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Women's lax wins inaugural D1 game



Clare Murphy, a freshman from Waxhaw, NC., recorded two goals and one assist in VCU women's lacrosse's season-opener and first division-1 game.

SOPHIA BELLETTI
Staff Writer

Nearly 800 Ram fans stood in brisk 20 degree weather to show their love for the VCU women's lacrosse team played its inaugural division-1 game at Cary Street Field on Valentine's day.

With a recorded seven saves and 13 assists, VCU beat Gardner-Webb University 21-9.

"It was awesome seeing the whole community come together, both the school and the city of Richmond, to support our team," said freshman attack Molly Barcikowski. "There were so many people here today who wanted to come out to see what lacrosse was and I think we gave them a good showing."

Barcikowski began making her mark early, giving her team a 1-0 lead about seven minutes into the game.

"Personally, having the first goal ever in VCU lacrosse history is pretty awesome," Barcikowski said. "I'm excited that I got to do it with this team and I'm looking forward to making more of those memories."

Barcikowski was the highest scorer on Sunday with five goals total. The freshman from Sykesville, Maryland recorded a hat trick in the first 12 minutes of the match.

"Going out onto the field, I think we were all ready and it showed at the end of the game," Barcikowski said. "I think we met our expectations. Going into the next week of practice, we're just going to take this game as a learning experience and keep moving forward."

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James River Association challenges Dominion permit

ANDREW CRIDER
Staff Writer

The James River Association is challenging a permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) allowing Dominion Power to dump as much as 350 million gallons of coal ash wastewater into the James river.

"We are deeply disappointed that the permit approved by the State Water Control Board fell short of fully protecting the James River when the technology to meet stronger water quality protections is readily available and affordable," the association said in a press release Wednesday. "We are filing notice of an appeal to ensure that America's Founding River receives the same level of protection as any other waters."

The DEQ permit was issued Jan. 21 and allows coal ash — the byproduct of burning coal to produce power — dumping to take place from the Possum Point plant on the banks of the Potomac and the Brema power station 60 miles upstream of Richmond. The permit also sets legal precedent for future such permits.

The Environmental Protection Agency, one of the regulatory government bodies said coal ash contains toxic elements including mercury, cadmium and arsenic among other contaminants. Coal ash wastewater is created when the ash is mixed with water for storage purposes.

Dominion currently has 11 wastewater ponds across the state, some of which are more than 50 years old.

Dominion spokesman David Botkins said the removal of the wastewater from ponds will be helpful for the environment.

"The whole issue of Dominion closing its coal ash ponds is a positive environmental story," Botkins said. "When the regulation came out in April of 2015, we started moving aggressively to comply with it."

Dominion will be treating the wastewater rigorously beyond the requirements of the

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VCU alum makes splash at Google



JOSHUA BUCK
Contributing Writer

Local artist and 2009 VCUarts alum Richie Pope has been on a roll lately, illustrating two Google Doodles this year and publishing more for The New York Times, The Atlantic and The New Yorker.

Pope said he discovered his love of artistic storytelling early. Growing up, his mother didn't buy him many comics, so between getting the occasional book from the local 7-11, he decided to get more resourceful.

"I had my own little comic series with my own little fake logo," Pope said.

In addition to having a stack of scrapbook comics, Pope said he would also spend time watching superhero cartoons and absorbing their complex, drawn out story lines.

Pope explained how, like many teenage creatives, his tastes began to gain more of an edge during his high school years, and he used his art to channel the personal pain and angst of youth.

But even as an adolescent, Pope had a knack for seeing the the world outside of his own experiences.

"In high school, I spent more time inside watching CNN than I did going outside," Pope said. "Like, do other kids sit around and watch CNN?"

After high school graduation and talking with one of his teachers, Pope decided to give VCU a try.

Though art was his passion, Pope said his path wasn't immediately clear. He credits the Arts Foundation program and professor Sterling Hundley with turning him onto communication arts.

"I only knew that (things like) children's books were illustrated," he said. "I didn't know that an illustrator was an actual title until I came to VCU."

Pope said illustration allowed him to tell stories at a pace that was appealing to him.

"At 18, I was too impatient to to be an animator, too impatient to do comics," Pope said. "But I could just do an image and say something. It was still storytelling."

Aside from figuring out his lane as an artist, Pope credits his time

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Acknowledging the many faces of privilege

SIONA PETEROUS
Contributing Columnist

As part of VCU's 14th annual Black History Month Lecture, creator of the nationally acclaimed single panel comic series "The Knight Chronicles and (TH)ink," Keith Knight presented his slideshow lecture series, "They Shoot Black People, Don't They?"

Following the death of Michael Brown and the events that followed in Ferguson, Knight decided he would create a slideshow to discuss police brutality, racism and how our everyday interactions allow it to perpetuate society rather than draw another comic.

During the lecture, Knight used his drawings as a visual guide to explain

how, throughout his 20 years of publishing comics, he continuously revisited the topic of police brutality.

If you're part of a minority community in America, then there is nothing new about the conversation surrounding police brutality to systematically justify abuse towards all Black Americans and other minority groups for centuries. However, the conversations about police brutality — whether it be on social media's growing hubs of influence, in the news or in academic settings — there is a common thread: the focus is almost exclusively on cis-hetero Black men.

As a Black woman who aims to utilize and mobilize solidarity as a political tool to influence change, I find this historical trend to be extremely frustrating, as it highlights the dissonance and misunderstanding of how exactly privilege works.

A person can be Black, but have the privilege of being a male in a patriarchal society, the same way a person can be Black and cope with the additional oppression stemming from being a woman living even further in the margin of the same patriarchal society.

Privilege is not overarching — it's multidimensional. It's possible to be completely devoid of certain inherent privileges in one respect, while benefiting entirely from it in another.

But even within an already-oppressed community, there is rarely acknowledgement that male privilege exists. Hence, Black women, myself included, are put in

a position of having to choose between prioritizing two aspects of themselves: race or gender.

It's ridiculous to expect Black women to decide between humanity and liberation for their race or humanity and liberation for their gender when we encompass both aspects — yet the dominant conversations regarding police brutality and racial inequality force us to make this distinction.

That being said, it shouldn't surprise anyone that as interested and excited as I was to listen to Knight's take on race relations in America, I was also extremely apprehensive. I was prepared to feel conflicted during the lecture, to agree with what Knight was saying

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In this section: Oral health Ph.D. program. McAuliffe opens Clinton office. Glen Allen black history month video. GRTC Pulse project. James River Association challenges Dominion dumping.

SCALIA DIES AT 79

Antonin Scalia, the influential conservative and most provocative member of the Supreme Court, has died, leaving the high court without its conservative majority and setting up an ideological confrontation over his successor in the maelstrom of a presidential election year. Scalia was 79.

Scalia was found dead Saturday morning at private residence in the Big Bend area of West Texas, after he'd gone to his room the night before and did not appear for breakfast, said Donna Sellers, speaking for the U.S. Marshals Service in Washington.

President Barack Obama made clear Saturday night he would nominate a successor to Scalia, despite calls from Republicans to leave that choice — and the certain political struggle over it — to the next president. He promised to do so "in due time" while paying tribute to Scalia as "one of the towering legal figures of our time."

Scalia's death most immediately means that that the justices could be split 4-4 in cases going to the heart of the some of the most divisive issues in the nation — over abortion, affirmative action, immigration policy and more. In a tie vote, the lower court opinion prevails.

Scalia used his keen intellect and missionary zeal in an unyielding attempt to move the court farther to the right after his 1986 selection by President Ronald Reagan. He also advocated tirelessly in favor of originalism, the method of constitutional interpretation that looks to the meaning of words and concepts as they were understood by the Founding Fathers.

Scalia's impact on the court was muted by his seeming disregard for moderating his views to help build consensus, although he was held in deep affection by his ideological opposites Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagan. Scalia and Ginsburg shared a love of opera. He persuaded Kagan to join him on hunting trips.

He was in the court's majority in the 2000 Bush v. Gore decision, which effectively decided the presidential election for Republican George W. Bush. "Get over it," Scalia would famously say at speaking engagements in the ensuing years whenever the topic arose.

A smoker of cigarettes and pipes, Scalia enjoyed baseball, poker, hunting and the piano. He was an enthusiastic singer at court Christmas parties and other musical gatherings, and once appeared on stage with Ginsburg as a Washington Opera extra.

Ginsburg once said that Scalia was "an absolutely charming man, and he can make even the most sober judge laugh." She said that she urged her friend to tone down his dissenting opinions "because he'll be more effective if he is not so polemical. I'm not always successful."

Quick-witted and loquacious, Scalia was among the most persistent, frequent and quotable interrogators of the lawyers who appeared before the court.

During Scalia's first argument session as a court member, Justice Lewis F. Powell leaned over and asked a colleague, "Do you think he knows that the rest of us are here?"

Scalia's writing seemed irrepressible and entertaining much of the time. But it also could be confrontational. It was a mocking Scalia who in 1993 criticized a decades-old test used by the court to decide whether laws or government policies violated the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

"Like some ghoulish in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after being repeatedly killed and buried, (the test) stalks our ... jurisprudence once again, frightening the little children and school attorneys," he wrote.

Scalia was passionate about the death penalty. He wrote for the court when in 1989 it allowed states to use capital punishment for killers who were 16 or 17 when they committed their crimes. He was on the losing side in 2005 when the court changed course and declared it unconstitutional for states to execute killers that young.

In 2002, he dissented from the court's decision to outlaw executing the mentally disabled. That same year, Scalia surprised some people with a public declaration of independence from his Roman Catholic church on the death penalty. He said judges who follow the philosophy that capital punishment is morally wrong should resign.

Scalia also supported free speech rights, but complained too. "I do not like scruffy people who burn the American flag," he said in 2002, but "regrettably, the First Amendment gives them the right to do that."

