College’s new strategic plan in development

Steven Nelson

William and Mary has operated for the past 14 years without revisions to its strategic plan, a crucial blueprint for fundraising efforts and other future goals. Efforts are now underway to institute a new strategic plan, which will serve to guide the priorities of the College going forward. In September, President for Strategic Initiatives Jim Golden, the committee has recently released fourteen draft challenges that the new plan will seek to address.

These challenges range from establishing a new “financial model for the College” to instilling “the integrity of a liberal arts education.” Mr. Reveley and Mr. Feiss collaborated in appointing members to the committee, which presently includes both faculty and non-voting student representatives from undergraduate and graduate programs.

The committee’s goals were shared with The Informer by President Reveley, who said, “The committee’s main function is to facilitate a wide-ranging conversation with faculty, staff, students and alumni about a vision for William and Mary and the great challenges before us. This will lead, ultimately, to a plan I will take to the Board of Visitors in April for approval.” Over the past few months, President Reveley has described many of these challenges as primarily financial, with the College needing to counter escalating state budget cuts and marginal enrollment support.

Provost Feiss emphasized the importance of the plan, commenting that “without a strategic plan with well-defined core values and a limited set of goals and objectives, setting of institutional priorities for the allocation and reallocation of resources can become extremely difficult.” The new plan under development seeks to be more fluid and marginal enrollment support.

Co-chairs Provost Geoff Feiss and Vice President Jim Golden approved the strategic plan in April, Mr. Golden said President Reveley will “assign responsibility for implementation of the Plan’s goals and specific objectives.” The plan will be reviewed each year following enactment. “The annual review process will include an assessment of progress against the plan and appropriate reports to the President and the Board of Visitors,” said Mr. Golden.

Mr. Feiss said that follow-up on specific goals “will surely be a responsibility that the president will take very seriously, likely with the assistance of his VPs and the provost.” Mr. Feiss continued, “Some of the Planning Steering Committee’s work in the spring will be directed at developing the best model for assuring annual review, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the plan.”

President Reveley believes that student involvement is important to the process. “The views of students have been and are being actively sought by the committee. I hope members of the William and Mary family, students have informed thoughts about what makes the College important to American higher education -- what is it that we do unusually well and should, even at great cost, keep doing unusually well for the foreseeable future?”

The budgeting process will take into consideration all goals and measurable objectives for the next five years, Mr. Golden said that there will be six to eight “grand challenges” that will be focused on. In mid-November, two open forums were held to allow undergraduate students to share their views for what William and Mary should focus on. President of the Student Assembly Valerie Hopkins (’09) attended one of the forums. She shared, “one student said that sustainability should be a priority to both save electricity and attract prospective students.” Ms. Hopkins said students also expressed a desire for the school to improve alumni networking, to better define the College’s role in the Williamsburg community, and to make an effort to emphasize openness and tolerance on campus.

Sarah Nadler

Assistant Features Editor

Bill Lawrence (’90), the creator and executive producer of Scrubs and the creator of Spin City, will visit the College in late January. This was prompted by an interview with The Informer last fall, when Mr. Lawrence expressed an interest in visiting campus. The Informer is currently working with UCAB and a group of faculty members to make the visit a success. Details for the visit have not been finalized, but there will likely be a public event under the co-sponsorship of UCAB and The Informer.

UCAB is currently promoting a film competition in which students can submit short films that will be judged by Mr. Lawrence. Giuliana Morales (’10), UCAB film committee chair and organizer of the competition, was able to update The Informer on UCAB’s plans for the competition. According to Ms. Morales, “The Bill Lawrence Filmmaking Competition is a short film competition that will showcase W&M talent in honor of Bill Lawrence’s return. In order to be eligible, student teams have to incorporate a predetermined prop, line of dialogue, and creative device related to Bill Lawrence or the College.”

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SA votes $500 for Hindi class, $400 for police tailgate food

Ian Kirkpatrick
Assistant News Editor

The November 18 Senate meeting opened with a bill from Sen. Britteny Fallon (’11) which requested $500 to finalize funding for a new Hindi language course. South Asian Student Association (SASA) representative Sravya Yeleswarapu ’10 spoke of her organization’s extensive efforts to secure the last $500 for the course from various administrators and departments.

