Pressure builds as cross controversy continues

Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Nebraska) delivered the annual Charter Day address at PBK Hall on Saturday where he received an Honorary Degree and present on this historic occasion, receives honorary degree from the institution that has produced such a generational leader.

The Senator further stated “America’s growth since the settlement of Jamestown has given birth to the greatest democracy in the world and although we are faced with these many problems, just like the first individuals to settle this country had encountered, we will ultimately succeed.”

Senator Hagel also expressed his hopes for the future and how these hopes play an integral part of what William and Mary seeks to deliver to its students: a greater understanding for the world we live in and America’s role within it. Referring to a statistic that 40% of the world’s 6.3 billion inhabitants are under 18 years of age, Hagel stated, “The greatest force for change in the world is the next generation. And America must not ignore our next generations of the world. We must trust America’s purpose and not its power. Because in fact, the American purpose has always been what the world has trusted and come to respect. Our future in this century will not be determined by the power that we exert on others but rather by the trust we install in others.”

Senator Hagel concluded his address by stating, “In this nation some individuals look for ways to divide ourselves…but in this country and around the world no matter who we are, we all share a spirit of humanity and decency. In the end, we all hold the same beliefs of family, morals, values and traditions. America’s strength is in its people and I have no doubt that America will preserve.”

Prior to his address at the Charter Day ceremony on Saturday, Senator Hagel took time on Friday afternoon to visit W&M government students at the College to discuss a wide variety of issues from who he saw as mentors to many current policy debates facing the United States today.

Business Editor

Senator Chuck Hagel delivered Charter Day address, receives honorary degree.

Andrew Blasi Jr.

that are not just limited to terrorism, including energy dependence, budget deficits and entitlement spending, weakening infrastructure, and global warming.

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College releases sexual assault survey results

Website launched to educate college community

Jon San

At noon on February 4, the College’s Office of Health Education unveiled a new website aimed at educating the college community on the topic of sexual assault. The website, along with a school-wide survey conducted in December, is part of a new plan to broaden sexual assault education.

Of the roughly 5,500 students at the College, 503 students responded to the survey. And of these students 184 were male and 316 were female.

The survey posed a series of “rape myth” situations to which students were asked to respond based on a scale of varying agreement (1 meaning strong disagreement with the myth and 7 meaning strong agreement with the myth). Rape myths, according to a citation taken from the survey, are “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, according to a citation taken from the survey, are “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women.” Conducted by Sandi Cleveland, the Substance Abuse Health Educator at the Student Health Center, among others, the survey highlighted certain incidences where there occurred an above-average amount of agreement. Agreement meaning that those students agreed with the rape myth incident posed to them.

One of these highlighted incidences was that “If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.” Of the 530 students who responded, only 36.8% strongly disagreed with the myth meaning that roughly 63% percent were in varying agreement with it.

Another scenario asked, “Men don’t usually intend to force sex... SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVEY RESULTS
**New online housing lottery promises to be less stressful experience**

Residence Life still testing program, searching for volunteers

Chase Coleman  
Staff Writer

Beginning April 16, students will be able to choose rooms for the next year through the new online selection process. This new process, which will only affect regular undergraduate housing, will be very similar to room selection in previous years, except that it will be a two-week process using my.wm.edu’s temporary online program Banner.

While in previous years students received lottery numbers, this year students will receive a time window during which they can select a room. Windows will remain open until late afternoon, allowing more students to choose rooms at the day’s end. Karrin Pawluk, the Assistant Director of Residence Life, assures that there will be no more than 60 students entering each window, “so it’s not like registration where there could be several hundred people hitting [the website] at one time.”

As another safeguard against technical problems, the selection process will take place over a two-week period. Residence Life has already tested the system using a small population and plans to test it again soon with a larger student sample. Even if technical problems do occur during selection, help will be available to students.

The long time frame of the selection process is not only to prevent an overload of the system, but also to alleviate students of the stress that has often been associated with Lottery Day. “We wanted to make sure…that students weren’t feeling rushed and pressured to make a choice,” said Pawluk. Students should be able to see current availability as each room is selected, although it is possible that this information may not be accessible until the end of the day.

While in previous years students had to wait, sometimes for hours, inside a crowded Trinkle Hall, this year students can select a room in minutes from any place with internet access. “This is that ‘other nice thing [about online room selection] that because you’re on a computer, you don’t have to be here [on campus],” which may be a great relief to students abroad.

Similar to past years, whoever roommates have a better window can choose a room during that time period by entering the other roommate’s ID number. This roommate will then receive an email asking him or her to accept or decline the room selection, so students must remember to check their email. “We’re going to have to make sure…that students have the floor plans to the dorms, which are available at the Residence Life website, readily accessible during selection. It is also important, Boykin mentioned, that students “do their research and be realistic about their choices.” Both Boykin and Pawluk agree that this trade-off is positive since the new online system will be much less of a hassle. For those students worried about the selection process, however, Pawluk plans to have computers available at the Residence Life office in the Campus Center, where the staff can answer any questions.

During spring break, Residence Life will email students who have paid the room reservation deposit their room selection window along with a link to a video demo outlining the process.

**James City County named healthiest community in Virginia**

According to a recent study by the Schroeder Center for Healthcare Policy here at the College, Poquoson City is the healthiest community in Virginia. While York County ranked 8th in the list, James City County (where New Town is located) was noticeably absent. It is important to note that although Williamsburg is located within James City County, it is considered to be independent of the county.

**William and Mary 3rd best value public school in higher education**

The College was ranked 3rd among best value public school in higher education by Kiplinger’s Personal Finance magazine. This is an improvement from last year when the College ranked 4th according to the publication. The rankings are based on schools that excel in providing an outstanding economic value with a first-class education. More than 500 public schools were polled with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill topping the chart.

**New lottery location:** From now on, students won’t have to make it down to Trinkle Hall for long lottery lines, but will only have to fight with Banner to get the rooms they want.
Six characters can’t cut it: WMuserids become more “secure”

Stephanie Long

News Editor

All new students entered into William and Mary’s computer system after March 1 will longer have to squeeze into the standard six character WMuserid formula, but will be up to 16 characters in order to increase the uniqueness and security of their WMuserids.

This change originated from Banner’s need for uniqueness and the school’s desire to give the WMuserids longevity. The more unique the WMuserid is, the less likely there will be duplicates. Students will be able to keep their WMuserids after graduation rather than having them cancelled for recycling, as has been the custom for years. This is made possible because of the lesser probability of repeating e-mail addresses with 16 characters than with six characters.

The new WMuserids will take the first initial of a student’s first name, the first initial of his/her middle name and up to 13 characters of the student’s last name. There will no longer be a’s to indicate the lack of a middle initial or missing spaces in the student’s last name, and up to two numbers will be added to the end of the WMuserid if necessary to prevent duplication. The Communications Director of Information Technology, Susan Evans, also pointed out that with the student’s full last name in his WMuserid, the e-mail will also be “more recognizable.”

For now, the new WMuserids are only going to be applied for new students entering my.wm.edu’s database, but eventually students currently under the six character system will have the opportunity to change their WMuserids. Bernardette M. Kenney, Enterprise Information Systems Director for IT, anticipates this second phase of the program is projected to take place in the next 12 to 18 months.