The only child of an Italian immigrant father who was a professor of Romance languages and a mother who taught elementary school, Scalia graduated first in his class at Georgetown University and won high honors at the Harvard University Law School.

He worked at a large Cleveland law firm for six years before joining the faculty of the University of Virginia's law school. He left that job to work in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

From 1977 to 1982, Scalia taught law at the University of Chicago.

He then was appointed by Reagan to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Scalia and his wife, Maureen, had nine children.

Obituary by the Associated Press



PHOTO BY MIRANDA LEUNG

The James River Association is challenging a permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality allowing Dominion Power to dump as much as 350 million gallons of coal ash wastewater into the James river. The Southern Environmental Law Center is representing the James River Association in the case.

JRA challenges Dominion dumping permit

—continued from page 1
permit issued by the DEQ, according to Dominion spokesman Rob Richardson.

"The water at the Bremono power station is going to be filtered and treated and then it's going to go into a holding tank," Richardson said. "When the water is in that tank it's going to be tested to make sure it's going to meet the stringent DEQ permits."

Richardson indicated that there was no other way to remove the wastewater from the collection pond than dumping it into the James.

"Dominion is filtering and treating this water, it's safe. its non toxic, it does not have coal ash in it, it's safe treated water," Richardson said. "We live in Virginia too, we use the river, we boat on the river, we swim on the river, we take our families to the river, we are aren't doing something that would harm the river."

The Southern Environmental Law Center will represent the James River Association in its case.

Senior attorney Brad McLane said the filtration system Dominion says it will use will make the wastewater safe enough to be drained into the rivers.

"At this point Dominion has gone above and beyond what the Department of Environmental Quality was requiring, following a really good treatment system," McLane said.

According to McLane, the Clean Water Act requires when elements are disposed in the water that there be both a technological standard to filtration and testing.

"The recent test of the Dominion treatment system got arsenic down to a level so low you couldn't see it," McLane said.

McLane said he thinks the permits fail to issue regulations appropriate for technology standards.

"If you get arsenic down to that 25 parts per billion (ppb) that's a very safe level of arsenic. Instead the permits would allow 520 ppb."

McLane said the pollution limits are currently too high and are much higher than what Dominion is doing of their own accord.

"Dominion has this treatment system that can get the water to a very safe level, we hope they use it, but they are not obligated to," McLane said. "They can save money by not using their treatment system by not using it to its max ability."

If we get significant public comment we can make changes to the permit. DEQ looks at the application and sees how well it adheres to the laws and regulations. We hold public hearings, we have a public comment period and we draft the permit.

—BILL HAYDEN
DEQ SPOKESPERSON

Drew Frye, an independent chemical engineering consultant from Vienna, Va. agreed the amount of pollution the permits allow is relatively high.

"These limits are not very low, but they do seem typical of older sewage treatment plants," Frye said. "If you compare the limits and the EPA primary standards, they are about 100 times what is required."

Frye indicated that both the quantity and quality of the water in the James river should allow for the wastewater to be diluted with the river to acceptable levels.

Frye said the water in Richmond is more affected by the city's aging lead piping, than by the James river.

In 2013, a city report on water quality indicated that city water contained 6 ppb of lead, where the

EPA standard is 0.

DEQ spokesman Bill Hayden said the permits issued were structured around federal and state regulation.

"We follow Virginia water quality standards in those permits which are approved by the EPA, so the basis of the permits is Virginia law and federal law," Hayden said.

According to Hayden, the processes to issue the permits has a number of opportunities for the public to voice concern. The draft permits were affected by this process after the Southern Environ-

mental law center originally voiced its concerns.

"If we get significant public comment we can make changes to the permit," Hayden said. "DEQ looks at the application and sees how well it adheres to the laws and regulations. We hold public hearings, we have a public comment period and we draft the permit."

The DEQ would not offer comment about the lawsuit raised against the permits.

Bremo power station first began burning coal in 1931, but completed its natural gas conversion in June of 2014. The plant is roughly 60 miles upstream of the city's water intake plant on Douglasdale road.

Hayden said Dominion would be required to test the water downstream in order to make sure the

heavy particles would mix safely.

"When we issue the permit we look very closely at water quality issues, we make sure that Dominion takes steps to check water quality and do testing, they test for a lot of kinds of pollutions and if they find any," Hayden said.

The legal action is not the first of its kind, nor is it the only protest of the state's permit.

On Feb. 4, a bill proposed by state senator Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax) would require Dominion to dump its coal ash in landfills, but the bill died in committee.

"Coal ash right now is being stored in a bunch of ponds around the state in six different facilities and the EPA says they aren't allowed to be stored like that any more, they have to be stored in landfills," Surovell said.

According to Surovell, the landfills the power plants would like to use to store their coal ash would fail to contain their harmful chemicals. "The so-called landfills they want to put them in are not built to modern standards, they only have a clay liner on the bottom," Surovell said. "They don't have a synthetic liner. They don't have lining on the side and what we found is when you do that, the heavy metals in the coal ash tend to leach out into the groundwater and eventually find their way into the rivers."

Surovell was not motivated by the permits issued by the DEQ, but rather reacting to a coal ash leak into the Dale River.

According to the Charlotte Business Journal, the state of North Carolina will sue Duke Energy for \$6.8 million dollars after the local power company spilled 39,000 tons of coal ash into the Dale River in 2014.

"What North Carolina legislature ordered them to dig up all the coal ash and move it into modern

landfills that are properly lined so that it would not leak out," Surovell said. "That's what my bill sought to do is make sure coal-ash is being store in modern landfills."

The amount of coal ash Dominion plans to dump in the James is 33 times larger than what was dumped into the dale.

The issue behind finding alternatives to dumping the water into the James is cost. Surovell's bill would have cost between one and three million dollars. The price increases would be then passed on to dominion customers.

"People didn't think that paying an extra one percent on your utility bill would be enough, and some people thought that paying an extra one percent on a utility bill would be to much for clean water I guess," Surovell said. "Paying an extra one percent on their electric bill a month is a lot cheaper than cancer. heavy metal leaches out a bunch of fun stuff that is great for your complexion, like lead, cadmium."

On Feb. 8, InsideNova reported Dominion dumped 33.7 million gallons of untreated coal ash into Quantico creek last spring. The dumping occurred when wastewater in one of the Possum Point power station ponds was drained into the Potomac.

The Prince William County Board of Supervisors announced that they would appeal the state's permit to dump coal ash in response to the dumping in Quantico Creek.

"We have grave concern about Dominion Virginia Power draining water from their sizable coal-ash ponds and emptying it into Quantico Creek and the Potomac River," said Corey Stewart, chairman of the board of county supervisors in a press release last Thursday.

McAuliffe opens new Clinton Richmond office

FADEL ALLASSAN
Print News Editor

Gov. Terry McAuliffe headlined the opening of democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton's new campaign office in Richmond.

McAuliffe, who has called himself one of Clinton's strongest political allies, spoke at the office opening on Feb. 12 at 1000 Carlisle Ave.

The new office is where the Clinton camp will organize grassroots efforts in Richmond and central Virginia.

McAuliffe commended the former secretary of state at the opening event, touting Clinton's record as first lady and in the senate.

"I have known Hillary for 36 years, I know her passion, I know her soul I know her determination. She's a fighter, she's a progressive who gets things done, she doesn't just talk," McAuliffe said.

"I think you all realize that elections matter but we need your help. It's the grassroots, it's the door to door, it's the phone calls that are going to win this election," McAuliffe said.

The Virginia governor was the co-chairman of Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign and previously served as the Democratic National Committee chairman. In 2013, McAuliffe was elected governor, succeeding Republican Robert McDonnell.

In addition to sending a democrat to the governor's mansion in 2013, the Lt. Governor and Attorney General positions were also won by democrats for the first time since Gov. Douglas Wilder's administration in the 1990s.

McAuliffe urged democratic voters in the state to come out in numbers again in order to win the white house.

"You did it for me when we broke a 38 year trend where one party winning the white house and the other winning the governor's mansion, that didn't happen" McAuliffe said. "We won and our attorney general and lieutenant governor won. It was the first time in 24 years."

The campaign office opened one week after Senator Bernie Sanders's campaign opened its Richmond office in downtown Richmond.



PHOTO BY ANDREW CRIDER

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe spoke at Hillary Clinton's Richmond campaign office at the grand opening on Saturday. McAuliffe has called himself one of Clinton's strongest political allies.

McAuliffe criticized the Vermont senator, claiming that Sanders criticized Pres. Obama's record and that Sanders' policies were idealistic.

"I like Bernie, I've known Bernie for a long time, but he said the president was weak and a disappointment. I don't think our presi-

dent has been weak or disappointing," McAuliffe said. "I would like to offer everyone free college tuition in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but I won't because I can't. We don't need politicians making promises they can't keep."

After Clinton edged Sanders in the Iowa caucus on Feb. 1. Sand-

ers came out on top of Clinton by 12 percent of the popular vote in the New Hampshire primary one week later. The democratic presidential primary continues with the Nevada primary on Feb. 20 followed by the South Carolina primary one week later.

VCU unveils first Va. oral health research Ph.D.

FADEL ALLASSAN
Print News Editor

A new VCU School of Dentistry program is the first in Virginia to offer a Ph.D. in oral health research or the biomedical sciences.

The program, housed at the VCU Medical Center, will welcome its inaugural class in the fall 2016 semester and will focus on cancer, infection and stem cell engineering.

School of Dentistry dean David Sarrett said the new Ph.D. program is intended to underline the well-documented correlation between sound oral health and overall physical well-being.

The multi-disciplinary program will be open to students with bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees in dental surgery or any equivalents.

"The Ph.D. program in oral health research will emphasize these relationships in training future researchers, who will make discoveries and translate them to improved patient care by dentists and oral health care providers," Sarrett told VCU News.