The bill, entitled the ‘Helping Haul Hindi Act’ avoided a prohibition on the SA using student fees to provide academic credit by allocating the money from the off-campus account, which is privately funded by the organization. Most funding bills allocate money from the substantially larger consolidated reserve account, into which unused Student Activity fee money goes each year.

Ms. Yeleswarapu said that although the Hindi course offered this spring is a pilot program, it is an important first step towards the establishment of 101 and 102-level courses. Ms. Fallon added, “[Hindi] is one of the critical languages listed by the State Department.” Sen. Steven Nelson (’10) suggested that the Senate give more thought to the bill, which insisted that only $500 was needed. The only Senator to vote against the bill was Sen. Matt Pinker (’09), who argued that not enough students would be assisted to warrant funding.

VA Vice President Kristin Slawter (’09) then delivered an update on all happenings within the Student Assembly. A text book program may be started at Swem to make it easier for students to get by without purchasing expensive textbooks. Facilities management will probably switch outside lamps to LED lights due to the huge cost benefit and the fact that they do not randomly turn off. Another blue light will probably be installed by the Ludwell Crosswalk.

The passed and pending legislation segment, in which Senators address the progress of their bills, revealed that the Reduced Parking Fee For Bumped Students Act, by Sen. Ryan Eickel (’10) has not met its objective since it was passed in Spring 2008.

The International Relations Club, which organizes and sponsors the event, invites high school students to represent the policies of foreign countries and politicians in simulations of the committees of the UN and various other international bodies. Conference organizers hope that the event will increase knowledge of international conflicts, international problems, and the importance of diplomacy among the attendees. In concert with the conference, the International Relations Club also raised nearly $1200 for Doctors Without Borders.

First round of green fee projects announced

The first series of projects funded by the $15 per semester “green fee” was announced by the Committee on Sustainability. The projects include $16,000 for recycling, $3,000 for solar cell research, $15,000 to install occupancy sensors in Swem Library to reduce energy use; $16,000 for electrical metering equipment in the Randolph Complex; and $3,000 to Professor Randy Chambers, the head of Keck Lab, to study storm water runoff. In addition, a $40,000 “green endowment” in mutual funds has been established to fund future projects in sustainability.

VIMS professor to set priorities for carbon-cycle research

Professor Deborah Bonk of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science has been tapped to serve on the Carbon Cycle Science Working Group, which coordinates climate science research among 13 federal agencies. Bonk was chosen because of her research on nitrogen cycling within marine ecosystems.

The Working Group hopes to develop a national research plan on carbon-related phenomena by December 2009.
Campus construction progresses as Career Center receives $6 million donation

Aimee Forsythe
Staff Writer

As classes wind down for the semester, construction work around campus maintains its momentum. Work on Rogers, Miller, and the School of Education are all well on their way to meeting their projected completion dates according to Anna Martin, Vice President of Administration.

The renovation of Rogers, the second phase of the Integrated Science building, is on time and still set for a March 2009 completion date. When it reopens it will house the Psychology Department, the Psychology Student Assembly, the Career Services Center, and still set for a March 2009 completion date.

According to Martin, these additions should be finished by Fall 2009. Miller Hall will house both the undergrad and graduate business programs. The new School of Education is expected to be finished by either Spring 2010 or early Summer 2010 at the latest. Construction on the new School of Education, on the old site of Sentara Hospital, began in September.

In a few weeks construction on the additions of the high bay and new lab for Small Hall will begin. According to Martin, these additions should be finished by Fall 2009. Once these are completed, renovation of the existing building will commence.

New projects, such as the Career Services Center, are on the horizon. Earlier this week, Manhattan real estate developer Sherman Cohen committed $6 million to the new facility. Miller Hall, the soon-to-be home for the business school, is still making good progress and should be finished by Fall 2009. Miller Hall will house both the undergrad and graduate business programs. The new School of Education is expected to be finished by either Spring 2010 or early Summer 2010 at the latest. Construction on the new School of Education, on the old site of Sentara Hospital, began in September.

As previously reported by The Informer, students and members of the Student Assembly were concerned that important student rights information was not being distributed by the Dean’s office. This matter was brought to light when a student, who was not given the packet, received a harsh punishment when he decided to resolve his case informally.

