

VIRGINIA TECH CONDUCTOR

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

In this issue

- Page 3 - Language matters — musing on the language and rhetoric of diversity and multiculturalism.
- Page 3- What is the most segregated hour in America?
- Page 4 - SWOPERA — Carpetbag Theatre's energy grabs students' attention.
- Page 4 - Multicultural Fellows seek applicants.

Patriot Act impacts students

By Kim V. Beisecker, *kbeiseck@vt.edu*, director, Cranwell International Center

On October 26, 2001, amid the emotional turmoil of September 11, Congress passed the Patriot Act with a minimum of discussion or fanfare. This act defines a new crime of "domestic terrorism" to encompass, "any action that endangers human life and is a violation of any Federal or State law." The new Federal antiterrorism statute targets enhanced security through changes in the way surveillance and intelligence are conducted, increased detention powers, the removal of obstacles to investigating terrorism, the way agencies share information among themselves, and specific directives to banks and financial institutions regarding money laundering.

Receiving attention on college campuses are the amendments to: the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1972, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986. Appropriate Virginia Tech officials in the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, specific departments, support services, and the library have examined the direct and indirect effects on their programming. Deborah Duncan, chief of the Virginia Tech Police, reports that there have been no changes to procedures in the police department. She states that neither the VT Police nor FBI has accessed any information as a direct result of the Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act requires the full implementation of a student visa-monitoring program now referred to as SEVIS. On the Virginia Tech campus, the most visible activities were the educational meetings, collection of data, and replacement of immigration paperwork for all international F/J students and scholars. Monika Gibson, director of Graduate Student Services, notes, "Following the introduction of SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), more resources have been dedicated to immigration advising and the management of SEVIS."

At the Graduate School, Cranwell

See Patriot Act on page 4

After review, university seeks to increase diversity

At the Nov. 10 "Information Session on the Comprehensive Review of Race and Ethnicity Conscious Programs," President Steger told the approximately 300 people present, "The university is committed to obtaining a diverse campus. . . . A diverse population means greater learning opportunities and students who are better prepared to succeed."

Provost Mark McNamee and Ben Davenport, the chairman of the board of visitors ad hoc committee formed to review Virginia Tech programs in response to the Attorney General's instructions, reported on the process and outcomes.

Following the update, McNamee and Ben Dixon, vice president for Multicultural Affairs, answered questions and listened to comments for more than an hour (presented separately in this issue). Comments included endorsement of the Gateway program, which has been cut, and the Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP), which has been broadened, and recommendations on strategies for enhancing diversity. There were expressions of concerns about faculty hiring and student recruitment from faculty members and students, a certain amount of impatience with the process, and some venting, but also praise of the opportunity for discussion.

In introducing Davenport, Steger said that Davenport had suggested the information session in order to have an open communication process.

"We are here to share the results of the review process that has been underway since April . . . to provide information requested by the



Kenya Motley, a Presidential Campus Enrichment Grant Recipient and sophomore early childhood education major, talks with President Charles Steger after the forum.

Attorney General," Davenport said.

Since the process began, the legal environment changed. "The

See Increase Diversity on page 2

Minority recruitment and retention discussed

Provost Mark McNamee and Ben Dixon, vice president for Multicultural Affairs, responded to questions and comments regarding the Review of Race and Ethnicity Conscious Programs at Virginia Tech, which began in April to answer questions from Attorney General Jerry Kilgore. During the presentation, President Charles Steger and board of visitor member Ben Davenport said the university is committed to diversity. The following is not a transcript, but is meant to indicate the range of topics addressed and extent of concern.

Undergraduate Admissions

A number of people asked why the Gateway program was cancelled. The Gateway program brought to campus minority students who had been offered admission to Virginia Tech, to encourage them to



Richard Conners, Multicultural Fellow and retired faculty member from electrical and computer engineering, asks a question of Mark McNamee and Ben Dixon.

accept the offer.

McNamee said the university will be looking at Gateway-type programs, but will focus on high schools or regions rather than on minorities. He also said that they hope Black alumni will assist in recruiting. "Now that we've had time to look at the Supreme Court ruling and assess our priorities, we can create a better program."