By not recycling WMuserids, graduates and alumni will be able to keep their WMuserids and have access to mywm.edu after graduation. This movement over time will be increased inclusion of alumni in their relationships to the College was augmented earlier this year with the creation of an Alumni Association on mywm.edu’s homepage for seniors.

The switch to a new format in some ways seems long overdue in that it will allow people to keep their usernames forever. But there are certain drawbacks to this change, for, as Student Assembly senator and Student IT employee Matt Beato (99) purr, “it’s going to make things longer, and that’s not necessarily better.” Beato boasted of the simplicity of the six character system and also, being the Director of the Student Information Network (SIN), pointed out that programs which use the WMuserids will have to be updated.

Evans and Kenney acknowledge these issues with the system, but believe this change is wholly for the better. They have made every effort to contact on-campus programs which have made use of the six character format about the changes, and so far they have not faced too much resistance. “Outside of William and Mary it’s meaningless,” said Evans of the six character WMuserid. She asserted that the new formula, “realistically is the standard outside of the College.”

Students for Life celebrate “Pro-Life Week”

Adam Bollik

Staff Writer

The Declaraton of Independence claims that all people are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, and among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”. It was this very right that the campus organization Students for Life was attempting to highlight during their Pro-Life Week programs, held from February 5 to 8.

All throughout the week, members of Students for Life ran a table in the University Center, handing out lapel pins which, while smaller than a dime, represents the size and shape of a ten-week-old fetus. The attached pamphlet outlines the course of development of a fetus from conception to birth, and closes by saying, “Some people think my life began at birth; but my journey started long before birth.” The group also distributed candy, cookies, flowers, and CDs with a copy of Nick Castrone’s song “Can I live?” throughout the week.

“All we are trying to do with Pro-Life Week is to raise awareness about how many abortions there are,” said Katie Povandl (’07), President of Students for Life and one of the many members who was working the table at the UC during the week. One of the events that the Students for Life do every year to help raise awareness of abortion is place luminaries near the Crim Dell as a memorial to abortion deaths.

The Students for Life also sponsored a speaker, Janet Morana. Morana is the founder of “Silent No More,” an organization which seeks to make the public aware of how women suffer after getting an abortion. Aside from the guest speaker and the luminaries, Students for Life offered two sessions where students could get involved in the national discussion on abortion by watching films, holding group discussions and having a question-and-answer session with club officers.

During “Pro-Life Week,” Students for Life were sold t-shirts and registered volunteers to work at a local pregnancy care center which offers alternatives to abortion, including adoption. According to Povandl, the organization is also planning to host a benefit concert in April that will raise money to benefit pregnancy care centers in Williamsburg.

Students for Life continues to work throughout the year to raise awareness of the ongoing national abortion discussion. The club has members that attend national conferences, and recently several members were in D.C. for the annual March for Life. Concerning the mission of Students for Life, Povandl said, “All we want to do is make people think at abortion and ask, ‘Why are there so many?’”

The Virginia Informer apologizes for the following error that appeared in our November 2006 Issue:

The headline on the article on page 1 incorrectly identified W&M alumnus and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates as David Gates.

The Virginia Informer would like to correct any facts printed incorrectly. Please submit all corrections via email to editor@vainformer.com.

Pro-women pro-lifers are “Silent No More”

SFL brings Janet Morana as part of Pro-Life Week

John R. Kennedy

Opinion Editor

Janet Morana from the Silent No More Awareness Campaign came to William and Mary on February 8 to educate women about abortion and the experiences of post-abortive women.

Silent No More was co-founded by Morana and Mary’s computer system after March 1 will no longer have to squeeze into the standard six character WMuserid formula, but will be up to 16 characters in order to increase the uniqueness and security of their WMuserids. The change originated from Banner’s need for uniqueness and the school’s desire to give the WMuserids longevity. The more unique the WMuserid is, the less likely there will be duplicates. Students will be able to keep their WMuserids after graduation rather than having them cancelled for recycling, as has been the custom for years. This is made possible because of the lesser probability of repeating e-mail addresses with 16 characters than with six characters.

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Janet Morana: The co-founder of Silent No More, an organization to help women who are suffering from post-abortive syndrome, explained the negative effects abortion has on women to William and Mary students.
SA Senate begins second semester with heated debates and shouting matches

Senators fight over spending students’ money on swamp, supporting Nichol

Stephen Dause
Staff Writer

The first two Student Assembly Senate meetings of the new semester were full of both promise and heated debate. The main topic of the first, which is still unresolved, was spending on campus beautification; and while the second ended in an unusually heated shouting match over the Wren cross controversy, it was also relatively productive.

In the first meeting, newly installed Senate Chairman Joe Luppino-Esposito ('08) opened with a few remarks on goals he hoped the body would accomplish in the semester. Among them were the prospects for student voting rights in Williamsburg, student-friendly housing and businesses, and a more efficiently-run Senate.

Several executive appointments to the offices of Internal Affairs, Public Affairs and the Review Board were confirmed, the deadline for the Constitutional Review Committee was extended into this semester to March 5, and the infamous foul-smelling “swamp” in the woods between old and new campus may be looking and smelling better soon thanks to recently passed legislation.

However, President Ryan Scofield vetoed the bill that gave the Student Environmental Action Coalition funds for planting several million seeds in the swamp area, citing concerns about the viability of the operation. Co-sponsor Zach Pilchen ('09) announced that he would plan to attempt to override the veto on February 13.

Senators Andrew Blasi ('10) and Scott Morris ('09) initiated their “Freshman Campaign,” which included various bills dealing with issues of particular concern to freshmen, such as eliminating or reducing extended orientation, new campus renovations and preserving the true self-determination of hall councils. The campaign has been met with mixed success, as some bills have already been passed and others have come up against competition and/or been tabled in committee.

The Greater Accountability Act, sponsored by Senators Matt Beato ('09) Walter McClean ('07) and Mary family, we refer to all William and Mary students, past and present. This is their college, too."

Editor’s Note: Joe Luppino-Esposito is the Assistant Editor in Chief and Andrew Blasi is the Business Editor of The Virginia Informer.

Scofield kicks off last semester as SA president

Matthew Sutton
Assistant News Editor

Student Assembly President Ryan Scofield is set to start his last semester at the College and plans to have active final half of his term. According to him the agenda for the executive branch will include planning for the undergraduate majors fair in the coming weeks and addressing the issues of the city’s three-person to a house rule and campus judicial reform. He also commented on the Wren cross controversy and his recent veto of the Wetlands Act, a bill championed by Senator Zach Pilchen ('09).

In an interview with The Virginia Informer, Scofield gave his thoughts on the latest developments of the growing campus debate over President Nicholl’s removal of the Wren cross. On the general issue he said, “My thoughts are that it has adopted a very interesting character and tone, and that to the majority of students it’s more of a non-issue than anything else”
SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVEY RESULTS: College uses results from survey to develop high tech website to educate students

continued from page one

The College debuted its new sexual assault resources and education, including videos and other interactive features.

In an email dated January 23, both President Nichol and Vice-President Sadler announced that "an initiative is being launched to identify ways to take full advantage of technology to reach students more effectively." This initiative would turn out to be the new sexual assault website.

The aforementioned website was launched to educate students about sexual assault and provide strategies, resources, and literature on preventing their occurrence. Regarding the website’s content, Cleveland and the other 61 people in the site’s creation said that, “the theoretical basis for the content in the website represents a fairly new approach to education and prevention by encouraging healthy behaviors that enhance students’ lives and relationships, thereby ‘building a healthy community’.”