Last spring, Senator Ben Brown (‘11) contacted Dean Gilbert about creating an easy-to-use method for students to understand the judicial process and the rights they have. The heart of the work was completed over the summer and the final product was made available this fall. According to Dean Gilbert, the information is “available via the web”, both in the “Student Conduct” section of the dean of students website and on the “Know Your Rights” tab of the myWMU website. Dean Gilbert states this section was created this summer to provide a prominent location for the Student handbook.

Scheduling policy is to make students aware of their rights in the Information Session of the conduct process. According to McBrown, Dean Gilbert is also open to the idea of offering the “to students during informational conferences” student handbook.

The packet is available online and in hard copy at the Dean of Students office. “The textbook says… [for students to read the Handbook and the information on the website so that they understand the behavioral expectations of the college and can make wise decisions regarding their conduct],” says Dean Gilbert. He confirmed to Sen. Brown that he would most likely begin offering student rights packets to all students before meeting in his office.

Amethyst Initiative: Former Middlebury president says drinking age should be states’ decision

Ian Kirkpatrick
Assistant News Editor

On November 20th, John McCardell, the former President of Middlebury College, spoke about the absence of a national debate concerning the drinking age. His speed emphasized “the beauty of the federalist system,” where states act as policy laboratories, testing different solutions before they advance to the federal government. Due to federal law, creativity concerning the drinking age has been stifled.

The National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984, the federal mandate that states have a drinking age of 21, stipulates that 10 percent of federal highway funds be withheld from states that do not increase their drinking age to 21. This has effectively quashed debate, and Dr. McCardell explained why he believed the requirement should be lifted.

Dr. McCardell drew heavily from the lessons of Prohibition in the United States during the 1920’s. He described the social tendencies that were exhibited on a large scale during the “noble experiment” of prohibition, and noted that similar negative behaviors to have emerged in today’s prohibition on 18-21 year old population. He emphasized that prohibition does not work today, as it did not in the 1920’s, but simply pushes drinking out of the public eye. This has led to an increase in dangerous drinking behavior in the 18-21 year age group.

The largest achievement touted by proponents of the 21 year age limit since its enactment has been a reduction in alcohol related traffic fatalities. Dr. McCardell noted that every age group contributed to the decrease, which he said would imply a different variable. Alternative contributors likely included safer cars, seat belt requirements, airbags in cars, zero tolerance laws and the idea of a “designated driver”. Dr. McCardell. He noted that the raised drinking age was a minor factor in the decrease in fatalities.

Dr. McCardell proposed that the federal constraint on highway funding be lifted when it comes up for renewal next year, so to allow for experimentation at the state level. He also shared a proposal by forth his non-profit group Choose Responsibility, which recommends that states who chose to lower their age institute a system of alcohol licensing for 18-21 year olds.

The process would work as driving license programs, and would include education, with the idea of meaningfully incorporating parents to encourage responsible behavior. A license would be granted after passing a course, and would be permanently revoked after a single instance of misuse. With this tentative step, Dr. McCardell argued we could see the reversal of some of the negative trends of the last two years, including binge drinking. He also reiterated that if the current national law was lifted, there could be many approaches taken by the states.

Dr. McCardell described the organization he founded, Choose Responsibility, and the Amethyst Initiative, an open letter by many prominent college presidents. Choose Responsibility, he said, aims to lower the drinking age and should not be confused with the Amethyst Initiative. The latter advocates for a new debate on the policy. He concluded, “I will leave it to someone who occupies a higher moral ground to tell a returning soldier they lack the maturity to buy a beer.”

Like what you see?

US. Informer meetings are every Monday 7:30 p.m. Blair 223
SA-sponsored speaker claims professional licensing puts minorities under medieval-esque ‘new guild’ system

Kristin Coyner
Opinion Editor

On November 18, students gathered in Blair 229 to hear attorney Valerie Bayham deliver a lecture entitled “From Hairbraiding Raids to the Flower Police: the Fight for Economic Liberty.” This talk was the second in a lecture series entitled “Civil Liberty and Minority Communities” sponsored by the Student Assembly Department of Student Rights. This event was put on in co-sponsorship with the William and Mary NAACP Chapter.