While faculty for the program will primarily consist of doctoral-level professors from the School of Dentistry, it will also draw professors from the VCU School of Medicine and the School of Engineering.

Program director Oonagh Loughran said collaborations across several schools in the university will benefit students by allowing for a mutual exchange of talent and expertise.

The new program's research will be conducted in the Philips Institute for Oral Health Research, a research and education center in the school of dentistry which focuses on infectious, neoplastic and genetic diseases of the oral cavity and cancers of the head and neck.

According to the American Cancer Society, almost 60,000 people will develop head and neck cancer in 2016. Estimates from the ACS also indicate that more than 12,000 deaths will occur this year as a result of head and neck cancer.

The new oral research program aims to tackle the prevalence of these cancers in future years by training and preparing the next generation of researchers in oral cancer and various other diseases.

"The students we train will go on to lead their own research groups to tackle these diseases,"



The students we train will go on to lead their own research groups to tackle these diseases. This new degree is building on the research capability that we have now at VCU, while also looking to the future.

—OONAGH LOUGHRAN
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Loughran said. "This new degree is building on the research capability that we have now at VCU, while also looking to the future with VCU becoming not just recognized for our good clinical dentists, but also for our contributions to oral health research."

The School of Dentistry is one of five schools within the VCU Medical Center that U.S. News & World Report recognized as the No. 1 hospital in Virginia in their 2015 Best Hospitals rankings.

FAST FACTS

The **multi-disciplinary** program will be open to students with **bachelor's, master's or doctorate** degrees in dental surgery or equivalents

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City council approves GRTC Pulse construction

ANDREW CRIDER
Staff Writer

City Council approved the construction of the controversial \$53 million GRTC Pulse project in a 7-1-1 vote last week.

The measure will remove parking along Broad street to create 3.5 miles of bus-only lanes as part of a 7.5 mile rapid transit system stretching from Willow Lawn to Rockett's Landing, beginning October 2017.

According to the GRTC website, the Pulse project would improve local and regional mobility while minimizing travel times and accident rates. Construction of the 14 station system will begin in April.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe played a crucial role in securing a \$25 million federal grant which helped build momentum to approve the project. The state government is also providing \$17 million for the rapid transit system, which leaves the city to pay the remaining \$7.6 million.

Councilman Parker Agelasto (D-5th district) cautioned against the city taking on too big of a burden for the system.

"I think that's a great aspiration, but the city can't drive that bus alone," Agelasto said.

According to the councilman's liaison, Ida Jones, the council had taken so long to vote on the Pulse because of the number of members of the public who came to speak on the proposal.

"If (City Council doesn't) want it, that is their decision, but we're not going to wait forever and I will give the money back to the federal government," McAuliffe said in a statement this month to the Richmond Times-Dispatch after some council members wanted to delay the decision another year.

McAuliffe is joined by Mayor Dwight Jones in support of the project, which he believes could be an economic asset for the city.



Construction of the 14 station, \$53 million rapid-transit GRTC Pulse system will begin in April. The project will remove all parking on Broad street to accommodate 3.5 miles of bus-only lanes as part of the 7.5 mile line beginning October 2017.

"The Pulse will be a stimulus for job growth, creating nearly 400 jobs within the city of Richmond and stimulating nearly \$35 million in economic impact," Jones said in a statement last week.

Mayor Jones said that the system would also help local business, although some local business owners disagree. Among them are Kathy Pritz, co-owner of the Richmond Book Shop on Broad street.

Printz said that all of the businesses owners around her, with

the exception of Alchemy Coffee shop, disapproved of the bus system because of the elimination of parking spaces to make room for the bus lanes.

"It would hurt if people can't pull up, if I can't pull up to unload my car, if people can't pull up to sell me books and a lot of the time they are older people and they're not going to be carrying those books for three blocks," Pritz said. "They have said there was going to be a lot of off street parking but that's al-

ready filled up with a lot of people."

Steve Rogge, a manager at Asado Wing and Taco company at Laurel and Broad streets agreed the lack of parking will hurt his business.

"It would certainly take out a lot of the parking we have for our customers, because we don't have a parking lot ourselves," Rogge said. "It would be a deterrent I would feel for customers."

Rogge said he doubted many of his customers would use the rapid transit system.

Derrisk Buskey, the manager of Monument shoe store on Broad, also said that bus system would hurt his business.

"It's bad due to the fact our storefront is on Broad street, and in Richmond everyone knows it's hard to find a parking spot," Buskey said.

Area high school's black history month video stirs controversy

ANDREW CRIDER
Staff Writer

Glen Allen high school in Henrico became the center of controversy and national news headlines last week when a video produced by the African-American Policy Forum was shown during two school assemblies.

The video, titled "Structural Discrimination: The Unequal Opportunity Race," shows colored runners racing next to white runners in a relay. During the race, various obstacles with titles such as "Housing segregation, poor schooling and underemployment," appear and prevent the colored runners from keeping pace with their white counterparts.

The video was shown as a part of the school's celebration of black history month on Feb. 4. According to U.S News Education, the high school has a 63 percent white and 21 percent black student body. School officials were made aware of complaints from parents that evening.

Don Blake, whose granddaughter attends Glen Allen high school told NBC12 he believed the video created racial divides.

"They are sitting there watching a video that is dividing them up from a racial standpoint. It's a white guilt kind of video," Blake said.

Responding to concerns from community members, the Henrico County School Board released a public statement on Feb. 11.

Most of us know very little about the social history of the United States and its contemporary impact. It was designed as a tool to throw light on American history.

—LUKE HARRIS
CO-FOUNDER, AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY FORUM

"While we as educators do not object to difficult and constructive conversations about American history and racial discourse past and present, we understand why many people feel this video in particular was not the best way to deliver such an important lesson," Superintendent Pat Kinlaw said in the statement.

The statement released by the school board indicated that there had been a large amount of emails and phone calls addressing the video.

"The school division has heard the feedback from our community loud and clear, and we will take additional measures as needed to review instructional material on an ongoing basis," Kinlaw said.

School Board Chairman Micky Ogburn said the Henrico School Board and administration consider the matter to be of "grave concern."

"It is our goal to prevent the recurrence of this type of event," Ogburn said.

The school board has announced that it instructed its faculty to no longer show the video.

Luke Harris, co-founder of the African-American Policy Forum, told the Washington Post that the video was designed for elementary and secondary schools.

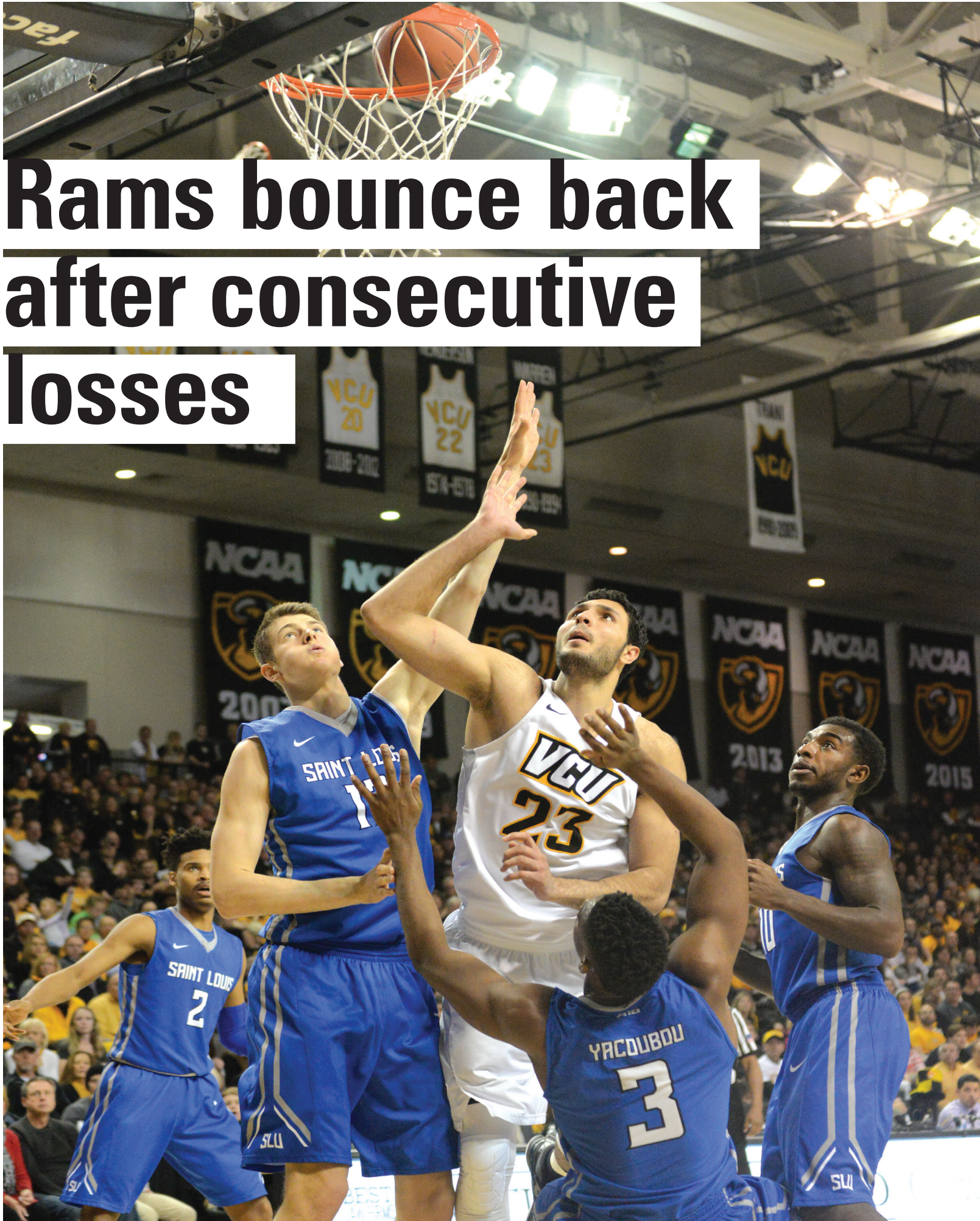
"We found that the video has a huge impact on the people that we're showing it to," Harris said. "Most of us know very little about the social history of the United States and its contemporary impact. It was designed as a tool to throw light on American history."



sports



Stat of the Week
VCU baseball is picked to finish second in the A-10 behind first place Saint Louis.



