But will you run to the phone in order to dissect your herpes with two total strangers who have anointed themselves the sexperts? It's doubtful.

This is not meant to degrade the two hosts in any way whatsoever. It takes real guts to willingly talk to fellow students about sexual concerns.

I'm just wondering who is calling the show to ask for advice. Are these people for real, or is it a joke? Let's be honest. It takes a lot of courage for most college students to talk about sexual tribulations. And that's why it's hard to believe students willing to voluntarily discuss sex in front of ruthless, unforgiving college students.

My guess is the show receives a large number of prank calls. Most people will do anything to avoid discussing their private sexual business on a public level. Instead, we resort to jokes to ease the awkwardness.

Talking about an acute Chlamydia infection is just plain uncomfortable. That's why we talk about sports, politics, money or weather. It's just easier to talk football than to talk STDs.

Imagine calling your best friend on the phone and saying, "Johnny, let's talk syphilis. I'll pick up a 12-pack and swing by your place."

Take a look around the Tech campus. It's easy to find students who are willing to vocally support or oppose certain issues. Take our nation's president, for example. Some people love him, some people hate him. Regardless, everyone's got an opinion on George W. Bush.

On the other hand, it's extremely difficult to find a group of students willing to vocally support or oppose condoms, dildos, homosexuality or crabs.

And that's why it's difficult, for example, to take seriously a student who phones a college sex show to discuss the sheer thrill of second base. I mean, come on buddy. If you want to celebrate, do so by yourself when no one's looking.

In this day, anything related to sex is more often than not taboo. Even this column is taboo. Yeah, we can say and do certain things we couldn't say or do 30 years ago. But sex is still one of those cloudy areas where any comment is prone to being totally misconstrued, in turn upsetting someone or embarrassing them.

In a world where students instinctively post and regularly update their day's schedule via AOL Instant Messenger, some things just need to be kept private. Some things are nobody else's business, plain and simple.

Until recently, Jimmy Kimmel and Adam Carolla hosted the very popular "Man Show," a show which focused mainly on topics relating to sex in some way or another. Most people love the show and find it really entertaining.

If the sexperts goal is to entertain Tech students, then that's great. But if they plan to educate, too, then they have a lot of work ahead of them. Not taking sex seriously and discussing it in a comical manner is one thing,

but treating sexual issues with maturity and sensitivity is far different. Most Tech students will quickly recoil or make jokes if the uncomfortable subject of sex arises.

Here's why: if somebody slips up and says the wrong thing, that person will probably be treated unfairly. Whether you like it or not, that's how it usually goes.

Sex is a really sticky subject. Take homosexuality, for example. Coming out of the closet can ruin somebody's reputation and/or career. Pauley Shore is a classic example. Oh, he's not gay? Sorry, nevermind then.

Furthermore, the Internet has basically eliminated the need for sexual discussion. Anything and everything linked to sex can be answered with help from the trusty Web. Why call and ask the sexperts how to impress a girl when it can easily and conveniently be looked up on the Internet? I'm not talking about porn, but that's not very hard to find, either.

And porn is another classic example of how sex is such a hush-hush topic. We all know everyone has porn, but when was the last time you heard someone say, "Hey man, I'm going to lock my door and watch porn right now. When I take my 'watching porn' away message off, then you can come over."

Instead, people say "Hey, I'm going to lie down and take a nap for a little while, so don't bother me, ok?"

Maybe one day our society will openly embrace sexual discussion and not treat it as such a forbidden topic. Maybe college shows like "Sex Talk Live" will increase public awareness and help people feel more comfortable.

But for now, sex is an extremely private matter, and anyone calling a TV sex show to discuss their STDs is either lying or just plain fearless.

Oh, look at the clock, it's time for my nap.

Daniel Goodman is a regular columnist for the Collegiate Times.

Partial-birth abortion ban justified

Joseph Ruscio

I am writing in regard to the column, "Women's right to choose protected by privacy and confidentiality" (CT, Sept. 23). The author wrote in regard to an anonymous bill passed by the U.S. Senate on Sept. 17 (judging from her carefully composed diatribe) she felt unfairly restricted women.

Reasons why the anonymous bill was an unconstitutional horror abounded, even making a reference to the Taliban at one point, but nowhere in the column could I find a single sentence actually describing the contents of the bill or even its name. I even scanned it a second time just to make sure in my early morning haze I had not just missed it.

Feeling confused as to how I am supposed to agree or disagree with an editorial not even naming the "injustice" it is railing against, I Googled the relevant keywords to see just what the Senate had been up to.

When I discovered the bill in question it became evident as to why any

mention of it was omitted by the author. The bill is actually the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. It was unanimously sent to committee by a Senate vote of 93-0.