Valerie Bayham is a staff lawyer with the Institute for Justice (IJ), a libertarian public interest law firm which litigates and advocates for economic liberty, property rights and free speech. Although this lecture was billed as pertaining specifically to minority rights, IJ argues cases involving individuals across racial and ethnic lines.

During her PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Bayham projected photos of the different individuals involved in IJ cases. “Tonight I am going to tell you the stories of the folks that we have represented over the years” said Ms. Bayham. (see note 1)

The first case discussed involved Talib-Din Usdah and Pamela Farrel, a husband and wife team from Washington D.C. who were threatened with jail time for opening their hair braiding business. Ms. Farrel flunked her first attempt at gaining a cosmetology license and was threatened with jail time for opening a salon for natural hair. Instructing her to retake the test on a white person instead of serving natural hair clientele without first passing the cosmetology exam, which caused trouble with the D.C. government.

“In most states to braid hair, you have to go to school for 1,500 hours and can cost anywhere between $5,000 to $15,000, all to simply braid hair which most of these ladies have been doing for years... It’s one of the biggest underground industries there is,” noted Ms. Bayham.

In addressing why states implement such regulations, Ms. Bayham asserted that “Far too often the government acts to protect the established business interests rather than the public. It’s what we call cartels... This isn’t just something that happens to the hair braiders, though — this happens all over.” Transportation entrepreneurs, specifically taxi drivers, repair workers, casket salesman and interior designers were all mentioned for having cases involving excessive regulations in market entry. “In order to get in the business, it requires getting everyone else’s permission to do so. This is like saying that Dick Fil-A has to get McDonald’s in order to open up,” said Ms. Bayham.

One of the more interesting cases Ms. Bayham highlighted involved Baptist minister Nathaniel Craigmile of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Rev. Craigmile decided to sell caskets after the burial of his mother, hoping to provide his parishioners with the opportunity to buy caskets without paying the funeral home mark up price. This caused Chattanooga funeral directors to try and shut down Rev. Craigmile’s business. In Tennessee and ten other states, it is illegal to sell caskets unless you are a licensed funeral director. This licensing process requires two years of school all to “sell a wooden box,” as Ms. Bayham described it.

According to Forbes Magazine, over 20% of professions now require licensing, compared to 4% in the 1950’s. “Just like the guilds of the middle ages, the new guild system is there to keep folks out of business” said Ms. Bayham. Price increases and job reductions were noted as the main effect of professional licensing.

“The sad fact is that the laws are so bad in this area that there is no way that we are going to get the courts to totally turn around because both the Republicans and the Democrats say ‘Economic liberty? We don’t want to touch this.’ And this has a real cost to real people,” said Ms. Bayham.

In concluding, Ms. Bayham tried to impress a parting message to attending students: “When you hear in the political discourse across the country about the horrible deregulation that is occurring in the financial industry and that anything and everything needs to be regulated, I want you to stop and be a little skeptical. I am not saying that there should be no regulations, what I am saying is that there are costs to these regulations and you need to pay attention to who’s advocating for them...Are there being ways to achieve the end then through regulations?”

Smooth de-regulator. In a lecture regarding economic liberties, Attorney Valerie Bayham said that professional licensing regulation is not a cure-all and it has its costs.
**City Councilman Paul Freiling (’83) shares his thoughts on the College and students**

Michael Watson  
Assistant Opinion Editor

Williamsburg City Councilman and William and Mary graduate Paul Freiling recently sat down with The Informer to discuss student life, the three-person rule, public transportation, and a wide array of current city issues.

The Virginia Informer  
How has the off-campus party atmosphere changed since you graduated?

Paul Freiling: Off-campus parties continue to exist. Except for a few guys and I watching a new TV channel called "MTV" at a house we had on Lafayette Street and discovered to our horror, the Green Leaf, there really wasn't an off-campus party scene. People partied at the Units and Society Court and there were also hall parties people went to at their dorms.

VAF: That was before the legal drinking age went up to 21?  
Freiling: Yes, that's true. Before legal drinking age went up to 21, there was 18 to drink beer and 21 to drink wine and liquor. The last couple of years I was here, they started grandfatherring in the 21-year-age, but even in first few years after legal age 21 parties still took place on campus more often than not.