Rams bounce back after consecutive losses

MARCUS BLACKWELL
Contributing Writer

VCU returned back to the floor after a tough loss to George Washington University, by taking on the University of Massachusetts and Saint Louis University.

UMass

On Feb. 11 the Rams traveled to Massachusetts to face the 9-12 Minutemen. The game began with high energy, a usual sign of success for VCU, but the team struggled to get into a rhythm. VCU had issues throughout the first half on both the offensive and defensive ends. UMass came out firing from downtown, connecting on all seven of its 3-point attempts and forcing 11 VCU turnovers in the first half.

VCU scoring leader Melvin Johnson couldn't get it going early on and went into the locker room with just three points to his name. Despite the team struggles, junior guard JeQuan Lewis was effective offensively, racking up eight points and four assists as the team trailed by 11, 43-32 at the start of the second half.

The lead grew as high as 15, but VCU was able to fight back with a late 13-2 run powered by a great defensive effort, cutting the lead to two with 1:07 left in regulation. Despite the furious rally, UMass was able put the game away with clutch free-throw shooting in the final minute, handing VCU its seventh loss of the year. Perimeter shooting ended up being the tell-all in this game, as VCU only made 5-20, while UMass put in 10-17. Junior Mo Alie-Cox contributed 10 points and four rebounds, while Lewis and senior guard Korey Billbury both dropped off 15 points.

Saint Louis University

Following consecutive losses, the Rams returned back to Richmond on Feb. 13 to take on Saint Louis, in what was a treat for the home fans; VCU jumped on the board early, with Lewis hitting back-to-back 3-point field goals to open the game. VCU, with its stifling defense and fast pace offense, jumped out to a 14-3 lead in the first four minutes. The defense was all over the floor, causing turnovers and bad shot attempts for the Bi-

likens. Although the team played well at the start, at about the 10 minute mark the Rams went on a three-minute scoring drought that kept Saint Louis in the game as it got deeper in the first half.

With around three minutes left in the first half, VCU caught fire from long range, putting on a shooting clinic led by Billbury. He went into the locker room with four 3-pointers, while Johnson and Lewis both had two each. The Rams ended the half hot with a 20-point lead and a score of 44-24.

The second half began the same way as the Rams continued their dominance at both ends. In the first few possessions their defense forced back-to-back shot-clock violations, with one being capped with a monstrous block from Alie-Cox. With 10 minutes remaining, the Rams had lead ballooned by 28. The game ended with VCU winning 85-52. Sophomore forward Justin Tillman had a big second half, finishing with 12 points and 11 rebounds. Billbury finished with a game high of 20 points.

Head Coach Will Wade was proud of the way his team bounced back after taking two straight losses.

"I'm happy that we're back on the right track," said Wade. "The two games that we lost are completely on me, and it's squarely on my shoulders. Tonight we came out much sharper, and had great defensive energy for both halves."

This win for the Rams had a few different guys showcasing what was one of their better individual nights of the season. Leading scorer for the night Billbury also thought that the team's dominance was due to their defensive pressure.

"Even though we played great offense, it was the defense that got us this win," said Billbury. "We really focused, we all worked together and this is what we got. At first we were just winning, like blindly winning, now we know what we have to do out there. Thank god we won, but those losses really helped us."

Tillman felt that the team's overall intensity opened the door for easier looks offensively, especially for him.

"The trainers got me right, and things just started opening up for me," said Tillman. "We just stayed aggressive all game."

VCU will take the floor again for the home fans on Feb. 16 against Rhode Island University.

Junior Ahmed Hamdy-Mohamed is shooting 52.6 percent from the field with 5.8 points and 3.6 rebounds per game in a backup role.

GAME STATS		
VCU	vs.	UMass
23-50-46%	FG%	24-52-46.2%
28	Reb	28
14	Ast	15
10	Bench Pts	25
63	FINAL	69

GAME STATS		
VCU	vs.	SLU
30-58-52%	FG%	20-57-35%
36	Reb	34
17	Ast	14
31	Bench Pts	11
85	FINAL	52



Senior Melvin Johnson and junior Mo Alie-Cox find success on the hardwood after a big day at the General Assembly.

Ram in Action: Korey Billbury

ZACH JOACHIM
Contributing Writer

The 2015-16 season has been a roller coaster ride for the 17-7 men's basketball team. A 5-5 out-of-conference start, in which the Rams failed to gain a signature win, had skeptics buzzing and all of Broad Street fretting. Then came the streak; 12 wins in a row dating from Dec. 22 to Feb. 6 quieted the naysayers and placed VCU firmly atop the Atlantic Ten standings. Senior guard Korey Billbury spoke about the challenges of staying focused during the run. "I call them blind wins," Billbury said. "It just becomes easy to overlook the little things during a win streak. That's what coach Wade would harp on even after those big wins." Watching this team during the streak, one could not help but notice the special chemistry they have acquired in such a short time. Billbury, who describes himself as a collected guy who doesn't get angry easily, said that

this collective mentality has been a huge part of the recent success. "Everybody has pretty much a similar personality and background," Billbury said. "Being around this team lifts my spirits up." Recent losses at the hands of George Washington University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst have brought the Rams back down to Earth. "The little things that got covered up during the win streak came out the past two games," Billbury said. "Against GW, we played good defense in the first half, then struggled in the second. Then we flipped the problem at UMASS. We played good D in the second but not the first. We've just got to put two good halves of defense together, and we'll be alright." VCU now finds itself in a dog fight atop the A-10. The top four seeds will gain a double-bye in the conference tournament and seven teams with winning records now vie for those spots; Dayton University, St. Josephs Univer-

sity, St. Bonaventure University, GW, Davidson University, Rhode Island University and VCU. The senior is averaging 11 points and five rebounds per game. His production has stalled after his 20 point performance in the road win against Richmond on Jan 16, but he did find his groove in the loss against UMASS as he poured in 15 points. Billbury acknowledges that the team understands the urgency needed to finish conference play strong in order to put themselves in a good situation come tournament time. "We've got to be more urgent," Bilbury said. "We've got to pay attention to detail, play inside out, and rely on each other to carry out the plan coach Wade has laid out for us." A three-game home-stand after the UMASS loss could be just what the doctor ordered. "Winning is contagious," Billbury said. "Problem is, losing can be the same way."



Senior Korey Billbury recorded a game-high 20 points against Saint Louis on Feb. 13.



Freshman Sky Hyat recorded one goal and four assists in VCU's win over Gardner-Webb.

Women's lax wins inaugural Division 1 game

—continued from page 1

VCU ended the first half leading 12-4. The Rams aggression and offense control continued into the second half, although it took the team a little longer to regain momentum. Seven minutes in, freshman midfielder Blaire Langelier scored her third goal, putting VCU on the scoreboard for the first time in the second half. Langelier, Barcikowski and freshman attack Mackenzie Galli all recorded hat tricks. The Bulldogs used fast breaks to get on the board. Three goals in three minutes gave the Rams a scare, but VCU's redshirt-freshman attack Chloe Mujwit responded with a goal of her own. "We need to slow the ball down

a lot quicker in transition and even if they don't score on transition we need to be able to be the aggressive," said Head Coach Jen O'Brien. "That's something we like to do, play aggressive style defense." In the end, O'Brien said the game was a learning experience. "We're going to continue working on our chemistry on both ends of the field," O'Brien said. "That's natural with a young team, we're still learning to work together and support each other." O'Brien said it was important to the coaches that they played a deep rotation Sunday, making sure every girl on the roster got minutes during the program opener. "We want to play fast and play aggressive so it's very important to have those subs," O'Brien said.

"We have to develop our team and to develop our team they have to be out there in games." Overall, 11 Rams found the back of the net in the victory. Redshirt-freshman midfielder Sky Hyatt led the team with four assists. "I am so proud of our girls," O'Brien said. "We've said it from the beginning they've put in so much work. They've waited so long to play a game. I'm just so happy for them to finally be able to play and enjoy this game with all of the support that they have." The Rams return to action Feb. 20 as O'Brien returns to her alma mater UMBC where she played all her four years. Game-time is set for 3 p.m.

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Hollywood versus VCU: diversity in question



ILLUSTRATION BY CARSON KOUMURA

ADRIEL VELAZQUEZ
Contributing Writer

The 2016 Academy Awards Ceremony is already marred with controversy due to its bleached pool of nominees — but how do the VCUarts Theatre and Cinema departments measure up?

The Oscars ceremony has faced criticism due to the lack of diversity in its nomination pool, causing some in the Hollywood sphere, including Will and Jada Pinkett Smith and Spike Lee, to boycott the awards.

Since the Oscars' inception in 1929, only 6.4 percent of Oscar nominees were non-white, and this hasn't changed much in recent years. Only six men of color have won the Academy Award for best actor and only one woman of color, Halle Berry, has ever won Best Actress. In 2016, actors such as Idris Elba, Michael B. Jordan and Will Smith were snubbed of a nomination.

So how does VCU's actor pool stack up against this contested pool of nominees?