The bill bans a most heinous method of late-term abortion, where an unborn child in the third or late second trimester is partially delivered and killed, in the interest of women's rights.

I will not go into any more detail on the technique in question due to its graphic nature, but I encourage readers to investigate themselves. I doubt many will be able to do so without their stomachs turning. The bill also rightfully provides an exception for instances where the mother's life is in danger.

This bill in no way restricts a woman's right to choose. A woman has the right to choose abstinence, to utilize contraception and in the statistically nominal cases where properly used contraception fails or she was the victim of a rape, she has the right to terminate the unborn child well into the second trimester.

What she does not have is the right to partially deliver a child and — inches

before it becomes a viable human being — snuff its life out.

Infants delivered as young as 23 weeks have survived, and the chances of survival increase to 80 percent by 26 weeks (last week of the second trimester).

The practice of partial-birth abortion is prohibited in 30 states and a ban previously passed by Congress only to be vetoed for lack of the mother's life exception. It evidently enjoys the unanimous support of a legislative body including such notable right-to-choice champions such as Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in no way impedes a woman's ability to have an abortion, as the author tries to insinuate. It bans a procedure so vile the author did not even bring herself to mention it, understandably preferring to dance around the issue and couch her argument in sanitary terms such as "pursuit of happiness," "non-desired conception" and "privacy."

Joseph Ruscio is a doctoral candidate in computer science.

COLLEGIATE TIMES

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YOUR FUTURE HOUSING CONNECTION



Tricking the senses

by Alison Cordell
 Staff Writer

Jeff and Tess, also known as the Evasons, stunned audiences at Owens Food Court last night with their mind reading skills. If they couldn't stun their audience, they at least provided some entertainment while dining.

The Evasons walked around Owens during dinner, approached tables of students and performed tricks such as mind reading and various illusions.

First, Tess approached freshman Kristin Schields and correctly guessed her name, the bank her credit card came from and her credit card number.

Sophomore business major Scott Randa also participated in the Evasons' activities. He was instructed to pick a bill out of his wallet and hide it from Tess, who then told Randa the value of the bill as well as the serial number on the outside.

"It was pretty amazing. At the last second I switched the bill from \$1 to a \$10 bill, and she still got it," said Randa.

Another one of Tess's tricks was tested on freshman general engineering major, Aasia Haque. Haque had a picture of a friend in her wallet and without looking, Tess told Aasia the person in the picture was a girl named Shemma. Haque said no one else knew who the girl was.

Jeff had a few tricks up his sleeves as well. While his partner Tess did the mind reading, Jeff used tricks of illusion to impress his audience.

First, Jeff took an observer's pair of plastic sunglasses and placed them on a table. After moving his hands over them several times, he lifted them up causing the sunglasses to flip over on the table. An observer commented the glasses looked magnetic but it was impossible because they were all plastic.

Jeff's other trick fooled participants into thinking he was touching their arm, when he really was not.

He made participants close their eyes and then touched one arm a few times quickly. Then he would tell them to count how many times he touched their arm again.

The participants both admitted it felt like he touched their arm three times when in actuality, he never touched their arm again.

"It was a weird feeling. I know I felt him touch my arm, but the audience said he never did. He pulled off a nice trick," said Peter Matthiessen, a participant in the arm touching trick.

Not everyone was amazed by the mind reading and illusions.

"He had a fishing line around his hand, and I think that was helping him do the tricks," said junior English major Joshua Logan.

Logan admitted it was entertaining, even though he knew it wasn't real mind reading.

Most observers and participants reacted the same way.

Watching the Evasons was entertaining most said, but few actually believed they had mind reading or magical powers; however, most agreed they put a new twist on the dining hall experience.



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Sports

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Even though this year's National Football League campaign is only three weeks old, I'm excited, and it's not because the Redskins are 2-1. Unlike many Virginia Tech students, it doesn't matter to me whether the 'Skins go 15-1 or 2-14 because quite frankly, I hate the NFC.

So, why am I excited? Head coach Dick Vermeil has led my Kansas City Chiefs to a 3-0 start and many are heralding them as the hottest team in football.

The Chiefs haven't made the playoffs since the 1997 season where they went 13-3 only to lose in their first playoff game. I was an irate eighth grader who couldn't see why Elvis Grbac, fresh off the disabled list from a broken collarbone, should get the start at quarterback over Rich Gannon who had looked sensational in every game since Grbac's injury.

My hopes to celebrate a Super Bowl victory were dashed, and the Chiefs haven't been the same until now, thanks in part to Vermeil.