VAF: So, in your view has the impact of off-campus parties on residents increased over the past 20 years?

Freiling: Yes, it has increased. It's also increased in the past 5 years.

VAF: At the November 13 Council Meeting, several comments were made by Councilman Clyde Haulman that many students perceived to be an unfair characterization. Do you feel that students are sometimes too disruptive and, if so, what can be done to change this so they may retain their full rights in Williamsburg?

Freiling: That would depend on the situation of individual properties. If a property is available and an additional student can be a resident, the residents under a four-person rule would have greater flexibility in deciding where to live, greater lease availability, and rent flexibility. This doesn't mean that the total rent for a house in which three people live will not go up at all, but there is a potential financial benefit to students from this proposal. It's not only students—other renters can benefit from these flexibilities that allow four unrelated people to live in the same house. Most importantly, progress will not be made by reform of the three-person rule alone. I think the College and the City should look at privately operated student housing units in the areas near campus, like the site on Trayburn Drive by High St, for instance.

VAF: In what ways could the present college administration improve to bring about change on this issue?

Freiling: I'm not privy to those discussions; there are, however, the Ordinances Committee and President Reevley. In my personal opinion, I would like to see some way to resolve issues between the school and the City. The City's Ordinances Committee and the College's Ordinances Committee need to work together to bring about change on this issue.

VAF: How will the acquisition of Busch by InBev affect the economy of Williamsburg, which greatly benefits from Busch Gardens as well as the company's large brewing facility in close proximity to the College?

Freiling: The brewery itself is in James City County, and as far as I know, InBev plans to continue operating it, but I can't know the future. More concerning is the reputation of InBev for ruthless cost-cutting, and that may cost a few jobs from the brewery, which means that they will sell Busch Entertainment (who owns Busch Gardens and Water Country USA). There isn't an entry out there that is as efficient at running those properties as Busch Entertainment. For students, if fewer people come to Williamsburg, your off-campus options will suffer, but as far as I have heard, you haven't satisfied with them as they are. VAF: On a lighter note, was there a Wawa equivalent when you attended W&M?

Freiling: There was the Tiny Giant, but it wasn't a place people went to as a destination, like they sometimes do with Wawa. Everything was more internally focused. There was the Pub and the Wigwam at the Campus Center. The Wigwam was a dining hall, but the Pub, which is now Trinkle Hall, was a nightclub, and the major source of non-Greek social life.

Men's Division One golf team leaders with competition and brotherly camaraderie

Bert Mueller and Kirk Vernegaard  
Assistant News Editor and Staff Writer

From the fields of Scotland to the lush courses of Williamsburg, the sport of 15th century shepherds has found a home at William and Mary: William and Mary Varisty Golf. There are eight members on the men's team. Although the William and Mary Men's Golf Team is very near the top in terms of success, mostly because the team is small, they make up for it in terms of quality. The team is led by director of golf, pushes the team hard. According to O'Brien, the team is not only a competitive drive but also a fraternal bond that many sports teams are not only committed to their sport but also to one another. This spirit has carried over to the team. According to team co-captain Doug O'Brien, "The camaraderie of the team is just amazing. As of this year, the team is not only a competitive drive but also a fraternal bond that many sports teams do not share.

Freiling: Look, any group of people as large as the student body of William and Mary is going to have a few people that will reflect unfavorably on the larger group, so yes, some students are too disruptive. I mean, it's sad to be driving around on a Saturday or Sunday morning and see red SOLOs cut on people's lawns because they didn't pick them up. As for changing this situation, that's up to us. But this Di vision I team isn't just eating food for competition; they are also discussing the relationship between Mayor Zeidler and President Reevley. In my personal opinion, I would like to see some way to resolve issues between the school and the City. The City's Ordinances Committee and the College's Ordinances Committee need to work together to bring about change on this issue.

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Jennifer Souers
Business Editor

Master Craftsmen has been a fixture in the Williamsburg area for over 20 years, specializing in fine silver and pewter jewelry. In a personal interview with The Virginia Informer, entrepreneur and owner Holly Shields discussed her business with us, as well as lessons she’s learned.