Asked why the practice of waiving applications fees from under-

represented minorities was stopped, but still continues for applicants to the Corps of Cadets, McNamee said that, with online applications, the process of waiving fees is more difficult, but the university is looking at giving guidance counselors a certain number of fee-free applications for low-income students. Fee waiver for the Corps is not based on race/ethnicity, so it is not under scrutiny.

Asked about plans to recruit from low-income areas and whether the university is going to look beyond SATs and GPAs, McNamee said that the important criterion is whether the student can succeed — particularly the first year. "The admissions staff knows that high schools differ. Rather than SATs, they look at course selection and how a student did in that environment — so, if calculus is not offered, did the student take the most rigorous offering?"

He also said that people in admissions are evaluating broader use of an essay question.

Dixon added that the Presidential Campus Enrichment Grant uses an essay that requires applicants to talk about their involvement in diversity but does not define those activities as race specific.

In response to concern that people may be left out because of programs that have been eliminated, McNamee said that few programs had been eliminated. "Our strategy is to move as quickly as we can to make changes and leave programs in place while adaptations are being made."

Susan Gooden, director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center, suggested extending legacy privileges to the children of graduates of Virginia Tech's sister HBCU institution, Virginia State University.

Dixon said, "These are the kinds of ideas we want to see come forward." He asked her to submit that suggestion.

Asked why so many more minority applicants decline offers than is the case for other applicants, McNamee said research is needed to help the university reach out to prospective students. He invited the questioner to share why he did accept the offer to attend Virginia Tech.

Regarding graduate admissions, McNamee reported that race and ethnicity are not selection criteria. "The best graduate programs, that compete for federal funds, will be more successful the more diverse they are."

See Review on page 2

Increase Diversity ...

Continued from page 1

U.S. Supreme Court has provided guidance on how to proceed. (The court's ruling in June on the Michigan cases) has recognized that having diversity ... enriches discussion, a goal that the board of visitors supports."

He said the goal is to increase the diversity of qualified students who apply to Virginia Tech. "In addition to recruitment programs such as VT STARS, we all have important roles to play in encouraging students to apply and assuring that Virginia Tech is an open and welcoming community to all. (VT STARS is the Virginia Tech Summer Training Academy for Rising Students, which provides non-formal learning experiences in information technology for low income, under-represented, or first-generation college-bound at-risk youth. See www.vtstars.vt.edu)

"Our board is dedicated to fostering diversity in all campus activity. We want to help people become complete individuals in this diverse society," Davenport concluded.

"We have all learned many things in this process," said McNamee. "And we have set standards for how we can discuss complex issues ... and shape the questions that still need to be resolved. Within the law, we will do the best we can to move the process forward."

Speaking from a PowerPoint presentation (available at www.provost.vt.edu), McNamee said, "The principle is non-discrimination" and "It is the educational benefit of a diverse environment that will guide our discussions."

He said that two principles will guide the use of race and ethnicity in university programs: 1) The activities and benefits of the university should be open to all; and 2) The narrowly-tailored use of race or ethnicity in selections should be limited to activities critical to creating a diverse campus environment.

During the review, 408 university units responded, 364 reported that there were no race or ethnicity conscious activities, and 44 reported one or more such activities for a total of 71 programs with race or ethnicity aspects. "We focused on race or ethnicity as a selection criteria," McNamee said.

Programs are acceptable if they are open to all, regardless of race or ethnicity, such as partnerships, cooperative agreements with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and programs with low-income or first-generation college student criteria. Most of the 71 programs were acceptable. Those that were problematic were modified or discontinued.

The university forwarded five programs to the Attorney General's Office in May 2003 for legal advice. Those programs were undergraduate admissions, privately funded financial aid where race or ethnicity were criteria, MAOP, federally-sponsored activity, and the McNair Scholars program, which is also a federally-sponsored program.

"While awaiting a response, we engaged the leaders of these programs to make recommendations," McNamee said. "Undergraduate admissions expanded recruitment efforts to improve the numbers of minority applicants and the numbers of those who accept offers of admission," which is significantly below the rate of acceptances for all enrollees, he said. Race and ethnicity continues to be one of many factors for selection.

The board of visitors learned at their Nov. 1 meeting that the Attorney General's Office has ruled that Tech's policy of considering an undergraduate applicant's race among many other factors was permissible.