Cleveland said that the website was also created in part because of events that have occurred in the past couple of years. She said that, “the sexual assaults that have occurred in recent years have reminded us of our need to remain both responsive and proactive in addressing the issue of Sexual Assault.” The website combines new technology with a multitude of resources that allow students, parents and faculty, not to mention victims of sexual assault, to understand and prevent sexual assault.

Specifically, the Improvisational Theatre (IT), with assistance from professional camera crews, created five videos that address strategies for dealing with sexual assault in a light-hearted manner. Mike Wilbur, a freshman and member of the group, said that “humor is not aimed at sexual assault itself because we agree that it is a very serious issue. However, by making the situations humorous it made for a more engaging and accessible presentation of the material.”

Other, more serious resources on the website include a definition of sexual misconduct, what Virginia State Law defines rape as, strategies on how one can help a friend or family member who has been sexually assaulted, nearby medical and counseling centers that are readily available, and a plethora of other links, events and advice.

The website also includes resources for those of the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning (GLBTQ) community. “We wanted to provide information and support for ALL survivors of sexual assault within our community. The scope of the project was intentionally broad to be inclusive of all our students,” said Cleveland.

While the website is being continually updated and revised, so far, according to its creators, the feedback has been favorable.

As for the future of sexual assault education, Cleveland is especially excited about the Sexual Assault Peer Advocate program, “which will provide peer advocacy to survivors of sexual assault or anyone on campus seeking more information about the issue. Recently, 13 students of the College began a 40 hour, comprehensive training process to become Sexual Assault Peer Advocates.”

The Sexual Assault Resources and Education website can be found at http://www.wm.edu/sexualassault/.

Creative awareness: The College debuted its new sexual assault resources and education, including videos and other interactive features.

on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.” To this, 30.7% strongly disagreed while only 1.6% strongly agreed. The idea that “rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men” was strongly disagreed with by 40.4% of the polled students and strongly agreed with by 1.6% of students.

While the statistics may seem surprising to many, Cleveland and the other Health Educators behind the survey (specifically Ginger Ambler, Donna Haygood Jackson, Sarah Irwin, and Trisha Hunsaker) insist that they don’t consider William and Mary to be fundamentally different from other, similar universities.

SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVEY RESULTS:

Gender of survey participants

Of the total 503 participants:
184 males (37%)
316 females (63%)

Compared to the College’s undergraduate average:
45% male
55% female

Check it out online: www.wm.edu/sexualassault

www.VAInformer.com
All the news that’s fit to go online.
On a brand new Web site coming soon.
**FEATURES**

**College overspends, SEAC pushes for new policies**

$1.5 million could be saved over next two decades with energy improvements

Nick Hoekker
Staff Writer

In the 2005-2006 school year, William and Mary spent approximately 1 million more than necessary on energy expenses. To rectify this situation, the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) circulated a petition asking the school to adopt a new energy policy. The petition calls for increased energy efficiency at campus facilities. This increased efficiency could be achieved in a number of ways, including ensuring Swem computers are off at night, using compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) light bulbs, and running an energy audit of the campus.

An energy audit on William and Mary Hall has shown that the school could save over $1.5 billion over the next two decades by improving energy efficiency. The petition also has gathered the signatures of over 1,800 undergraduates, and prompted the proposal of a Student Assembly bill which would consider endorsing the petitions currently under review by the Senate.

The administration has taken some smaller steps so far in addressing the school's energy problem. According to Student Assembly senator, the environmental chair of Virginia Young Democrats, and SEAC member Zach Pilchen ('09), the school has begun using CFL bulbs when needed, and has begun constructing new buildings to LEADS energy efficiency standards.

However, the school has been reluctant to take up the bigger project of conducting an energy audit. A second energy audit is in order to properly conduct the audit. There are currently only three meters on campus, one to measure Old Campus, one for New Campus, and one for William and Mary Hall. In order to conduct the audit properly, the school would need to install energy meters for every building on campus. An individual meter costs $3,000. However, according to Pilchen, the revenue raised by performing an accurate audit on every building would far outweigh the costs of constructing meters.

To demonstrate their commitment to revising the energy policy, SEAC held a rally outside of the Brafferton on February 5. Approximately 35 students attended the event, and President Gene Nichol made an appearance. In addressing the students, Nichol stressed the importance of the issue but did not offer any solutions.

Special thanks to Alec Mayer and Ian R. Whiteside for their help with this article.

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**Swimming off the deep end:**

A field guide to William and Mary

Nick Fitzgerald & Matthew Sutton
Humor Columnists

Thank you for joining us for a preview of the upcoming National Geographic special, *Shabby People*. This is a highly scientific approach to categorizing three types of students who attend the College. Read carefully, because you can use this handy guide to spot this diverse wildlife here on campus.

The Daily Grinder

This creature feels most at home inside a poorly constructed, yet strangely hip, coffee shop. Its diet consists primarily of a steady stream of chai lattes and other foamy drinks, prolonged exposure to which has been known to cause general constipation of the mind and disarray of the mouth. Often found congregating in groups smoking cigarettes and discussing the latest emo LP, the Daily Grinder has been known to conduct the works of acclaimed children’s writer Roald Dahl to the 18th-century Germanic philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Strangely, nature has selected that these creatures be outfitted with ill-fitting clothes and thick glasses, which camouflage them from their two natural predators—the employed, and frat boys.

The Frat Boy

Behold, the king of the social jungle. When not playing a game of Ultimate Frisbee on the Sunken Gardens, listening to Jack Johnson, or playing Halo, this creature is most often seen in its natural habitat doing a leg stand in the basement of the units. Note the flowing mane, the bloodshot eyes, the rubber red face, and the puke stained Natty Lite t-shirt. Although extremely contemplative immediately following his last bong hit, the frat boy’s vocabulary is typically limited to such vitriolic axioms as: “What’s up, brah?”; “Gnumml!”; “That was sweet, bro!”; and “I totally need another.” Darwinian adaptations include: longer arms and a more flexible elbow, a change which occurred after hundreds of years of playing beer pong at a high tolerance for alcohol; and a preference for the music of 50 Cent, Chingy, and Nelly.

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**Carefully Random**

Why are there numbers spray painted on the College paths?

Stephen Dause
Carefully Random

The recent spray painting of numbers on sections of New Campus’ sidewalks had some students wondering what is amiss at William and Mary. Was this, in fact, an occult message from a secret society, a message that students could interpret and understand? Or was it instead the ever-nearing alien’s new version of crop circles in urban settings? Are those numbers landmarks for an incoming invasion? Should we all grab our tin foil head coverings, our flashlights, and a jar or two of peanut butter, and run for shelter in the Yates basement?

The explanation is far more simple. The areas around the spray painting will soon be repaved, and the marked areas indicate the sections that have to be repaired before the entire walkway is resurfaced.