According to a recent study by the University of Southern California, of all the speaking parts in films, 74.1 percent were white and the other 25.9 percent were non-white. In comparison, the VCUarts Theatre department is more diverse as 64.5 percent of students are white and 35.5 percent are non-white.

"Diversity at VCU is a core value that we want to protect and advance," said Joseph Seipel, Dean of VCU's School of the Arts. "We need to keep recruiting the best talent to the School of the Arts, and that (goes) for students as well as faculty."

VCUarts' Cinema program is comprised of 66.6 percent white students and 33.3 percent non-white students. Students in this program learn the fundamentals of filmmaking, from writing to production.

"Our job is to serve the students that we accept," said David Toney, artistic director and assistant professor in TheatreVCU. "In terms of diversity, that means that we have to give them opportunity. And so, for the most part, our casting is colorblind."

Toney emphasized that, because TheatreVCU is part of an educational institution, they're going to choose roles based on talent more than any other quality.

"There's a lot of different kinds of people here," said Hajr Avant, a first-year cinema student. "I feel like our group is different ... because although it is diverse, if similar people band together, that kind of cancels out the whole point of diversity. But we don't do that. We have a lot of different kinds of people that work together often."

Recent films such as "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and "Creed"

have brought diversity to franchises that had been lacking.

"Currently, with all the things going on, such as a black person in Star Wars, people of color are starting to be represented more in film and that's really important," said Byron Koranteng, another first year cinema student. "When I was younger, I didn't have many black directors to look up to. I want to be the representation. I want kids to look up to me and say 'Hey I can make movies too.'"

"Creed," a sequel-spinoff of the classic Rocky franchise was released to critical acclaim in November 2015. However, neither its African-American director nor its African-American lead were nominated for an Oscar, only Sylvester Stallone was.

"Straight Outta Compton" was also released to critical acclaim, but only its two white writers were nominated for best original screenplay — none of its diverse cast or its nonwhite director.

"They might have a predisposition to select their own reflection," Toney said. "Maybe even unaware to them, they see something and they see themselves. They're looking at the container instead of looking at the heart and mind and the issue of whatever project they're looking at."

After controversy arose earlier this year where an instructor in VCUarts allegedly made racist remarks to a student, which resulted in protests involving poster-bombing the facilities, the school's administration has made efforts to promote diversity and sensitivity training.

"The School of the Arts is deeply committed to championing excellence and we want to ensure that our community is an inclusive one, where everyone — no matter your perspective, background, or life experience — can have a voice and a place," Seipel said.

Activists working towards diversity in the arts are faced with a particular challenge, especially because institutions like the Academy have existed and operated the same way for decades.

"Complaining goes a long way ... and money talks, so you have to figure out a way that you can become viable," Toney said.

A recent study by The Economist showed that 94 percent of the Academy voters were white, an unfortunate disparity that might impact the decisionmaking process for nominations.

"What these people don't want is to be constantly held up to a realistic light," Toney said. "But that's what theater's for. We're supposed to show humankind what they actually are, not what they think they are. We are compassion, we are conscience. So they don't know what we're gonna tell them."

Ram Reverb:

"LEAVE ME ALONE"
BY HINDS

JOSHUA BUCK
Contributing Writer

On their debut full length, "Leave Me Alone," Spanish rock quartet Hinds bring surf rock back into the garage and successfully capitalizes on the buzz built up from their breakthrough EP last year.

Known for their breezy live sets, Hinds manages to successfully bring a stunning level of spontaneity into the studio. There's a real sense of joy here that jumps out of every track. From the very first shared verses of "Garden," it's impossible not to imagine the girls glancing over at each other and smiling as they launch into the spellbinding harmonies. Every track has the feeling of being at your friends' apartment and having them suddenly say "You have to hear this new song we wrote!"

The band has been together for almost half a decade at this point and it shows. Carlotta Cosials and Ana Perrote trade lead vocals and beachy guitar riffs. Ade Martin lays down scuzzy bass lines and Amber Grimbergen delivers some laid-back, retro-cool drumming.

At its core, this an album full of songs about boys, but the the band unleashes a mischievous wit to keep the tracks from sounding routine. Songs like "Fat Lipped Kiddos" (Lips still hurting and my fear doesn't know it/ You slept here for ten last night) are evocative in their simplicity. At other points, the band uses their infectious energy to make lines like "I'm flirting with this guy/ Just to pretend I'm fine" sound legitimately upbeat.

Hinds has delivered one of the best albums of the young year, and it should be a PBR-accompanied staple throughout 2016.

SOUNDS LIKE:
A 60's girl group hosting a grungy basement party

PERFECT FOR:
Drinking beers and bitching about boys (or girls)

Shaferbird Feature

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



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— NICOLE CAREY



PHOTO BY AUSTIN WALKER

The Daily, located in Carytown, made for a romantic lunch spot this Valentine's Day.

Pope makes a splash at Google

—continued from page 1

at VCU with helping him to grow as a person in addition to the Arts Foundation program helping him find his direction in studying illustration.

"I used to be really, really scared of people," Pope said. "I just got thrown into situations that I wouldn't have asked for, but sometimes you've just got to be pushed forward. (VCU) taught me confidence in myself and in my story."

Since graduating in 2009, Pope said his work has become more political because he feels it has become more important for him to share his experiences with others.

Pope said he's stayed in touch with many of the people he met during his time at VCU, and they've assembled their own collection of artists.

"A lot of us are doing really cool stuff ... When I got the Google Doodle, a friend of mine called up and we just talked," Pope said. "He's been getting into the National Portrait Gallery and we're just talking like 'Man this is weird. We were just nineteen-year-olds with less facial hair.'"

Pope said he and his friends may have accidentally influenced other local artists too.

"They come up and they're like, 'You inspire us!'" Pope said. "And then sometimes that gap starts to flatten, and then you're all

just friends and you hangout and you're just inspiring each other."

Pope said the strong community in Richmond, combined with the area's relatively cheap rent, has kept him from moving

to a bigger city like New York. He said he expects to continue doing work around the River City, but hopes to be exploring new fields in the next five years.

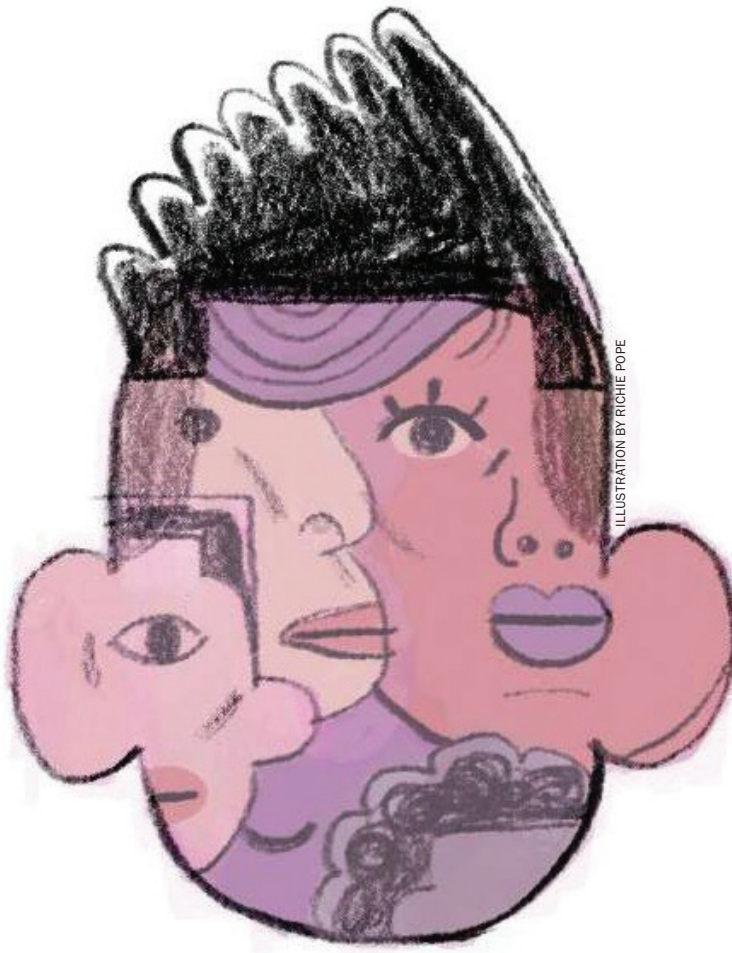


ILLUSTRATION BY RICHIE POPE

VCU Music goes pro bono with Jazz 4 Justice concert



Students from VCU Music perform during the Jazz 4 Justice concert, which was a collaboration with the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation to fundraise for local pro bono legal consultation.

SAMUEL GOODRICH
Contributing Writer

Rarely is there an intersection between legal counsel and jazz music, but a recent event at VCU found it and added some philanthropic flair.

VCU Music collaborated with the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation to host Jazz 4 Justice on Feb. 5 to support pro bono legal representation in the Richmond community. The concert was performed by jazz students and directed by jazz professor Antonio Garcia.

Jazz 4 Justice began at George Mason University in 2001 with the goal to support legal representation in Fairfax County, and has since spread across to many other college music programs across Virginia.

Garcia, who is also the director of Jazz Studies at VCU, met a representative of the concert series at a jazz education conference and felt it would be perfect for VCU.

“The organization had already partnered with some other university jazz programs,” said Garcia. “I believed it to be an excellent avenue to raise funds both for pro bono legal services in the Richmond area and for VCU Jazz Scholarships.”

This was VCU’s second time hosting the concert in Richmond and, according to the director of communications for the music department Amy Sheets, Jazz 4 Justice has been a great success along with other fundraising concerts

“Our fundraisers have been very popular,” Sheets said. “Not only is it a great opportunity to see a variety of student ensembles, but they support organizations in the Richmond community.”

These concerts, like the many others offered by VCU Music, also give students experience in playing their instruments in front of a live audience.