Master Craftsmen was founded in 1981 in Williamsburg by Ms. Shields and her husband. After completing his training as an apprentice silver smith through the Colonial Williamsburg program, Mr. Shields’ husband started his own shop, thus becoming a “Master Craftsmen.” Ms. Shields explained that “technically he was a journeyman – they don’t call you a ‘master’ until you leave and open your own shop.” Originally intending the store to be a wholesale pewter shop, Ms. Shields and her husband struggled along for a while till they decided to go into business for themselves and redesigned the store and its purpose. In 1982, they opened a store where “the idea was to get products that different master craftsmen made in Colonial Williamsburg. They would make it on the side and we would put it in our shop, baskets from the basket maker, the Sheldrake had fireplace tools, and the weaver had shawls and things like that. My husband made the silver bracelets, and we had a spinner who spun the pewter and that ended up doing so much better than the other products from the other craftsmen.” Since then, Master Craftsmen has specialized in silver and pewter jewelry, and other silver and pewter products.

Master Craftsmen is known especially for its classic silver cuff bracelets. One of the most interesting parts of the Ms. Shields’ business—and what makes these bracelets unique—is that they are based on classic Colonial-era designs. Ms. Shields describes the colonial tradition she bases her process on as “[Colonial Silversmiths] would take scraps of silver and just make them into the cuff bracelets and use thin silver wires [just] to put trims on bowls and things. They would just take that and turn them into the bracelets. A lot of the designs are just old classic designs. And then there are also different masters made in Colonial-era designs. Ms. Shields describes the satisfaction she receives from her business and seeing people enjoy her products. She recounted a time when she was entering an elevator in Washington, D.C. and a girl was wearing a bracelet made at Master Craftsmen. She remembered another time “down at Virginia Beach, I was walking down the beach and there’s a man that always has his little bar set up on the beach. These people were talking and there was this girl, and she had on all these Master Craftsmen bracelets. Ms. Shields and her business as well, though she describes herself as “lucky.” She says “I feel like being in Williamsburg we’re kind of lucky; we’re feeling it, but it would be a whole lot worse if I were in Michigan or somewhere. But I can tell [business] has slowed down and I’m just hoping that, just being real careful ordering, that it will be all right. I’ll be interesting to see how Christmas goes, but so far, I can’t complain. I’m pretty much on par with last year… I’ve cut back on employee schedules and things like that.”

Ms. Shields, who says she’s learned a lot from her experiences, provided some good advice for anyone wanting to start their own business. She said “Just be positive and if it’s something you really want to do, just keep at it. It’s a lot of hard work; it’s a lot of, just faith almost, just hoping it’ll work out. But I feel like I’ve just been really lucky, because it’s almost like I’ve found a niche. There’s got to be a market for what you’re selling, and that’s where I really do feel like the College helps me a lot. The College is a big part of my customer base. You just got to look into all avenues too. I have a website, and that’s been a real plus at this time and I do sell on my website, but I’m lucky because I have a product that’s real easy to ship!”

Ms. Shields described the satisfaction she receives from her business and seeing people enjoy her products. She recounted a time when she was entering an elevator in Washington, D.C. and a girl was wearing a bracelet made at Master Craftsmen. She remembered another time “down at Virginia Beach, I was walking down the beach and there’s a man that always has his little bar set up on the beach. These people were talking and there was this girl, and she had on all these Master Craftsmen bracelets. You know it just makes you feel really good about what you’re doing, and [people] are like ‘You made that?! Yeah, it’s me, I’m the Master Craftsmen. I do like that.”

Drum of the Week
Hawaiian Crunk

Jeff Dailey
Staff Writer

Ingredients
- 4.6 oz Hawaiian Punch
- 4.6 oz Mach W Energy Drink
- 1.5 oz Malibu Pineapple Rum
- 1.5 oz Malibu Coconut Rum

Directions
Mix in a big glass with ice and satiate your aching head.

Editor’s Note: The Virginia Informer encourages its readers to please drink responsibly, and in accordance with local, state and federal law.

Yuletide brews spread holiday cheer

As the temperature drops, what better way to warm your body than some liquid Christmas spirit? While the Southern Comfort and eggnog combination is a holiday staple, beer drinkers may like a more bitter, post-taste bud orgy, tolerable, after taste. Highly drinkable and heavy ales.