However, use of race and ethnicity in the awarding of private financial assistance awaits a ruling from the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, McNamee said. Once that ruling is made, university officials will meet with donors to modify language in such awards, if necessary.

The AG's office also ruled that Virginia Tech and other state agencies should continue to comply with federally sponsored programs that support selection based on race or ethnicity, including the McNair Scholars program. "It is anticipated that the federal government will be modifying their language in response to the Supreme Court ruling," McNamee said.

Regarding MAOP, the program has already broadened its reach, McNamee said. "The use of race/ethnicity is one factor in considering overall under-representation in a planned

field of study." He added, "We are working with the MAOP leadership to make minor adjustments," asking if there are better ways to make the benefits available to more students. Later in the program, when a student who holds a MAOP scholarship said she wanted to transfer to business, but that college does not recognize MAOP, McNamee praised MAOP and said he would like to see its benefits extended to all colleges.

Randy Grayson, MAOP founder, told the Roanoke Times (Nov. 3, 2003, Tech officials: School meets affirmative action standards) that he doesn't believe the changes will harm the program because its purpose is to assist all underrepresented groups, whether lower-income blacks or lower-income whites from Appalachia. In many cases, the applicant's socio-economic status - not his or her race or ethnicity - helps the applicant

Review ...

Continued from page 1

Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP)

A number of people were concerned about changes to MAOP, offered personal testimony regarding the importance of the program, and reported that it is well regarded across the nation.

McNamee praised MAOP, but said that "The way we help students is different today than it was two years ago." He said MAOP now helps more students without hurting its benefits to minorities. "We believe MAOP is special at this university. We are going to work to make sure it is sustained." He said it should be expanded to all of the colleges. It currently serves students in six - excluding business and engineering.

Faculty recruitment and retention

McNamee explained that the university does not have race, ethnicity, or gender as part of the hiring guidelines. "Faculty members on search committees understand the importance to the university of a full range of attributes. We are looking at the complete person."

Dixon pointed out that department members on search teams want people with top talents, "and that can come from a variety of areas. So the teams are encouraged to use a wide search."

McNamee said that "In the 21st century university, excellence and diversity go hand in hand, and it's a mistake to separate them. To be successful, it is critical that departments be able to attract a diverse faculty. We require that search committee members understand the university strategic plan. I think we can be successful."

Asked about increasing diversity in the university's administration, McNamee pointed out that several searches are underway to fill vacancies and encouraged people to suggest candidates.

Regarding retention, McNamee said, "With every person who left there is a complex story. We're learning those stories and we are working with faculty to see what we can do. We are successful in some cases." But other universities recruit Virginia Tech's faculty.

Diversity research

Asked about efforts to measure the impact of narrow tailoring policies on Virginia Tech students and the commonwealth, Dixon responded, "This is the primary example of why we have to conduct research around diversity, and ask such questions as "How are majority students impacted." And McNamee said that the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights is looking for such studies. "We could become a leader in diversity research and scholarship and others could benefit." Members of the university community were encouraged to respond to the call for papers for this spring's conference on diversity scholarship, sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

Comfort levels

Asked how students can be helped to feel comfortable using programs that previously were not for them, McNamee

qualify for the program. And all participants must be accepted to Tech on their own merits first, he said.

Regarding programs where under-representation is factor, McNamee reported that the AG's office said, "Programs must be demonstrably open and unrestricted by race or ethnicity." McNamee added, "— so any student would feel comfortable in receiving benefits from such a program."

McNamee concluded that the "goals of the university in moving forward" are to understand and comply with the law, to monitor and report progress in achieving a diverse educational environment, and to identify and recommend the best practices for improving and maintaining the diversity of the student body.

asked students to share their individual needs, saying such feedback from many students will help fine tune programs.

Dixon said that the reasoning behind the Presidential Campus Enrichment Grant (a financial aid program for students who demonstrate commitment to educational diversity) is to give people the opportunity to have experiences in diverse environments and share them.

McNamee also invited confidential communication about any program that limits participation.

Goals

Asked what the university's goals are and when the university will feel the goal of diversity has been met, McNamee said that Virginia Tech is very far away from representing the population of Virginia. And Dixon said, "It is a moving target as the population changes. It is important to have an ongoing dialog."