While I’m sure the good residents of Yates basement would be more than happy to accommodate any half-delusional, scared-stiff soul in constant fear of alien invasion, such drastic action will probably not be necessary in the foreseeable future. Do you have a burning question and cannot find the answer? Send something on campus that makes you think, “Huh?” Send in your queries and columnist Stephen Dause will search high and low for an answer, or at least some sort of creative response that pretends to answer your question. Send questions, comments and complaints to random@vainformer.com

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Prof. Schechter offers refreshing perspective on old history

“There’s what’s so exciting about history — finding things that don’t make any sense”

Nick Fitzgerald
Features Editor

Mild mannered Ron Schechter is a professor of history here at the College. With degrees in history from the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago and Harvard University, Schechter’s credentials and involvement with the study of history are both thorough and impressive.

Schechter has been teaching at the College for ten years. “I feel very lucky to be here at William and Mary, the students are great, and I have great colleagues.”

“The concept of terror during the European Enlightenment is Schechter’s current research focus. “I’m looking to find out what people meant in the 18th century when they spoke or wrote of terror, or used cognate words such as terrible, terrifying, etc., what did they mean and what kinds of value did they attribute to terror? … I have not found a lot of other historians’ work on this issue, and that’s very encouraging to me. Historians look for original topics, or at least original approaches to topics—they’re hard to find, but when you think you’re on to one, that’s very exciting.”

Pulling questions out of primary texts, and discovering a narrative in history—rather than an encyclopedic knowledge of it—is an approach Schechter applies both to his own research and inside the classroom. He encourages his students to approach primary sources directly and engage them at a first-hand basis, rather than reading another historian’s interpretation through a text book. “I do have a document [primary source] based approach to teaching. It’s very important to me to integrate readings…[that] don’t simply illustrate some point I want to make, but that they stand as a centerpiece of the class. I don’t like to use text books, but not because I think they’re necessarily bad. What I want students to do is to use them as evidence for arguments that they construct and defend.”

“Part of what I hope to achieve is a sense of disorientation that is deliberate. It forces you to think about the document and engage with it in a way that you wouldn’t be able to engage with a chapter in a text book. That curiosity and sense of strangeness that provokes questions and research is essentially what professional historians go through when they go into the archives and libraries and read old published material.”

Schechter also stressed that history provides important life skills, and that the concept of making arguments and using evidence to support those arguments is not limited to within the bounds of a history classroom.

On a more personal level, Schechter’s favorite word is “haberdasher” (or “haberdashery”), he plays tennis, and has a very diverse interest in music. “Classical, jazz, reggae, ska, even punk—I learn a lot about music from my 13 year old kid.”

In closing, Schechter explained that, as a historian, the piece of writing which has probably most affected him in his approach to research and teaching is entitled The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History, by Robert Darnton. He quotes directly from the book, reading that “when we cannot get a proof, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem, we know we are on to something. By picking at the document where it is most opaque, we may be able to unravel an alien system of meaning.” He continues, saying, “That’s what is so exciting to me about history, finding things that don’t make any sense. And that is precisely the place where you want to be persistent.”

Fall dining survey triggers changes in service, hours

Results show improvement

Sweatha Sivaram
Contributing Writer

Dining surveys take place once every semester, and are used to gauge student response and satisfaction in regards to various food related issues. Items in question are considerations such as student perception of the food’s variety and quality, student patterns and preferences in terms of food, and, in addition, the overall dining experience. Changes are instituted based, at least partially, on these responses. Menu changes are often the biggest result of the surveys; one of the Marketplace stations has changed from Asian to Mexican, for example.

In general, the results of the survey indicated an overall level of satisfaction with dining services as a whole. The survey suggested that students tended to have a better overall experience, a better appreciation of the value of a meal plan, faster service, and increased quality of food compared with the last survey’s results. Students also tended to feel a lot more welcome in the dining centers, and felt that the dining centers constituted one of their primary places for socialization.

Complaints and inconveniences regarding the dining halls usually had to do with cleanliness of the dining facilities and the frequent breaking down of the $100,000 dishwashing machine in the UC last semester. The other main criticism concerned the dining facilities’ hours of operation, considered less than optimum, especially during mid-afternoon.

Phil DiBenedetto, the director of Dining Services, has tried to address students’ concerns as best as possible, indicating that, for example, Dining Services has recently spent $18,000 to repair the UC’s dishwasher. Additionally, the Freshens bar at the Rec Center has new hours of operation: Monday – Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. DiBenedetto also indicated that nutritional information is on display in front of the UC and is also readily available online.
The Wren Cross Debate between Holmes fills Chapel

Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg. After claiming that he had “no dog in this fight,” Hollerith reiterated the same historical accuracy argument that others, including religious studies professor David Holmes, have previously made in public. Hollerith cautioned at the true motives of the SaveTheWrenCross.org supporters, claiming that a piece of “liturgical furniture” like the Wren cross was not truly important.

Following the invited speakers, Nichol announced the members he selected for his committee on religion and the Wren Chapel, which consists of students, alumni, faculty and community members. (See box on page 16).

After the hour-plus long session, the Board went into closed session, after which they released a statement in which they criticize the manner in which Nichol’s decision was made, yet they stand firmly behind his presidency. According to the Board, they believe “the President is new and he is learning.” Yet they refused to take any action toward reversing the decision until after the committee has reached a conclusion, which Rector Powell urged at the meeting to be before the April session.

In December, Nichol announced the members he selected for a review board, comprised of William and Mary administration, students, faculty and community members. (See box on page 16).

“Who is on the committee?”

On Thursday, February 1, William and Mary religious studies professor David Holmes debated author Daniel D’Souza over the issue of whether the Wren cross should be reinstated after President Gene Nichol’s decision to remove the cross from permanent display at the Wren Chapel.

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute and The Virginia Informer sponsored the debate in the Wren Chapel. Nichol declined repeated requests to participate in the debate.

Even before the debate started, supporters of both sides of the issue made their opinions known. Supporters of Nichol’s decision wore “I Support Gene Nichol” stickers inside the debate. Meanwhile, a candlelight vigil supporting the Wren cross was being held before the debate outside of the Wren Chapel.

The debate opened by allowing Holmes and D’Souza 15 minutes for an opening argument. Holmes went first and stressed how in religious history a cross was not important in chapels. According to Holmes it was not until the ninth century that the first churches started displaying a cross. Additionally, he stated that the cross in the Wren Chapel did not exist before 1940, after two centuries that the cross for thousands of years.

In D’Souza’s opening argument, he stated that the cross could be taken down if “millions of people can live and worship without the cross for thousands of years.”

Debate on Wren Cross makes it to Virginia General Assembly

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Cross controversy: When D’Souza and Chapel, Great Hall

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Holmes fills Chapel, Great Hall

Debate between D’Souza and how it was donated to the school by neighboring Judeo-Christian beliefs still play a strong role in the school African-American students should be offended by the also posed a hypothetical question about whether complained to him felt the cross was offensive. D’Souza almost 70 years without complaint until Nichol suddenly mentioned that the cross had been in the Chapel for 1940, after two centuries without. Holmes also added a building interior or exterior change, withheld funding from the school. The provision president of a university?” Marshall asked the pel did not come into existence until Kilgore (R-Scott) offered

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InformerInformerInformerInformerInformer

East Coast Times

During the question and answer section, Holmes often dodged questions on Wren cross. Nichol devoted part of his speech to address the controversy over his removal of the cross from the College’s historic Wren Chapel. He introduced a new committee headed by Dr. James Pumphrey, was one of the few in the audience who did not applaud the speech. She expressed her displeasure skeptical about the new committee set to study the issue. “I think it’s ridiculous to appoint a committee and he is wrong on this issue.” Nichol then held a university wide forum on February 6 to discuss his State of the College address and then followed with a community forum where he dodged questions on Wren cross.