The man who went into St. Louis in 1997 and needed only three years to turn the Rams

into Super Bowl champs may be doing the same thing in Kansas City.

When the Chiefs hired Vermeil in 2001, I knew there was hope for a team I had almost given up on due to my hatred for Grbac. Anyone who could turn the "same old, sorry ass" Rams into the "Greatest Show on Turf" could do anything in my mind.

Vermeil used the same strategy in Kansas City that he used in St. Louis: build up the offense first and then work on the defense. With the acquisitions of quarterback Trent Green and running back Priest Holmes in 2001, that formula was in motion.

Green was the perfect choice to run Vermeil's offense since he had already been trained for it before being named as a Chief. Many don't remember that he was the starting quarterback in the preseason for those '99 Rams, but an injury sidelined him for the whole year forcing him to hand the ball over to Kurt Warner.

Green and Holmes teamed up with tight end Tony Gonzalez during the 2001 season to lead the Chiefs to fourth in the NFL in offensive yardage. However, the

defense was No. 22 in the league in yards allowed.

In 2002, that gap grew even wider as Kansas City finished No. 5 in offensive yards and an abominable last in yardage allowed.

Through these first three games, the Chiefs' defense looked totally different. So far, they have recorded eight sacks amounting in a total loss of 59 yards for opponents, and have recovered all three fumbles they forced. The backfield has also made seven interceptions resulting in 2 touchdowns and 143 return yards.

The offense so far has been even more impressive. Green has thrown for a total of 669 yards with three touchdowns, while Holmes has rushed for a total of 296 yards with an astounding seven touchdowns.

Anyone who can't see the uncanny resemblance the '03 Holmes shares with the '99 Marshall Faulk, has no business watching football. Thus far, Holmes has caught 13 passes for a total of 171 yards. He is averaging 4.8 yards per carry on the ground and 13.2 yards per reception, making him the NFL's most

dangerous player right now.

Kansas City is also tearing up on special teams. Return man Dante Hall has two touchdowns on the season, one coming in the form of a 100-yard kickoff return, and the other on a 73-yard punt return.

This solid balance is what wins Vermeil football games, and his philosophy isn't brain surgery. He figured out that if Kansas City can execute 50 positive plays per game, they will win more than they lose. Make sure you gain yardage on offense or force your opponent to lose yardage at least 50 times in a game, and more than likely, you'll win. It's that simple.

Another thing Vermeil loves to see are touchdowns coming from all sides of the ball, and Kansas City is doing just that. This week marked the second week in a row the Chiefs scored at least one touchdown on offense, defense and special teams. No other team has accomplished this feat since the Bills of 1990, and they went to the Super Bowl.

Maybe I'm reading way too far into things and shouldn't be getting my hopes up so soon, but I don't care. This year's Kansas City team is for real, and I know they will continue to make me happy week in and week out right through to Super Bowl Sunday.

Jana Renn is the sports assistant for the Collegiate Times.

Clarett sues NFL over draft eligibility

by **Rusty Miller**
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Suspended Ohio State tailback Maurice Clarett sued the NFL on Tuesday, asking a judge to throw out a league rule that prevents him from entering the 2004 draft.

The lawsuit contends the NFL rule prohibiting players from being drafted until they have been out of high school for three years violates antitrust law and harms competition.

Clarett, who rushed for 1,237 yards and led Ohio State to a national championship as a freshman last season, wants U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin to declare him eligible for the 2004 draft — or require the NFL to hold a special supplemental draft sooner.

Under current rules, he is not eligible for the draft until 2005.

"Had Clarett been eligible for the 2003 Draft, it is almost certain he would have been selected in the beginning of the First Round and would have agreed to a contract and signing bonus worth millions of dollars," according to the lawsuit filed in federal court in New York.

The NFL says it will fight any challenge to the rule.

"We do not believe that this lawsuit serves the best interests of Maurice Clarett or college football players generally, but we look forward to explaining to the court both the very sound reasons underlying our eligibility rule and the legal impediments to the claim that was filed," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said.

Clarett was suspended from the team for at least a year after an investigation determined he broke NCAA bylaws concerning benefits for athletes and lied to investigators.

His attorney, Alan Milstein, filed the lawsuit against the NFL a day after he and Clarett's mother met with league executives in Washington to discuss whether Clarett would be eligible for the April 24 draft.

The lawsuit argues the NFL rule "is a restraint of amateur athletes who were strangers to the collective bargaining process."

A Duke University legal expert says Clarett has a strong case and the NFL will probably have trouble keeping Clarett out of the draft.

"Any attempt by competitors to restrain competition in the labor market is regarded by the courts with great suspicion," said Paul Haagen, a Duke law professor.

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