While the university has not set targets, it does benchmark against peer institutions, McNamee said. "And we have a long way to go."

He emphasized that every student benefits by participating in an environment with a diversity of intellectual points of view and cultural backgrounds. "The goal is to enrich the educational benefits for every student."

Dixon added, "We need to give students every advantage, from a technical point of view and a human relations point of view."

Near the end of the question and answer session, McNamee said, "We have learned a lot as this has evolved. Perhaps we will be better off, working through this together than if it had been easy for us."

A more detailed report on questions and answers is posted at www.provost.vt.edu.

About 'The Conductor'

The Conductor is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at multicultural@vt.edu.

Back issues are online at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/vtpubs/spectrum/>

Editorial Board

Kimberly S. Brown, 231-8440, ksbrown@vt.edu
Richard Conners, 231-6896, rconners@vt.edu
Benjamin Dixon, 231-1820, bdixon@vt.edu
Mahmood A. Khan, 703-538-8398, mahmood@vt.edu
Susan Trulove, 231-5646, strulove@vt.edu

Production

Roxanna Link, Coordinator of Communications, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 231-2610, roxanna@vt.edu
Salem Times Register

Musings on the language, rhetoric of diversity, multiculturalism

By Susanna Rinehart, Theatre Arts
DIVERSITY. MULTICULTURALISM. DIFFERENCE.
TOLERATE. CELEBRATE. INCLUSION.
A PLACE AT THE TABLE.

The struggle for justice and equality has always been a laboratory for testing the power and endurance of language and rhetoric. Words and phrases find their power, lose their power, find their meaning, lose their meaning, take on new meaning, and on it goes.

A caveat here. It is clear (or should be) that what we call "it" is far less important than the cause itself. Conflicts over what is the "correct" word are most often thinly veiled excuses to avoid grappling with painful or uncomfortable realities. Anxiety over language often becomes a significant obstacle to participating in the dialogue at all. Many of us are guilty of shooting a disapproving glare or rolling our eyes at a speaker unfortunate enough to use "last year's (last month's?)" rhetoric. It only takes one experience of being on the receiving end of that glare to potentially silence the shaky voice of an emerging consciousness forever.

Having said that, *language does matter*. There is meaning in it. And, it can help us track our progress, our evolution (or lack thereof).

We've managed to go from "tolerating" to "celebrating;" from "respect" to "inclusion;" from "difference" to "diversity" to "multiculturalism." Progress? I truly believe so. But I have real concerns. We must look carefully at what these words mean and what they might imply.

I cringe a bit at the word "tolerance." I think many of us do. Take a look at Webster's definition: "sympathy or indulgence for beliefs and practices differing from or conflicting with one's own; the act of allowing something; the allowable deviation from a standard." To tolerate is defined as "to put up with." Hmm. Sounds a little begrudging, doesn't it? A little patronizing. Built into the notion of tolerance is the existence of a norm, a standard. Whose? As if I have to ask. However, as a friend reminded me recently, tolerance is the best we can hope for from some. And it is better than active intolerance. Certainly true, but I believe that real justice demands more than that.

To "celebrate" something or someone is to "honor," to "hold up or play up for public notice." The implication here is that diversity and difference are something to be proud of, something to be valued. That does appear to be progress. Even here there is the legacy of oppression of "the other." How about saying simply, "Diversity IS"? What I'm getting at is that a truly just and equal society would not need to celebrate difference. The need to celebrate it is embedded in a history of punishing it. So let's be careful not to be too self-congratulatory at our broadmindedness and generosity.

"Inclusion" is another complicated notion. It does indeed seem to move us forward from "respect," as "respect" implies a certain kind of polite distance. Inclusion is a word often used in the same sentence with "a place at the table." Without fully understanding why, I have been bothered by this one. I think I've figured out the source of my discomfort. It is reminiscent of the school playground. "Now, children, you have to include so-and-so in your game. It's the rule." "Do we have to?" "Yes you do." "Oh... all right. You can play." And this "place at the

table" thing. I get this image of a full table with perfectly arranged comfortable matching chairs, and someone being invited to pull up a metal folding chair and sit diagonally – because there is not quite enough room. As a newly retired VT professor said recently, "Yes, what we probably really need is a new table, and a new menu. Not just a place at the existing table." Well said. And more comfortable chairs.