Nichols decision to remove the cross from the altar to be intolerant toward caused on historical accuracy in that the cross was not present until 1940.

On the other hand, D’Souza rebutted Holmes’ original argument by saying that Nichol never cited the historical purposes of the building in his decision to remove the Wren cross. Additionally, D’Souza stated that if the cross were to be removed for historical purposes, that the college might as well be reverted to its mission indicated in its charter that stated that the College “propagate the Christian faith […] to the greater glory of God.” When asked about the possibility of having no cross at all so that more students felt welcome, D’Souza countered that not having a cross would be an endorsement of atheism, which, according to D’Souza, is as legitimate a “religion” as Christianity. After questioning each other about what they would personally do if their religious beliefs contradicted the symbols at a university, Holmes and D’Souza fielded welcoming to all” as it considered the opinions of the minority over the opinions of the majority. D’Souza argued during the question and answer session that it was intolerant to remove the cross as it stopped only a select minority from being offended while offending many more Christians. D’Souza argued that removing the cross was not making the Chapel “equally welcoming to all” as it considered the opinions of the minority over the opinions of the majority. D’Souza also stated that someone offended by the Cross would not be perfectly satisfied until all religious references in the building were removed, making the chapel completely secular.

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New town, new choices

Ever developing center down the road has a lot to offer

Pablo Fierro & R.C. Rasmus
Staff Writers

Just a two-minute drive from William and Mary is New Town Center, an ever-changing area that is definitely worth exploring. Most people already know about The Consolidated New Town Cinema 12, which is a popular draw for William and Mary students, offering both mainstream and independent feature films in a stadium-style seating environment. However, contrary to popular belief, New Town has much more to offer than just movies.

For example, the restaurant scene at New Town is diverse, offering lots of options for the casual visitor. Panera Bread and Quizno’s Subs are always a safe bet for a quick and tasty sandwich or bread bowl, while someone in the mood for a more leisurely lunch might want to check out the new and innovative Art Café 26, where patrons can enjoy light fare while viewing original works of art from comfortable, low-set couches. CheckBurger CheckBurger is a 50’s retro treat for lunch or dinner, and is excellent just before or after a movie. Be sure to try one of their specialty shakes or malts, or maybe even an Egg Cream or a Chocolate Coke if you’re in the mood for something new and different.

If you’re looking for something a little more participatory in your dining experience, or even just looking for a place to relax with a cold drink, The Corner Pocket might be the place for you. With a full bar, a hefty menu, and several billiards tables, The Corner Pocket guarantees food, fun, and a comfortable, relaxing atmosphere. However, it is the Center Street Grill that is by far the most intriguing dining option at New Town. The exquisite menu offers a bouquet of gourmet choices, including everything from Ahi tuna to baked brie with mushrooms, and is served over fresh-picked greens and an extensive wine list.

Finally, a take a peek into the new Barnes and Nobles as well. Offering books, magazines, and java as well, this store is a great place to kill a few spare minutes before a show or dinner reservation. If you’re into music, you may want to hop over to Authentic Guitars and check out their fine assemblage of guitars, basses, amps and music accessories. For fans of the graphic novel, the Comic Crib lies tucked away just behind the Corner pocket, and the brand new Computer Concepts of Williamsburg offers the opportunity for specialized computers as well as technological upkeep and maintenance services.

New Town has a lot to offer to the William and Mary campus community. Do yourself a favor and take a day to explore the ever-improving center. Do some shopping, have a nice meal, and see a movie at the New Town Consolidated. Taking the time to explore this new and constantly changing feature of the city may surprise you and open you up to a several new and exciting experiences.

Jamestown 2007

America celebrates its anniversary with many events at and around the College

Shelbi Wilson
Staff Writer

The Virginia Informer

February 27 through July 8, the National Mall in Washington D.C. will feature exhibits and performances showcasing Virginia’s traditions, culture and industry. From September 16 through the 19, a global summit focusing on the Future of Democracy will be held in Williamsburg. It will feature leaders and students from all around the world, culminating a year-long series held at seven of Virginia’s top colleges and universities. The William and Mary music program will also be holding two events to commemorate the Jamestown 2007 celebration with a program on music in 1607. On April 15, the Early Music Ensemble will sing at the Great Hall in the Wren Building. Additionally, on April 2 the faculty group, the Wren Masters, will perform in the Wren Chapel.

Film Review:
The Departed is “classic Martin Scorsese”

Joe Pirro
Film Critic

It’s simple: The Departed is a return to classic Martin Scorsese. An American remake of the Hong-Kong made Infernal Affairs, The Departed is the story of a cop and mobster pretending to be someone that they are not. Leonardo DiCaprio plays a Boston police officer sent undercover to take down a mobster, played almost like a caricature by Jack Nicholson. However, DiCaprio goes to realize that Nicholson has a mole, played by Matt Damon, in the police force. The two men, both undercover, try to figure out the identity of their counterpart before they are not. The Departed is extremely violent. However, it’s a symphony of gunshot and bloodshed. Scorsese shoots a tense, yet hilarious movie that explores the desensitization of American society to violence. It’s a movie that’s not to be missed and can only be described in one word: cool.

The Virginia Informer gives The Departed an enthusiastic A.

World of 1607 will premiere at the Jamestown settlement. It will compare Jamestown to the rest of the world in the 17th century and showcase many rare artifacts, such as a 15th century copy of the Magna Carta. From June 27 through July 8, the National Mall in Washington D.C. will feature exhibits and performances showcasing Virginia’s traditions, culture and industry.
John Locke Society Statement on the Wren Cross Controversy

The recent decision by President Gene Nichol to remove the Wren Chapel Cross is a profoundly unwise move based upon questionable logic. In an institution that helps plant the seeds and fan high the flames of American democracy, arbitrarily altering a decades-old tradition is precedent that we hope will be reversed.

William and Mary’s most famous alumnus, sir Edward Jefferson, wrote in the Declaration of Independence about a string of abuses that he attributed to Britain’s King George III. However, King George III had liqours placed on him by Parliament, which made sure that his power would never be absolute as many monarchies were at the time. However, even this limitation by a more democratic system would never be absolute as many monarchies were at the time. However, even this limitation by a more democratic system.

“The Old Yorktown Bell” continued to serve its purpose until the second burning of the Wren Building in 1859. The fate of the original bell became a bit foggy here. Some records indicate that it survived the fire and lived to toll until the third burning of the Wren by Union Soldiers in 1862. However, in 1860 article in the Virginia Gazette implies that the College commissioned a new bell to hang in the newly restored Wren building, leaving it first to hang “suspended in the College lawn!” before fixing it in one of the two new ironate towers of the Wren. “Its tone is admirable,” the Gazette reported of the new bell, “and can be heard at the distance of 9 or 10 miles.”

A concrete trial pops up again after the 1862 burning. The College Bell was certainly destroyed in the fire, and was not recast until after the War Between the States. This is perhaps the most important presidential. Bell, which between 1882 and 1888, became a powerful symbol of the enduring spirit of the College of William and Mary. During these years, the College was forced to close due to a lack of funds. However, then President Benjamin Stoddard Ewell rang the College Bell every year in the fall to signal the start of the school term, keeping the spirit of the College of William and Mary alive, even as she lay vacant of students. President Ewell’s determination paid off, and the College reopened under his presidency in 1888. To this day, President Ewell is immortalized on his tombstone in the College Cemetery as “The Old Bell Ringer.”