Goose Island Christmas Ale is sampled this Christmas season with the perfect dinner complement – Chicago style deep dish pizza. Goose Island’s Christmas Ale collection is definitely intended for Yuletide celebration with its cornucopia of spices and flavors. In fact, the bottle declares that the “flavor will develop over five years.” However, post-taste bud orgy, one is left with a slightly bitter, but tolerable, aftertaste. Highly drinkable and oozing with flavor, Goose Island’s Christmas Ale collection is defintely intended for those who appreciate the holidays.

Full Moon Winter Ale – “Christmas morning, over an open fire” is an oft-heard Christmas carol during this time of year. Full Moon Winter Ale is a common flavoring for winter ales – and Full Moon is no exception. As the holiday extension of the popular Blue Moon brand, Full Moon is much daintier and heavier – and obligation for any winter brew. However, unlike the spicy Goose Island, Full Moon is fairly light beer run of the mill. It tastes good and has the ubiquitous bitter aftertaste if dark beer but fails to stand out from the crowd.

Pre-game Santa the right way: The holiday season is the only time of the year when America casts off its penchant for light diluted beers in exchange for dark and heavy ales.

Note: The Virginia Informer encourages its readers to please drink responsibly, and in accordance with local, state and federal law.
College student reveals early life in war-torn Iraq

Phillip Mariscal
Staff Writer

For my Spanish Class, Sezan Al-Sultan ‘12 developed the segment of our presentation dealing with tropicalization, or imbuing ethnic groups with certain, often stereotypical, traits. The class deals heavily with cultural perceptions, often developed from what we hear and see in mainstream media. However, at her question, Ms. Al-Sultan’s unique background gives her freedom to think critically and independently. At the age of eighteen, Sezan is a William and Mary freshman and an Iraqi refugee. She was born and raised in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, where her father owned a small oil engineering company. He was also a farmer. However, as Saddam Hussein began to get power, the family moved to another part of Iraq where the government could better control the area they lived in and Saddam’s community—a definition whose rules were easy to bend. “We lost a lot of life there,” Ms. Al-Sultan said. “I was happy, like honestly, when I came here, you never realize how technologically absorbed everyone is. She misses never being able to simply appreciate the presence of just another person.”

Sezan’s sister, in particular, left a lasting impression. When Sezan was 18, her sister used to listen to music non-stop and wear American technological distractions. To Sezan, this was surrealism as she experienced violence exhibit a fondness for Night of when bombs fell. Sezan and her family had lived in her parent’s room, windows taped against potential shattering, Sibling rivalry sometimes emerged during the worst parts with herself and her sister fighting over the safest spot to sleep. When a bomb shook the home, Sezan’s sister would jump up and down, jealous that Sezan could feel safe. Ms. Al-Sultan, ever the caring sister, assured her that another bomb would fall. “We definitely laughed a lot. Just because of the way we lived. We were so used to it at that point. At that age, you think you’re going to be safe because you are with your parents.”

Sezan echoes the sentiments of older William and Mary staff and community members—the cell-phone-less, “unplugged” generation. Ms. Al-Sultan said, “I was happy because, honestly, when I came here, you never realize how technologically absorbed everyone is.” She misses never being able to simply appreciate the presence of just another person, lamenting that “everyone is on their phone. I do it now too, all the time. I can’t live without my phone, but over there, there was nothing to keep you sidetracked from really being with someone or being with family.”

In Iraq, Ms. Al-Sultan’s father owned an oil engineering company. Difficulties running the company from the U.S. prompted him to return to Jordan where he currently resides. Her mother, however, like many Iraqi women, does not work. This is not due to sexism, but because “[Wives] didn’t need to work. The dads were making enough money to provide for the entire family. I sound like I am bragging, but life there was really easy.” Ms. Al-Sultan’s driver in Iraq lived comfortably with thirty dollars a month. “Living here is so much more expensive. [In Iraq] we had a farm and we had land on the [Euphrates] River.” An Iraqi government official moved into what was once the Al-Sultan’s house, which they still own. These troubles are a continuation of life under a dictatorship. It was a time when the government took citizens’ land when it felt it could better serve society and the community—a definition whose rules were easy to bend. “We lost a lot of land when Saddam came in,” said Ms. Al-Sultan. Her grandfather had owned the area they lived in and Saddam started taking parts of it. However, she saddens when thinking of Iraq’s current situation. She wants to return one day, but her father tells her to forget it, wanting her to remember Iraq as it was. Yet, she does not seem sure where to direct her frustration, believing that Saddam could have sacrificed his power had he cared about the welfare of the people. “The mass of people that I see passing away now...there’s a lot more than it was before. I am not for Saddam at all and I hate dictatorship, but I am kind of pissed off because he could have just left if he really did care about his country...it would have saved us so much trouble.”