Now FOR THE BIG GUNS. DIVERSITY. MULTICULTURALISM. Diversity is defined as the "condition of being diverse." Diverse means "composed of distinct or unlike qualities or elements; differing from one another."



Rinehart

In theory, this is fabulous. This does in fact describe what our culture is. We all differ from one another. Therein lies the rub. WE are diverse. NOT... "We are the norm, and then all those others can provide us with a little (pardon the phrase) color and

variation which will spice up our lives, render us more competitive in the job market, and make us feel good about ourselves." So, how about the insertion of one little word? "Celebrate OUR diversity." A world where our collective differences are on an equal playing field? Probably impossible given our history. But worth imagining, isn't it? Ever think how much "tolerating" and "celebrating" of the dominant culture a minority has to do? Suffice it to say, more than would probably be tolerated by the "majority."

Multicultural is defined as "of, relating to, reflecting, or adapting to diverse cultures." Again, a good word and a laudable ideal. But, let's face it. What has this word come to mean in practice? There's white heterosexual... and then there is the "multicultural" everybody else. At a dialogue I helped to facilitate recently, a member of Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority commented that there is not a single Caucasian member in her chapter. Hmm.

At a recent forum, the proven educational benefits of diversity were touted as the primary justification for Virginia Tech's commitment to fostering and promoting diversity on this campus. I could not agree more that the intellect, education, and fundamental humanity of a middle class white student, staff, or faculty member is profoundly strengthened and deepened in a richly diverse community. However, we don't talk much about the benefits of diversity to minority students, staff, and faculty members. In a perfect world, such diversity would certainly have the potential for benefiting every member of a community. Of course, only if everyone has a voice.

To me, it is a sad state of affairs that any of us are in a position to have to "justify" a commitment to diversity at all. Think about it. Once again, I remind us: "Diversity IS." The justification for our commitment to diversity should lie in the fact that a commitment to diversity is right and just. Equal opportunity and access for all are right and just.

The struggle is for justice and equality and freedom. The significance of what words we use, the words we struggle to come up with in the midst of that battle, pales in comparison to the necessity for real action and change. But let's not fool ourselves: Language does matter. Words have meaning and history and power.

The most segregated hour in America?

By James C. Klagge,
a Multicultural Fellow and professor of philosophy.

The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., once said "it is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning." How much have things changed?

The Multiracial Congregations Project (http://hirr.hartsem.edu/org/faith_congregations_research_multiracial.html), led by Michael Emerson, a Rice University sociologist, defines a multiracial congregation as one where no one racial group is more than 80 percent of the congregation. Using that standard, Emerson has found that only 8 percent of all Christian congregations in the United States are racially mixed to a significant degree: 2 to 3 percent of mainline Protestant congregations, 8 percent of other Protestant congregations, and 20 percent of Catholic parishes. [Why these differences?] This seems especially surprising since Jesus made an effort to cross cultural boundaries in his ministry, and Paul made Christianity the first voluntary multi-ethnic organization by insisting that Gentiles as well as Jews should be part of the growing Christian churches.

The pattern seems no different in the New River Valley. There is less diversity in the NRV (9 percent non-white) compared to the nation as a whole (25 percent non-white), but even if we loosen the definition of a multiracial congregation to one in which no one group is more than 90 percent, such congregations still seem rare.

After the Civil War there were several Black churches established in this area, including St. Paul's AME Church in Blacksburg and Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church in Christiansburg. In 1881, the (white) Blacksburg Presbyterian Church decided to offer outreach preaching services for the local Black population once a month at night. The attendance was good at first, but soon dropped off. The church admitted "the colored preachers thought we were infringing on their rights," so the services were suspended. But perhaps the Black folks were beginning to realize what was recently expressed by Paige Patterson, a leader in the predominantly white Southern Baptist Convention: "When it comes to rhetoric, the best Anglo preachers on their best days don't preach as well as a good black preacher on his worst day."