According to the 1940’s college historian A.E. Kendrew, the bell that currently hangs in the Wren cupola is dated 1889, and was cast in Cincinnati by Messrs. Vanduzen and Tift of the Buckley Bell Foundry. It’s works, which operate both the bell and the hands of the Wren Clock, are made of brass in an iron frame. During the restoration of the Wren building in the early 20th century, this same bell was suspended from the scaffolding and rung unfailingly upon the hour. Interestingly, the College Archives still have a piece of the original “Old Yorktown Bell” bearing its inaugural 1717 date. The fragment was passed from the widow of Thomas H. Wynne to R.A. Brock to his daughter, Elizabeth Brock, who eventually donated the relic to the College.

Pops concert offers two lucky gamers chance of a lifetime

In addition to the video game-based part of the program, the concert will feature a number of theme songs from cartoons like “The Simpsons,” “The Jetsons” and “The Pink Panther.” Fully utilizing the benefit of the large screen in the UC Commonwealth where the concert will be held, students have created clips of each cartoon to show while the band plays the corresponding theme song.

“The music is kind of fluff, but the experience of putting it together is not fluff,” said Feldman. “Because you actually have to match the music and the video, it’s like conducting a film score...live.”

The band promises to present a unique multimedia experience well worth attending.

John Locke Society Board of Trustees

The 20th century theologian and political philosopher Reinhold Niebuhr warns those in power to carefully consider their action for fear of ironic consequences. President Nichol could do well to keep this in mind. He did not consider his action carefully, and ironically, made the Wren Chapel inadvertently less welcoming to many members of the William and Mary community.

-Arthol Lock Society Board of Trustees
Hamlet’s new “Right Hand Man”
Shakespeare in the Dark to perform unique adaptation

Megan Locke
Staff Writer

The tables are turned and Horatio becomes the star in Shakespeare in the Dark’s upcoming performance of Right Hand Man, an adaptation of Hamlet. Right Hand Man starts where Shakespeare’s Hamlet ends, with only Horatio left on stage to tell the bloody story of the prince of Denmark. Horatio thus recounts the events in Hamlet from his own perspective. His character is more fleshed out than in the original, and now has “a penchant for practical jokes and [is] often in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

The Horatio of Right Hand Man portrays the tale of Hamlet in a more lighthearted tone, and audiences will find themselves laughing rather than weeping as one of the world’s greatest tragedies is transformed into a comedy.

Thomas Baumgardner ('09) directs Right Hand Man and also wrote the script for it, mixing Shakespeare’s text with his own original monologues for Horatio. He thinks of Right Hand Man as bringing the story of Hamlet full circle. Even though Horatio does not have many lines in the traditional play, Baumgardner points out that Hamlet’s stalwart friend begins and ends the action of the play, and is therefore an important character who deserves a story of his own.

Right Hand Man is Baumgardner’s debut as a director, although he has had plenty of experience as an actor. “It is frustrating not to get up there and do [the actor’s job],” Baumgardner says, since he has done so much acting himself. However, he enjoys his new role and allows his actors lots of room for creativity. “They usually come up with better ideas than I have,” he says.

Andrew Favaloro (‘10) stars as Horatio in the play. Favaloro always liked reading Hamlet in high school, and says he likes getting to look at Shakespeare’s work from a different viewpoint. Favaloro also enjoys being part of a tight-knit ensemble. “The cast is small, so all of us have gotten closer to each other and to the director,” he remarks.

Favaloro’s fellow cast member Danielle Meeker (‘09), who plays Marcellus and various other roles, notes that much of the action in Right Hand Man was thought up on the spot during rehearsals, giving many of the comedic bits an improvisational feel. “It’s funniest when the characters break the fourth wall,” she says.

Shakespeare in the Dark will perform Right Hand Man on Sunday, February 18 and Monday, February 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the University Center Commonwealth Auditorium. Fans of Shakespeare, and those who simply want to see something fresh and new, should not miss the premiere of this promising new play.

See Right Hand Man on February 18 and 19 at 7 p.m. in the UC Commonwealth.

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February Schedule

Kimball Theatre
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

Movies

The Tournees Festival
The French and Francophone Film Festival at the College of William and Mary
Opening Night at the Kimball Theatre
Fri., Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Stupeur et Tremblements (Fear and Trembling) Not rated
Feb. 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22 screening room

Iraq in Fragments Not rated
Sun., Feb. 11-Fri., Feb. 16
7 and 8:45 p.m.
Feb. 11, 14, 16 screening room

Climates Not rated
Fri., Feb. 23-Thurs., Mar. 1
7 and 9:10 p.m.
Feb. 24, 25, 27, Mar. 1 screening room

The Ritchie Boys Not rated
Mon., Feb. 26-Sat., Mar. 3
6:30 and 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 26, 28, Mar. 2, 3 screening room

Live Performances

The College of William and Mary’s Botetourt Chamber Singers Gala Concert
Sat., Feb. 10 at 8 p.m.
All seats $15

The Williamsburg Youth Orchestra presents
An Evening of Romance
Featuring Pavel Ilyashov
Sat., Feb. 17 at 8 p.m.
Adults $12, Students $7

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation presents
An Evening with the Presidents: The Role of the Executive and the Bill of Rights
Sun., Feb. 18 at 7:30 p.m.
Adults and Youths (6-17 yrs.) $12, Children under 6 $5

The College of William and Mary’s Department of English presents
Ralph Ellison and the South
Lecture by Arnold Rampersad, Professor of English, Stanford University
Thurs., Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m.
This event is free but tickets are required

Wallner Mill Elementary Fine Arts Magnet presents
The Journey of a Lifetime
Sat., Feb. 24 and Sun., Feb. 25 at 1:30 p.m.
Adults $3.50, Seniors/Children $3
Pirro’s picks for Oscars 2007

Little Miss Sunshine could upset Departed for Best Picture

On Tuesday, January 23, nominations were announced for this year’s Academy Awards. The Academy loves surprises, and there were plenty to be found. Dreamgirls, an early favorite, led the way with eight nominations, but failed to garner a nomination for Best Picture. Also, Leonardo DiCaprio had been expected to be nominated for his performance in The Departed, but was nominated for Blood Diamond instead. So why didn’t Dreamgirls get nominated for Best Picture? The Academy nominates on a preferential ballot, masking their best pictures from 1-5. The films with the most number 1 and 2 votes get nominated. So while Dreamgirls probably was on the majority of ballots, it didn’t get enough support to make it into the top five, allowing Letters from Iwo Jima to slip in at the last moment.

The nominations did go as expected, though, with a couple of pleasant surprises (who wasn’t happy that Abigail Breslin was nominated for Little Miss Sunshine?). There is plenty of time until the awards ceremony on Sunday, February 25, but until then, The Virginia Informer takes a look at the major categories and predicts the winners, while discussing who should really take home the statue for the highest honor in Hollywood.

The Academy Awards are February 25 on ABC.