“Most of our students recognize that without their knowledge grown in the classroom the concerts would suffer in quality,” Garcia said.

While many of the concerts are performed in a cycle, like the Jazz Orchestra and faculty recitals, special events like Jazz 4 Justice usually get presented on stage when there is enough passion from the department to make it a reality.

“It takes a lot of energy to plan and stage an additional concert,” Garcia said. “So only the ideas that rise to the top of the proposed list can typically bloom into a successful event.”

Jazz 4 Justice is not the only special concert being put on this semester.

This past Sunday, the department hosted the “Carnival of Animals,” a family-friendly performance of Saint-Saëns’ composition. On Feb. 20 there will be a concert from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, a chamber music quartet who’ve toured around the country.

“Sleep Paralysis” paints the subconscious at Gallery 5

KRISTEN LAIR-BAKER
Contributing Writer

Gallery 5’s First Friday event featured dream-like paintings by Kevin McKee with performances by Friend Roulette, Georgie Isaacs and Napster on Feb. 5.

McKee, who said he frequently experiences sleep paralysis, received his Bachelors of Science in Psychology in 2012 and went on to complete the Arts Foundation program. Throughout his 8 years at VCU, McKee said he appreciated the helpfulness of the faculty, especially in the Mass Communications department.

“My interests in psychology and art connect because they are both basically obsessions with the same organ,” McKee said. “I’d like to know how human perception works, and maybe that informs my aesthetic sense.”

Sleep paralysis is a state when, nearing the moment of falling asleep or waking up, one’s body becomes paralyzed but they remain conscious. It typically includes intense hallucinations, sometimes accompanied by panic.

Each of the paintings in McKee’s exhibit, made with oil on hard masonite board, correlates with some form of a dream or hallucination experienced throughout sleep paralysis.

However, it is possible to get to the point where you can control them. This is known as lucid dreaming, which is when a person becomes aware that they are dreaming and can begin to manipulate their own hallucinations, leading to a more vivid experience. Typically, these hallucinations do not result in panic as the dreamer is much more aware of their surroundings.

When deciding the name of the exhibit, McKee said that he didn’t want to name the individual pieces in order to prevent any forced interpretation of them. Going off of this, he decided that the central theme and connotation of sleep paralysis goes along with that idea.

“I use dreams as an analogy to help people approach this kind of art, because dreams don’t come with titles or other ways to dissect their emotional impact,” McKee said. “It always seemed to me that they tap into something indescribable and coherent, yet articulated with incoherent forms and events.”

In addition to the exhibit, three different performances took place throughout the night, each correlating with the general theme and aesthetic of the gallery.

First, local Richmond performer Georgie Isaacs took the stage with a few original songs as well as recognizable covers that the audience could sing along with. Performing on her guitar and ukulele, Isaacs works with two different styles of music.

“My more serious stuff is inspired by literally everything I’ve ever listened to,” Isaacs said. “I like to write about my own life experiences and the random things that pop into my head before I fall asleep. I have a few songs that are based off of dreams that I’ve had.”

Some of her originals include “Bacon Kisses” and “Procrastination Masturbation,” both being pretty self-explanatory, humorous and relatable to the amused audience members.

Isaacs was followed by Napster and a New York band called Friend Roulette.

Friend Roulette describes their band forming in the wake of an accident involving their songwriter.

“We were all friends and played together in other projects since around 2005, but after Matt got hit by a car, he started writing weird songs with one hand and a piano,” the group said. “Julia added her voice and violin, John joined with his bass clarinet and Friend Roulette was born!”

Friend Roulette is unique in that their music is inspired by the different interactions of each member’s styles. “Matt (the band’s songwriter) stands on the subway and thinks about stuff and then shares the ideas with Julia and John.”

Originating in New York, the band’s favorite places to travel for performances are Richmond and Brooklyn. Needless to say, the group has a lot of time on the road, though they say if it wasn’t for their apartments and jobs they’d like to travel more.

“The minivan that we cruise around in is named ‘Chumba’.

She doesn’t have an input so we mostly listen to CDs and take naps,” the group said.



Attendees examine Kevin McKee’s art at Gallery 5. The exhibit focused on the subconscious phenomenon of sleep paralysis.



Performer George Isaacs plays onstage on February’s First Friday event. The Richmond native said her dreams inspire her.

EDITORIAL

Expect greatness: will Kendrick Lamar make history tonight?

MUKTARU JALLOH
Staff Writer

The event coined as “music’s biggest night” is featuring a storybook opportunity for an up-and-up hip-hop artist from Compton, California at the 58th annual Grammy Awards tonight.

Rapper and two-time Grammy winner Kendrick Lamar has a chance to become the third hip-hop act to ever win Album of The Year, and is also nominated for a record 11 awards(--)only one short of Michael Jackson’s 12 nominations in 1983.

Lamar, who released his critically-acclaimed album “To Pimp A Butterfly” last year, is also poised to win Song of the Year with his track “Alright” from the nominated album, which would be the first rap song to carry that title.

Also in the running for Album of the Year are pop stars Taylor Swift’s “1989,” The Weeknd’s “The Beauty Behind The Madness,” country singer Chris Stapleton “Traveller” and rock band Alabama Shakes’ “Sound & Color.”

Adele, who recently released her record-breaking selling album “25,” will be making her return to the Grammy stage after a four-year hiatus. Lady Gaga will also be performing a tribute to the late, legendary rock star David Bowie.

Lamar’s nomination for Album of The Year holds significance for all parties involved.

Many felt that Lamar was snubbed when his debut album “Good Kid, M.A.A.D City” earned him seven nominations at the 2014 Grammy Awards but not Album of the Year. Further controversy arose when Macklemore then took home Rap Album of the Year instead of Lamar.

Macklemore, a white artist, put out music that pandered more to the committee. His album “The Heist” featured several commercial pop hits including the diamond-selling song “Thrift Shop.” He did apologize shortly after the ceremony, commenting that Lamar’s album was the better candidate.

The committee’s controversial decision revamped several discussions and think pieces over race and the committee’s continued disconnect with black and hip-hop culture.

The Grammys, which began in 1959, didn’t award the first Grammy award for Best Rap Performance until 30 years later in 1989. Winners of the award, the Fresh Prince and DJ Jazzy Jeff, boycotted the ceremony with several other rappers due to the fact the award’s presentation was not televised.

A decade later, 21-time Grammy winner JAY Z boycotted the show due to what he felt were slights in the nominations that year, and also the non-showing of the rap categories during the live telecast. Last year, the Grammy’s again did not televise any of the four rap categories.

Lamar’s nominations make him the most nominated rap artist for a single night, surpassing the previous owner of that record, Eminem.

Lamar’s album “To Pimp A Butterfly” explores the show’s marginalization of non-white rap artists. Released in March, 2015, “To Pimp A Butterfly” is a politically-charged record that has received praise from activists focusing on racial issues.

Tackling themes such as race relations, police brutality, the exploitation of black talent in entertainment and survivor’s guilt, the album has undoubtedly impacted the industry.

The record has garnered high praise from many including President Barack Obama, who welcomed Lamar to the White House last year to discuss the youth and solving issues in the inner city. The president even chose the album’s “How Much A Dollar Cost” as his favorite song of 2015. The album was also ranked number one on end-of-the-year lists from publications including Rolling Stone, Pitchfork, Vice and Billboard.

An arguable contestant for most important album of the decade, “To Pimp A Butterfly” moved the needle sonically and socially. While there have been albums that have touched on similar topics, Lamar’s second album made the strongest statements.

A timepiece for the black experience in 2016, “To Pimp A Butterfly” will likely hold a significant place for this generation the same way Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On” and Public Enemy’s “It Takes A Nation of Millions...” have in the past.

More than just a social commentary, the album is marked by its well-crafted sound. With the album, Lamar chose to reject mainstream music and embraced past influences from legendary black artists such as The Isley Brothers, George Clinton, Parliament Funkadelic and Prince instead.

With a jazz instrumentalist and funk sound, “To Pimp A Butterfly” sounds nothing like anything from 2015.

Compared to the only two hip-hop albums to win Album of the Year(--)Lauryn Hill’s “The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill” and OutKast’s diamond-selling “Speakerboxx/ The Love Below”(--)“To Pimp A Butterfly” has little-to-no successful commercial mainstream songs.

“Alright,” a song which uplifts while noting the injustice that devalues black lives, has now become a protest record for the Black Lives Matter Movement and civil rights activist groups.

If Lamar wins this award tonight it would mean that the Grammy committee finally made the right decision and recognized hip-hop as a right-ful leading force in music and pop culture. Even more importantly, however, his win might be a breakthrough moment that amplifies the social issues that our society has failed to solve in the past 100 years.

Throughout time, the entertainment industry has marginalized black artists repeatedly. This occurrence was seen in this year’s Oscar nominations, in which no black-directed films were up for awards, even the record-breaking “Straight Outta Compton.” The controversy spawned the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag on social media and caused actor Will Smith to boycott this year’s awards.

A Lamar win might help bridge the gap between the Grammy committee and the current rap generation and rectify hip-hop’s place in music. Not only would it be a win for kid from Compton, but also a win for rap artists who have had to succumb to the Grammy’s snubs in the past.

As he said in a recent New York Times interview, “I want all of them. It’s not only a statement for myself but it’s a statement for the culture. (The Grammys are) important, because of the foundation the forefathers laid before me. Nas didn’t get a chance to be in that position. Pac. So to be acknowledged and to actually win, it’s for all of them.”

12

The number of award nominations for Michael Jackson in the 1983 Grammy Awards

11

The number of award nominations for Kendrick Lamar in this year’s Grammy Awards

0

The number of rap songs that have been awarded Song of the Year at the Grammy Awards

“The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill”
by Lauryn Hill
&
“Speakerboxx/ The Love Below”
by OutKast

The only other hip-hop albums to win Album of the Year at the Grammy Awards

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opinion

Reconsidering marijuana, the candidates

MONICA HOUSTON
Opinion Editor

Marijuana — a gateway drug that leads to harsher drugs? A mind-altering substance responsible for ill-conceived decisions and higher crime rates? A catalyst for the failed war on drugs?