Integration in church worship did not come to Blacksburg until 1961. The minister at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, Rev. Ellison Smyth, was asked by his Ushers Guild what to do if Black folks came to a service wanting to attend. "What should you do? They are people, sit them anywhere they want to sit." Soon the church governing body approved a statement endorsing integration of seating, membership, and use of facilities. The lone dissenting vote against the statement was V.P.I.'s President Walter Newman, who then left the church. In an interview 30 years later, (<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/blackhistory/timeline/smyth.htm>), Rev. Smyth (for whose father Smyth Hall was named) reflected on the long-term effects of that statement: "our doors are open, but there are very few blacks that come. ...I don't think there's any drive because of the reluctance to do anything that might weaken the existing black churches. I don't know what the answer to that is." Though few Blacks go to traditionally white churches, even fewer whites go to traditionally Black churches.

It is possible to think of lots of reasons why people worship with people of the same race. [Brainstorm here.] People tend to want a multi-racial church only if others conform to their own culture — sing their songs, adopt their style, follow their minister. So an "open door" is not usually enough to gain diversity. People rarely think about leaving their own comfort zone to experience the religious culture of another race.

A recent book by Beverly Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*, seems relevant to this issue. Tatum claims that people need significant places and times to develop their own sense of identity, including racial identity. For whites, these opportunities are pervasive, since racial sameness is the

See *Most Segregated Hour* on page 4

SWOPERA - spoken word opera

by Eliot Kriviski,
communications major

It wasn't slam poetry, and it certainly wasn't an opera. It was the Carpetbag Theatre Company's melding of traditional theatrics and contemporary rhyming into a hybrid of dramatic energy known as "Swopera," or "Spoken Word Opera."

Through the joint efforts of a few organizations on campus, from the Black Student Alliance to the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Carpetbag Theatre Company brought its collective talents in the form of "Swopera" to an almost filled Haymarket Theatre in Squires Student Center.

Yet, what brought many students to the show was not only the renown of the theater company for its socially-charged themes and original performances, but also curiosity. Not many knew what the show would be about, only that it would be a practice in a different type of art form.

"I want to see the whole slam poetry experience," said Laura Devlin, a junior interdisciplinary studies major. "(These) artists have passion, and that's what I love to see."

Devlin also said that she was interested in seeing what social topics and issues the troupe would present in the show.

The narrative of "Swopera" centered on a group of people who live in an undesignated 'hood' of America. The family has inherited not only a family restaurant that was once the cultural center of its community during the civil rights movement, but also the dream and disillusionment of the people who once lived that dream as they try to pass on that same feeling to the next generation. The show dealt with the difficulty that comes from trying to connect one generation to the next, the old unwilling to admit they have become old, and the young hesitant to take the reigns of the future.

The actual format of the play is hard to describe. The cast at some points engaged in traditional theatrical drama, only to jump into hip-hop/soul musical numbers, all the while conversing in the poetic language of slam poetry.

The uncanny yet compelling mixture of genres made an impression upon many students.

"(The actors') energy held my attention the whole time," said Brad McCullough, a freshman engineering major. McCullough also said how the actors expressed themselves helped make a connection to the audience and get their point across.

Other audience members thought that the mix of theatrical styles was a necessary component for the company to bring their topics and race and society home.

Cristin Coles, a senior sociology major and president of the BSA, thought that the company did a good job with bringing its message of social and racial issues in a different way.

She was also pleased to see that a youth group from the Dumas Theatre Company from Roanoke was present in the audience.

"I think it's great to see the younger kids here. I'm not sure what kind of theatre they've already been exposed to, but just like a college audience, it's good to broaden their horizons," Coles said.

The Carpetbag Theatre Company is a non-profit, professional theatre company that picks a diverse group of actors, writers, and musicians to create and perform original shows, from regular plays to musicals.

Yet to Takiyah Amin, a third year masters student in



The Carpetbag Theatre cast on stage as they perform "SWOPERA."

Theatre Arts administration, it was Company's creation method that made her confident in the actors' ability to connect with the audience.

"(They) create meaningful artwork with the community," Amin said. "They present stories and other people's lives, which makes it more real."

The article is from the Collegiate Times, www.collegiatetimes.com/
Copyright (c) 2003 The Collegiate Times, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Most segregated hour ...