Best Picture:
Who Will Win: The guilds and critics associations have been sharing the love this year, so it’s pretty difficult to predict who is going to win. However, it looks like Scorsese’s Boston crime epic, The Departed, will take home the Oscar. If there’s going to be an upset, look for the little movie that could, Little Miss Sunshine, to walk away with it come Oscar night.

Who Should Win: The best two films of the year, Children of Men and Pan’s Labyrinth, aren’t even nominated. So if stuck to the five nominees, Clint Eastwood’s lyrical masterpiece Letters from Iwo Jima deserves the gold.

Best Director:
Who Will Win: The Academy really doesn’t like Martin Scorsese. They have nominated him over and over again but refuse to give him an award. However, it looks like it’s finally Marty’s year for The Departed.

Who Should Win: While Letters from Iwo Jima is the better film, it’s time to give Scorsese his due. It’s been a long time coming.

Best Actor:
Who Will Win: While Forest Whitaker has been winning every award so far for his portrayal as Idi Amin in The Last King of Scotland, the Academy may choose to award the biggest loser in Oscar history, P. T. O’Toole, in the film 1-1. However, Whitaker should or “will” just barely beat the aged thespian.

Who Should Win: Ryan Gosling easily gives the best performance of the year for his role in Half Nelson as a drug addicted teacher who gets caught by one of his students.

Book Review: Sanctifying Myth

Birker argues that LOTR sought to return Western world to faith

One of the interesting back-stories the reader learns is that Tolkien was very private with his mythology, and if not for the encouragement and support of Lewis, would probably never have had The Lord of the Rings published.

Also covered in the book is the strange connection between the “hippie” environmentalist movement of the 1960s and ’70s and Tolkien’s Middle-earth, something which Tolkien regretted, considering the obvious theological differences he had with the hippie movement.

“Regardless of what the entertainment industry, environmentalists, fantasy enthusiasts...or any other element of the modern and postmodern world does to, or with, Tolkien and his legacy,” argues Birker, his one true and consistent vision was to “‘use myth to return the Western world to faith and right reason.’”

For the number of citations and footnotes in the comprehensive, though fairly short book, one might think it was a political, ideological or religious argument rather than one of a literary nature. Birker would say that this just demonstrates how fiction reflects what a culture and society thinks and feels.
In February 1, a Virginia Informer-sponsored debate was held in the Wren Chapel—with the controversial cross in full display—between William and Mary religious studies professor Dr. David Holmes and New York Times bestselling author Dinesh D’Souza. The Wren Chapel, with overflow into the Great Hall, was filled to capacity with students, staff, faculty, and local and national media. This debate featured two diametrically opposed views on the Wren cross, but the two men espousing those views were able to exchange them in a reasoned, intelligent manner. This is the kind of atmosphere that President Nichol, despite his articulate e-mails and emotionally loaded sentiments, has refused to personally engage in or support. Some will argue, however, that his newly formed committee on religion is just that—an extension of the concept of open, informed debate. In theory, it should be.

It should be representative of a wide variety of students, alumni, faculty and staff, all of whom have varying viewpoints on this issue. It should be a committee of many, coming together and making determinations and decisions based on facts and intelligent argument, not on divisive rhetoric or predetermined positions. It should be a committee that the entire William and Mary community can be proud of, one that examines President Nichol’s decision, not one which obsequiously whitewashes our president.

Upon initial examination, this committee—handpicked by the president—does not appear to exemplify any of these aspirations. From the student perspective, there are only two student representatives—hardly enough to encompass the full range of viewpoints on this issue. What’s more, both of the representatives chosen have signed petitions openly endorsing Nichol and his flawed decision. The other alumni and faculty also appear to be overwhelmingly tilted in his favor according to some of the members selected who expect to be outnumbered from the start.

This is hardly the balanced committee that Nichol promised to the community. It is approaching this issue with an impartial and open mind. This committee has high hurdles to clear, and while our confidence in the committee is low, we will vigilantly report its progress over the next few months. Tactically like this ancient reason why we are not surprised that the situation has escalated to new heights, with all eyes on Williamburg with every passing week.

The previous day above, of President Nichol leaving his office only a few minutes before The Informer was told he was not there, was used by Robert Marshall on the floor of the General Assembly as reason why Nichol’s salary ought to be cut. Why did President Nichol refuse to answer our invitation for nearly a month? Perhaps we will never know. What is clear is that evasive stall tactics are doing little to encourage an end to this rift, and they need to stop.

Some on this campus have been extremely critical of both the national media’s coverage of this issue, and, in particular, this newspaper’s coverage. The group “Our Campus United” has claimed that “outside figures” have hijacked this issue for their personal political gain. Strangely, two of the four “figures” listed on their Web site are, in fact, alumni Vincent Haley ’89 and Cesar Conda ’93. In our opinion, these are hardly strangers to our community and to our traditions. Even President Nichol has said that we should include the opinions of those who came before us, as their ideas often “come to the surface on their own.”

It is especially ironic that Brian Cannon ‘04, one of the spokesmen, has his heart was plainly not in it. I would credit Holmes attempted valiantly to stand in for a conspicuously absent President Nichol, his fine rebuttal of Holmes, and the entire judicial process was ridiculous broken beer bottles, I feel we were also of the debate was never in doubt, even against him. The Virginia Informer’s coverage, including our previously mentioned debate, has been a prime mover in holding Nichol accountable for his actions. Without our coverage—and the coverage of those committed to intellectual diversity, a marketplace of ideas, intelligent argumentation (all things which Nichol claims to desire on a college campus)—there would be no committee on religion, however skewed it may be, or dueling petitions, no discussions from the Board of Visitors, and, most importantly, a wide-ranging debate on this campus and in the general Williamsburg community. If Nichol truly seeks informed and open debate, he and his supporters should be thanking us for the wide open debate, he and his supporters should be thanking us for the wide discussion we and other media have been holding Nichol accountable for his actions. Without our coverage—and the coverage of those committed to intellectual diversity, a marketplace of ideas, intelligent argumentation (all things which Nichol claims to desire on a college campus)—there would be no committee on religion, however skewed it may be, or dueling petitions, no discussions from the Board of Visitors, and, most importantly, a wide-ranging debate on this campus and in the greater Williamsburg community.

Fact: President Nichol’s unilateral decision was (admittedly) poorly made. Yet, he has not reversed this poorly made decision. Fact: There is no consistent logic to why the Wren Cross should be removed, but other Christian symbols, statements, architecture and furnishings should remain in the Wren Chapel. (Aren’t they too similarly skewing and offensive?) Fact: There are dozens, perhaps hundreds of symbols, items, names, devices, organizations, statements, religious practices and people that are permitted by the College all across campus that could be (and are) unwelcoming or offensive to some. Yet, they are not removed, denied, defunded, shut down and kicked out. No. Only the Wren Cross is removed, leaving a vacant statement of intolerance behind on the altar.

Fact: While President Nichol talks a good game about tolerance, being “welcoming”, and unity, he has not tolerated the Wren Cross, has not welcomed the thousands that deeply care about the return of the cross and the former policy, and has caused the deepest division at the College since the days of McCarthyism.

Poor Professor Holmes never stood a chance. While I appreciate your newspaper bringing Mr. D’Souza to campus, a far lesser debate would have won just as easily.