Many of the 2016 GOP presidential candidates have used this reasoning to explain their opposition to the legalization of recreational marijuana.

With the presidential elections underway, it's worth considering which presidential candidates are for medicinal legalization and which are for recreational.

Many of the prospective candidates are for the legalization of marijuana for medicinal reasons but unfortunately also believe it is a gateway drug due to generations of bias and media persuasion.

Many of the GOP candidate's claim to have never tried weed, or had only tried it once in their lifetime. Donald Trump, whose use of pot is undetermined, supports legalizing medicinal marijuana but not recreationally.

"I'd say (regulating marijuana) is bad. Medical marijuana is another thing," Trump said to C-SPAN in February, "I think it's bad and I feel strongly about that."

Negative effects of marijuana like addiction, depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts are not common.

According to Salon, the most commonly cited study on cannabis dependence declared only 4 percent of Americans 15-54 are dependent on cannabis compared to the 24 percent who are dependent

on tobacco and 14 percent on alcohol. Among users, they found that 9 percent of cannabis users who try it get hooked, as compared to 32 percent for tobacco and 15 percent for alcohol.

There is no apparent medical benefit to tobacco or alcohol consumption, while studies continue to show the various benefits of using marijuana in certain contexts.

Florida Senator Marco Rubio supports a limited legalization of medicinal marijuana and said, "if I tell you that I did (try it), then kids will look up to me and say, 'Well, I can smoke marijuana because look how he made it. He did all right, so I guess I can do it too.'"

The problem with this logic is that it could wedded to anything — including alcohol, which is very legal, though it's proven to lead to addiction, over-consumption and death due to DUI and a number of different diseases.

"The bottom line," Rubio said, "is that it is a substance that alters your mind. Now when I was 17 and 18 and 16, I made dumb decisions as is. I didn't need the help of marijuana or alcohol to further that."

While marijuana is a mind-altering drug, depending on the method and quantity of consumption, it can also enhance the mind rather than deteriorate it.

Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson is another candidate that supports medical marijuana under certain circumstances but not recreational marijuana.

"I think medical use of marijuana in compassionate cases certainly has been proven

to be useful," Carson said. "But recognize that marijuana is what's known as a gateway drug. It tends to be a starter drug for people who move onto heavier duty drugs — sometimes legal, sometimes illegal — and I don't think this is something that we really want for our society."

What is disappointing about claims like this is that it is making a generalization about users, placing them in a category where they are unable to have discretion on which drugs they use.

By saying that marijuana is a gateway drug, you generalize that anyone who ever tries it will inevitably resort to harsher substances.

People have to choose to take harsher drugs just as much as they choose to smoke pot. Whether I like the effects marijuana has on me or not, I have to make the conscious decision to try something stronger in order to obtain the high.

According to Salon, a RAND Corporation study from 2011, titled "What Can We Learn From The Dutch Coffee Shop Experience?" found no relationship between using cannabis and harder drugs.

In fact, because legalization meant that people went to a coffee shop and not a dealer to get high, legal cannabis likely reduced rates of harder drug use.

It is obvious that Republican candidates' concerns with legalizing marijuana is rooted in fear of drugs associated with minorities rather than the current problems that hinder these very neighborhoods. For the Democratic candi-

dates, the reasoning for legalization is focused on something else entirely.

Vermont senator and presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders is for the legalization of marijuana with his main concerns on the war on drugs and the criminal justice system.

"I would vote yes because I am seeing in this country too many lives being destroyed for nonviolent offenses. We have a criminal justice system that lets CEOs on Wall Street walk away, and yet we are imprisoning or giving jail sentences to young people who are smoking marijuana," Sanders said.

Former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley supports decriminalization too.

"I think we need to have an open mind." "I think there's a lot we can learn from Colorado and Washington state. They seem to be keeping very good records," O'Malley said to CNN. "They understand they are the first in the nation, and I think we should be guided by what they are doing in Colorado."

Former Secretary of State and Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton also supports medical marijuana under appropriate circumstances.

"I think that we have the opportunity through the states that are pursuing recreational marijuana to find out a lot more than we know today," Clinton said during the first Democratic debate. "I think we're just at the beginning, but I agree completely with the idea that we have got to stop imprisoning people who use marijuana."

Marijuana is certainly a mind-altering drug, but not in the derogatory sense that many

of the Republican candidates are trying to convey. The side effects of marijuana can also be treatments for many suffering with depression, anxiety and cancer.

The government needs to reconsider the repercussions of continuing the legalization of alcohol while bashing marijuana — especially when alcohol continues to prove to be harmful while marijuana proves to be beneficial.

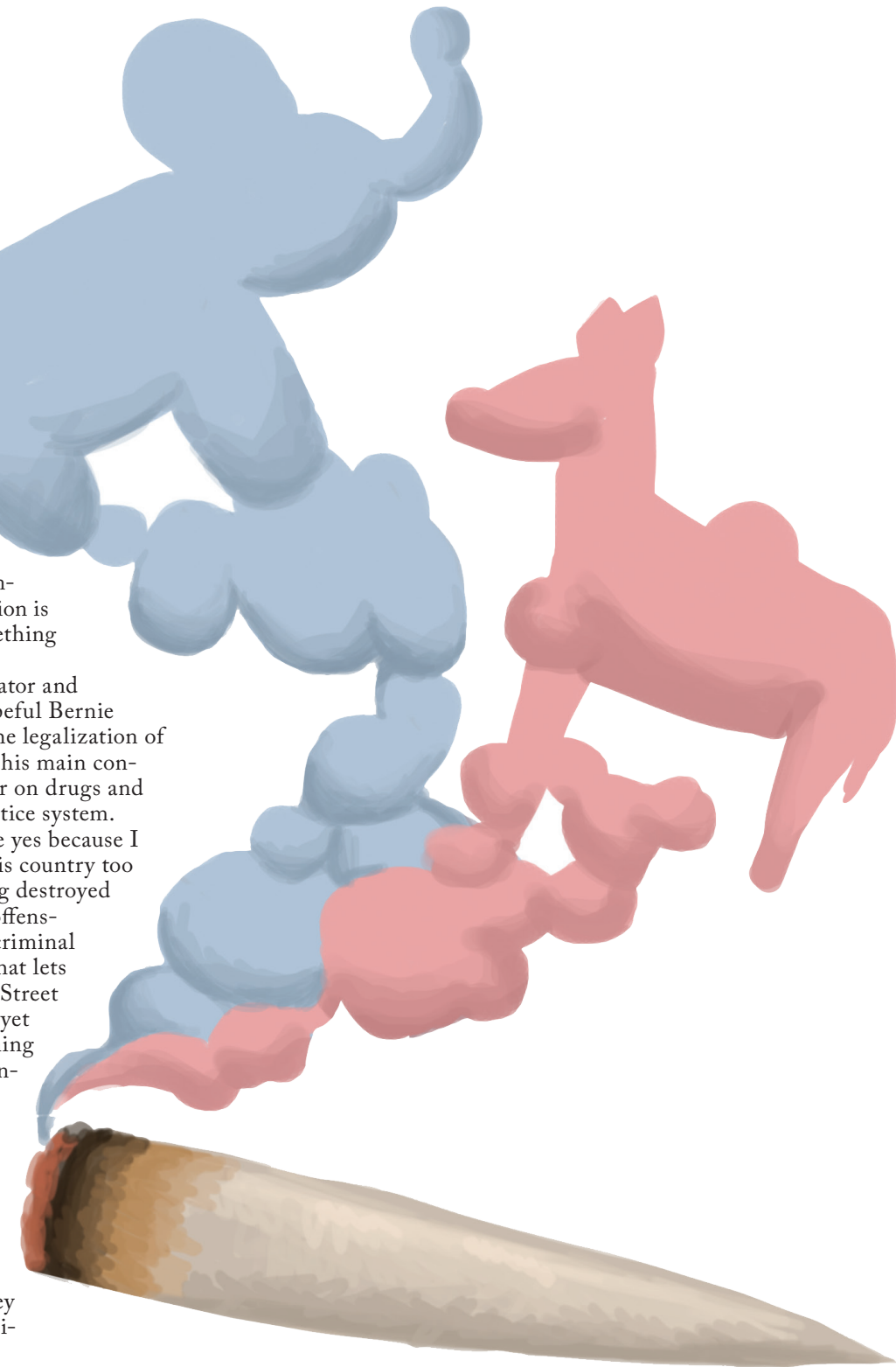


ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE VANDEVEER

Privilege has more than one face

— continued from page 1

while also feeling the all-too-common disappointment of not hearing a single mention, or seeing a single image, of Black women.

In all the lectures I've attended regarding race, not once have I heard a male speaker discuss why it's crucial to acknowledge not only white privilege but also male privilege to further the goal of racial equality.

Knight was the first person in my experience who broke this cycle.

Knight continuously revisited the fact that it's the responsibility of the privileged to use their "privilege for good," but that can only happen once a person acknowledges their different levels of privilege.

In Knight's view, the common complacency and unwillingness to understand roles and responsibilities of inherent white privilege when addressing racial barriers is not limited to being white. During Knight's lecture, he expanded this concept to gender barriers.

"I have male privilege," Knight said, before elaborating that he finds it is his responsibility to explain to his male peers they need to acknowledge how their actions also create a foundation for the oppression of women, and thus extends to further oppressing women of color.

This rhetoric desperately needs to become more commonplace so we can properly discuss the full experience of women of color and then proactively counter systematic oppression.