Continued from page 3

norm of experience for whites. But for Blacks, she claims, these opportunities need to be established and protected, since racial otherness is the norm of experience for Blacks in America. Perhaps Black churches play a valuable role for Black life, one for which there is no comparable need in White life.

Some multiracial churches are in transition and are unstable. Few multiracial churches are successful. One example is Oakhurst Church, a Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia — described in the book *O, Lord, Hold Our Hands: How a Church Thrives in a Multi-cultural World*, 2003. In the New River Valley, one church that I know of qualifies as multiracial — the Christian Growth Center (www.cgchurch.org) — an evangelical church in Christiansburg that has roughly 65 percent white, 30 percent Black, and 5 percent Hispanic members. It was founded some 20 years ago and grew as a diverse congregation. Another local church that comes close to being multiracial is Dublin United Methodist Church. This church was created in the late 1960's by intentionally joining two previously segregated congregations. Currently they have more than 50 non-white members in a congregation of more than 700. If readers of this article go to churches where the majority membership is less than 90 percent, please share this with me at jklagge@vt.edu.

White people whose interest in integrated worship goes beyond a simple "open door" policy may wish to consider these churches or consult this list of over two dozen predominantly Black congregations in this area: www.diversity.vt.edu/churches.html.

It remains an open question whether American Christians will achieve the diverse community of which Dr. King dreamed in which God's children — black and white — will join hands and sing together in church.

Klagge and his son Nick are members of Asbury United Methodist Church in Christiansburg.

Multicultural fellows applications available

The Multicultural Fellows Program is an initiative designed to provide a formal mechanism for faculty, administrators and staff to contribute to the university's mission of fostering a welcoming community for all. There are many individuals throughout the university community who regularly contribute to multicultural and diversity programs. The Multicultural Fellows Program is a way to recognize and encourage these activities.

There are currently 16 individuals who were selected from Virginia Tech's faculty, staff, and administration to officially serve the university as Multicultural Fellows. The Fellows have had the opportunity to influence how the university addresses issues surrounding diversity and campus climate. This group meets monthly and is responsible for the creation and continued publication of the *Virginia Tech Conductor*; a newsletter supplement to the Spectrum. This year there are 11 positions open as seven fellows have moved or plan to move to alumni status. Applications are available in the office of Multicultural Affairs, 332 Burruss, mail code- 0176 by Monday, December 15, 2003. Contact Alicia Cohen, acohen@vt.edu, 231-1820 for an application. Individuals interested in serving as a Fellow should have:

- a demonstrated commitment to diversity at Virginia Tech
- a willingness to work as a part of a team
- time available to attend two-hour monthly meetings (currently 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on Fridays; specific dates are determined based on availability of fellows)
- an interest in developing projects that contribute to diversity and multiculturalism

Patriot Act ...

Continued from page 1

International Center, and English Language Institute (ELI), considerable time and effort are being expended to ensure the accuracy of all data. More time is also spent helping students avoid potential violations and to work with individual students to find the best immigration solutions to their individual situations.

A small percentage of students have encountered difficulties and delays in receiving and renewing visas. In most instances, the students have had to defer their admission or withdraw from a semester because they were not able to arrive in time to begin classes.

Individuals from countries subject to the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) — predominantly Muslim countries — have been subjected to fingerprinting, photographs, and increased questioning at airports. These individuals are also required to periodically report to an immigration office for interviews, resulting in missed days of classes and work. In August, six students were refused entry at U.S. airports and were returned to their home countries to obtain new visas.

While international student enrollment at Virginia Tech has been steady over the last few years, there has been a downward shift in the number of students from predominantly Muslim countries. Judy Snoko, ELI director, notes, "Enrollments at the ELI are down overall, with no students from Saudi Arabia, UAE, or northern Africa."

Individuals opening bank accounts and applying for charge cards have been affected by policy changes that financial institutions have instituted as required by the anti-money laundering programs mandated by the Patriot Act.

David Cole, James Dempsey, and Carole Goldberg in their book *Terrorism and the Constitution*, offer an opinion that deserves our consideration. They insist that civil liberties are not threats to national security but are the essence of America. What are we fighting for in this war on terrorism, they ask, if not to protect our way of life which has personal liberty at its very core?