Andrew McRoberts
Class of 1987
Manakin-Sabot, VA

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

“Athletes get free pass at Homecoming” was a great article and I agree with you completely. As a is a member of the Kafka Alpha order I was in utter shock as I attended the tailgate on Homecoming. I am a sophomore so this was the first time I went with my fraternity; nonetheless I felt as if I was in some kind of dream, and it was incredible. I honestly could not believe people were drinking in public, especially where on this campus a student has to meet with the dean for something as little as having an empty beer can in their room. After being kicked out of our unit for having an empty beer bottle, I feel we were also completely mistrusted by the administration. The entire judicial process was ridiculous in itself. There was no evidence that we threw the bottles, but since it was in our unit we were forced to take responsibility. Also it seems the administration’s condescending attitude towards it extends to issues beyond alcohol and the judicial system, but that’s for another day. Good article.

Nick Patin
Class of 2009

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Staff Editorial:

On committees, petitions and politics

Dear Editor,

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Protest for “peace” supports military failure

Alex Mayer
Staff Writer

When President Bush visited Williamsburg recently to speak to Democratic Don Youngblom, he was accompanied by a student protest organized by the left-wing Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The posters advertising the protest suggested showing the president his disapproval of the recent “troop surge” in Iraq, I found this puzzling.

First of all, I am almost certain that the students that attended the protest were not really protesting the president's switch in strategy in Iraq. In fact, everyone I knew who were involved in it were students that would welcome a departure from the president's previous “stay the course” policy, as well as the replacement of the “old guard,” including Donald Rumsfeld, whose efforts to end the war have now been revealed as ineffective. Instead, these students were protesting because they saw the 20,000 additional troops as an “escalation” of the war. As if it weren’t really a “war” already, and we’re somehow making it “more” of a war by sending more troops. No, “escalation” is an effective catchphrase because of all the ominous implications it has in connection to Nixon's decision to bomb Cambodia during the Vietnam War.

Leaving aside the pros and cons of comparing the Vietnam conflict with the current one, there is a simple and fundamental difference between Nixon’s “escalation” and Bush's in Iraq. I would think it would be clear to everyone, but in their zeal to make Iraq into another Vietnam, the left has overlooked the simple fact that Bush, unlike Nixon, is not expanding the conflict because the borders of our society. “How can we work this away at the moral norms of past generations?” the progressives ask. The Virginia Informer has covered the Sex Workers’ Art Show in the past, and continues to offer information about it in the interest of free speech. But to what purpose? If audience members and students in our society, we can certainly oppose this disgusting art form in a purely social context. What was once only allowable in private burlesque houses is now gracing the stages of universities. But to what purpose?

Moral limits are always being tested in our society. “How can we work this away at the moral norms of past generations?” the progressives ask. The Virginia Informer has covered the Sex Workers’ Art Show in the past, and continues to offer information about it in the interest of free speech. But to what purpose? If audience members and students in our society, we can certainly oppose this disgusting art form in a purely social context. What was once only allowable in private burlesque houses is now gracing the stages of universities. But to what purpose?

What is the significance of life

Stephanie Long
News Editor

I found myself on Socrates’ assertion that the only thing I know with certainty is that I know nothing, and have chosen to live in a non-confrontational, open-minded way. For years I was convinced that the only thing we can do with our lives is question everything as we can about the world, and this is what we are here for why we are here for what would otherwise seem like a pointless period of time on earth. We are called to live. We must live in an attempt to find happiness. We must live in an attempt to uphold the values that make of it, and I believe that all lives are equally valuable. To me, this is so evident, that I am beginning to doubt Socrates’ mantra. After a while, following Socrates’ method of questioning, and I believe that all lives are equally important.

The significance of life

What is the point of life?

John R. Kennedy
Opinion Editor

The Sex Workers’ Art Show is a tour that exhibits the performance art of prostitution. This art form purports to offer a wide range of strange sexual interests. It can fall under an incredibly broad umbrella artistic? Art can be defined incredibly to admit that I represented pornography. One question my question is not the only thing I know with certainty is that I know nothing, and have chosen to live in a non-confrontational, open-minded way. For years I was convinced that the only thing we can do with our lives is question everything as we can about the world, and this is what we are here for why we are here for what would otherwise seem like a pointless period of time on earth. We are called to live. We must live in an attempt to find happiness. We must live in an attempt to uphold the values that make of it, and I believe that all lives are equally valuable. To me, this is so evident, that I am beginning to doubt Socrates’ mantra. After a while, following Socrates’ method of questioning, and I believe that all lives are equally important.

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The significance of life

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Meese plans to invite W&M community to committee

Matthew Sutton
Assistant News Editor

The burgeoning campus fracas over President Nichol’s Gateway Initiative, and the recent Wren Chapel cross has sparked dueling petitions, a formal debate held in the Chapel, and a newly appointed committee asked to render a Solomonic judgment.

National pundits and angry alumni have made much of the issue and now it’s up to one law school professor known for his affable demeanor to co-chair a committee tasked to resolve the controversy. Sporting a stellar résumé, Alan J. Meese, the Ball Professor of Law at the Marshall-Wythe law school is set to co-chair Dr. James Livingston, the emeritus chair of the College’s religious studies department.

Formerly a law clerk for both Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and for the well-respected 7th circuit judge, Frank Easterbrook, Meese boasts a solid conservative pedigree. A quick review of his published scholarship and public lectures places him in the mainstream of the Republican legal world. In addition to his writings he also holds a position on the board of the Virginia Federalist Society.

No stranger to the national stage, Meese has appeared on MSNBC in opposition to the 2000 Florida recount and in an interview with NPR, arguing that the Senate should confirm Samuel Alito, President Bush’s nominee to the Supreme Court.

Ostensibly an ideologically cautious appointment, yet at the same time, Meese holds a reputation as a consensus builder within the William and Mary community. Government Professor Clay Clemens remarked on hearing the news of Meese’s appointment, “I don’t have any reason to think he will conduct a reasoned discussion of these issues and help produce some conclusions that will calm it in Alan (and of course Jim Livingston as well).”

Meese was the first to clarify that his role would be to examine issues and help produce some conclusions. The College’s head of communications and relation to President Nichol, Whitson, offered a similar view, “I can’t think of two better major in Ancient Greek and Economics, Meese has a long history of involvement with the college. Currently the Vice President of the Faculty Assembly, Meese has also taught an undergraduate seminar. Frequently seen at Tribe sporting events and club activities, other College gatherings, he appears to be the consummate institutionalist.

For all of his ties to the school though, Meese is also known as a perceptve and independent thinker. An early critic of President Nixon’s Gateway Initiative, he recently penned an opinion in the Wall Street Journal challenging campus orthodoxies. Clemens noted, “He is no hesitant challenge to the prevailing wisdom, and often does. He employs both relentless logic and wit to get others to examine the premises of any discussion or decision.”

In that vein, he, unlike some alumni, claims no special mission from the Wren Chapel during his appointment. Even his Phi Beta Kappa initiation was held in the Capitol building in Colonial Williamsburg.

While admitting he is not a church-state specialist, Meese, whose legal specialty mainly revolves around constitutional law, does have a strong background in Constitutional law. A Fellow at the Institute of Bill of Rights Law, for instance, he is familiar with the legal aspects of the debate and has participated in countless programs under the Institute’s auspices. Meese has also written articles on affirmative action, civil disobedience, Liberty, Judicial Review, and the Free Speech Rights of Corporations.

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