Sexual assault is the second highest complaint made against police in America, and Black women are disproportionately the victims. We can't discuss racial equality while ignoring the fact that, as Black women, we live within the intersection of



ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON WRIGHT

racial and gender inequality.

The two concepts go hand in hand — and to achieve full equality we must first acknowledge police brutality, among other forms of state-sponsored violence, is not, and never has been, exclusive to Black men.

Knight's presentation was humorous, witty and somehow made a discussion that is usually mentally and emotionally exhausting more hopeful.

Do I think we have solved, or

even adequately addressed the issue of the gender inequality within marginalized circles seeking racial inequality? No.

Seeing a speaker discuss, humanize and acknowledge Black women, and how police violence uniquely affects us, gave me a much-needed beacon of hope that this attitude is becoming more relevant and will eventually become commonplace.

Oscars distract from Black communities in need of help

HIBA AHMAD
Contributing Columnist

#OscarsSoWhite is another example of a distraction from what is occurring in the world around us. Look past the glamour and focus on the root of the issues. Black people are being denied basic rights, and all we are worried about is the privilege of receiving an award.

Two neighborhoods of color have been suffering this past month in two different areas of the world. However, as a society, we've chosen to dismiss the life-threatening issues they face and focus our attention on awards shows.

#OscarsSoWhite caused a media storm when the prestigious Academy announced their nominees. The lack of representation of people of color was undoubtedly astounding. Absolutely no one of color was nominated, including the actors from movies about people of color.

For example, "Straight Outta Compton," a movie depicting the life of young black rappers, played by young black actors won an award for its screenplay. The writer was white.

At the same time the conversation around the Oscars was erupting, the people of Flint, Michigan — a predominantly black community with many under the national poverty line — are without drinking water. Their water has been polluted with high levels of lead and iron, leaving the water looking like sewage.

The fact that there is a town of people suffering from lack of drinkable water in the United States — a developed world power — is something to be ashamed of. The fact that this has been the case for two years now is heartbreaking. The institutional failure that has af-

fected the people of Flint should be clouding the airways more so than an awards show.

What does this say about American values? We, as a society, choose to ignore the basic needs of our fellow African-American brothers and sisters and focus on whether people of color are being awarded pieces of metal for their achievements.

We worked to ignite a conversation about award shows to the point where The Academy creates an initiative to increase diversity, but we are willing to allow our black brothers and sisters in Flint to drink poisoned water and Nigerians to die at the hands of extremists.

There has been a respectable push for more inclusion of people of color in every aspect of society including politics, education and entertainment. The spread of inclusion is necessary at every level, but we cannot fail to address the real issues that this marginalized population faces.

We should be protesting for clean water, not award shows. The lack of inclusion also expands to a global issue. On an international level, we should be channeling our energy towards helping our African brothers and sisters in Kenya, Nigeria, Mali and other countries become developed nations.

While headlines and banners across American TV screens

read #OscarsSoWhite, Boko Haram staged an attack on a northern Nigerian town. The terrorist group that has pledged allegiance to the Daesh, or Islamic State, burned a village to the ground killing roughly 80 individuals, mainly children.

Though the U.S. has made efforts to dismantle the Daesh with airstrikes, none of our efforts have been directed towards Nigeria where Boko Haram operates.

The last time this terrorist organization received large amounts of media attention was when they staged a mass kidnapping at a Nigerian university for women. Since then, only foreign news agencies have kept up with the organization.

We worked to ignite a conversation about award shows to the point where The Academy creates an initiative to increase diversity, but we are willing to allow our black brothers and sisters in Flint to drink poisoned water and Nigerians to die at the hands of extremists.

As a society, if we want to address the topic of inclusion, we must first work to meet the basic needs of people of color. We cannot continue to focus our energy towards the glamorized conversations that, in reality, are not really addressing the issue at hand.

We cannot continue to focus our energy towards the glamorized conversations that, in reality, are not really addressing the issue at hand.

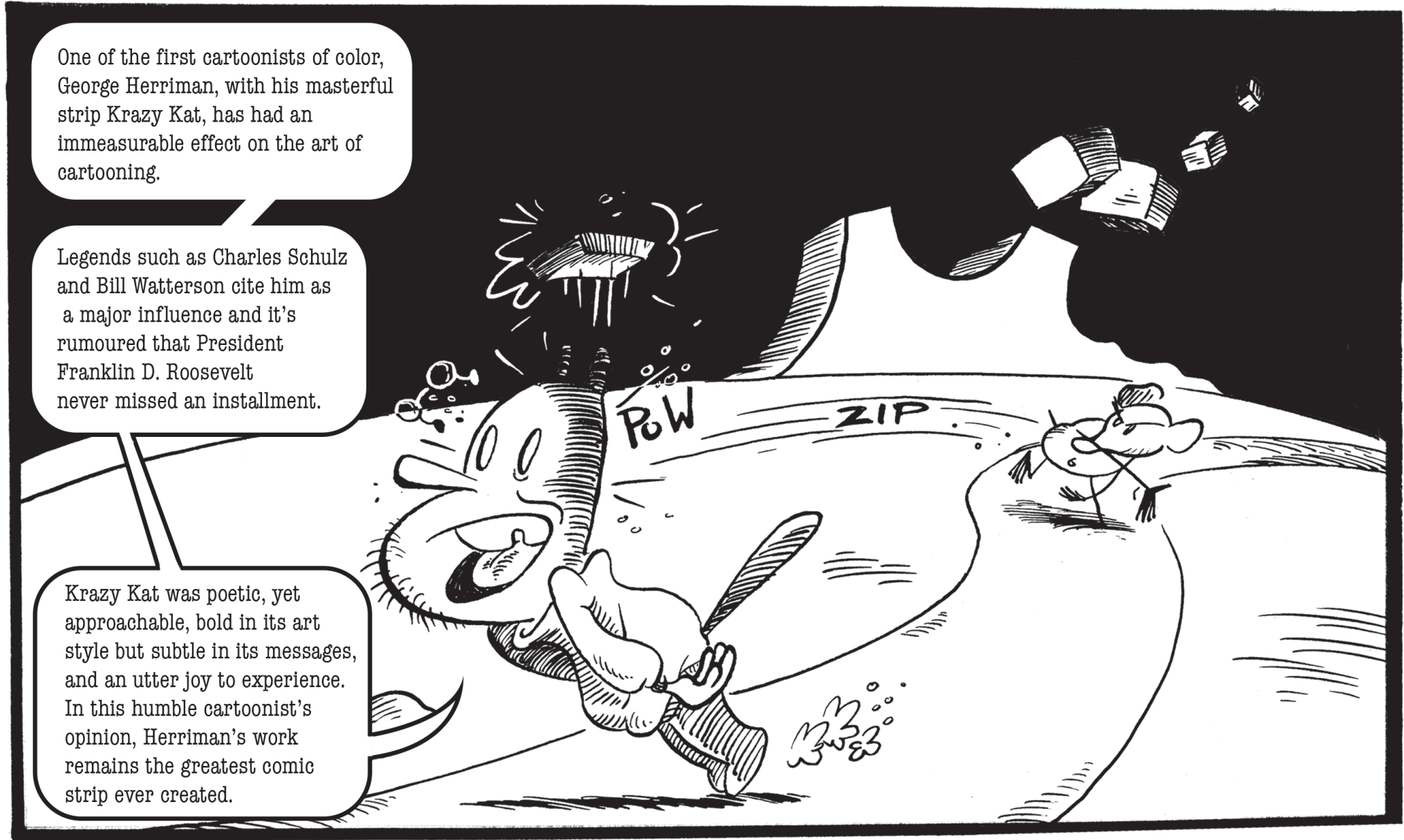
Love is Batty by Amanda Morrison



Valentine's Day by Christine Fouron



Krazy4George by Gareth Benthall



THE CT STAFF

Executive & News Editor

Sarah King
kingsa@commonwealthtimes.org

Managing & Spectrum Editor

Austin Walker
walkeraw@commonwealthtimes.org

Online News Editor

Maura Mazurowski
mazurom@commonwealthtimes.org

Sports Editor

Bryant Drayton
draytonbo@commonwealthtimes.org

Opinion Editor

Monica Houston
houstonm@commonwealthtimes.org

Illustrations Editor

Shannon Wright
wrightsn@commonwealthtimes.org

Photography Editor

Brooke Marsh
marshba@commonwealthtimes.org

Multimedia Editor

Margaret Carmel
carmelm@commonwealthtimes.org

Webmaster & Social Media

Josh Akan-Etuk
akanetj@commonwealthtimes.org

Staff Writers

Andrew Crider
crideraa@commonwealthtimes.org

Muktaru Jalloh
jallohmm@commonwealthtimes.org

Sophia Belletti
bellettsr@commonwealthtimes.org

Staff Photographer

Ali Jones
jonesa@commonwealthtimes.org

Becca Schwartz
schwartzb@commonwealthtimes.org

Staff Illustrators

Erin Bushnell
bushnellef@commonwealthtimes.org

Christine Fouron
fouronco@commonwealthtimes.org

Gareth Benthall
benthallgr@commonwealthtimes.org

Graphic Designers

Miranda Leung
Ashley Moody
Sarah Butler
Rachel Lee
designers@vcustudentmedia.com

Advertising Representatives

Katie Gallant
Shaun Jackson
Abigail Keatinge
advertising@vcustudentmedia.com
804-828-6629

Outreach Coordinator

Nicolas Desouza
smc_outreach@vcustudentmedia.com

Student Media Director

Greg Weatherford
gowweatherfor@vcu.edu
804-827-1975

Production Manager

Mark Jeffries
mjjeffriesVCU@gmail.com

Business Manager

Jacob McFadden
mcfaddenjc@vcu.edu

Assistant Business Manager

Samantha Foster
smc_assistant@vcu.edu

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