“I want to go back, but I know I’m not going to like it. It’s going to turn into something that its not. It is not going to feel cultural enough for me. Personally I don’t feel like the U.S. has an identity. It is a mixture and that makes sense, but at the same time, I don’t feel like people can relate. I am very traditional and cultural and religious. I can’t wear in the Middle East what I wear here. If I wore a sweatshirt and sweatspants in the Middle East, people would think I was homeless. People dress up there. I feel like being in America isolates you from the rest of the world.”

Ms. Al-Sultan, a Sunni, debunks the image that Iraqis of differing denominations lived in religious animosity prior to the invasion, noting that Shiite and Sunni divisions were not evident. “I don’t watch the news. I don’t know what images you guys see. Obviously you are going to hear about extreme cases. That is what people want to hear and see. The people I grew up around were very accepting. I had a bunch of Shiite friends. I didn’t even ask.” She also happily reminisces about the sense of community after Ramadan feasts, when more fortunate people would bring sugar and flour to poorer neighborhoods. “I still send clothes back to Iraq,” she proudly added.

Ms. Al-Sultan tries to maintain ties with her old way of life and traditional culture while living in a very different part of the world. She still tries to pray five times a day, gets confused about which way to turn her prayer rug, and dreams of performing the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca one day.

On the plight of Iraqi refugees, Ms. Al-Sultan laments the exodus of so many Iraqis from the country they love. “Syria and Jordan are flooded with Iraqis right now.” Pondering “the why” of Iraq, she has the same internal debate that many Americans do. However, Ms. Al-Sultan’s feelings are curiously devoid of politics, but instead are simply human: she misses her homeland, and struggles—as do so many other refugees—with the challenge of reconciling traditional culture with life in modern America.

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At the age of eighteen, Sezan is a William and Mary freshman and an Iraqi refugee. Go March 20, 2003, the United States-led coalition invaded Iraq. Being acculturated to the sights and sounds of bombs falling during Operations Desert Strike (1996) and Desert Fox (1998), Ms. Al-Sultan’s family wasn’t going to stick around for a third round of attacks that would permanently change the cultural and political landscape of the country she loves. After the United States-led coalition invaded Iraq, Sezan and her family huddled in her parents’ room, windows taped against potential shattering, Sibling rivalry sometimes emerged during the worst parts with herself and her sister fighting over the safest spot to sleep. When a bomb shook the home, Sezan’s sister would jump up and down, jealous that Sezan could feel safe. Ms. Al-Sultan, ever the caring sister, assured her that another bomb would fall. “We definitely laughed a lot. Just because of the way we lived. We were so used to it at that point. At that age, you think you’re going to be safe because you are with your parents.”

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Syndicate’s lesson doesn’t quite make the grade

Rachel Smith
Assistant Arts and Culture Editor

The Syndicate is a highly selective dance group based on such as hip-hop, jazz, and funk to create an example of truly classy and professional showmanship on campus.

On Friday, November 21st students lined up outside of the Sadler Center Commonwealth Auditorium to get good seats for this semester’s Syndicate show, The Syndicate Academy Presents Swag 101. Created in 2004, William and Mary’s Syndicate is a weekend hip-hop and break-dance crew. Swag 101 was designed to be an educational evening, featuring ‘classes’ such as MUSC Phenomenon, and SHKE 101: Intro to Band, FUNK 404: The Funk Phenomenon, and SHKE 304: Shakе-a-101: Intro to Band, FUNK 404: The Funk Phenomenon, and SHKE 304: Shakе-a-Phenomenon. The Syndicate Academy Presents Swag 101 was designed to be an educational evening about hip-hop. Swag is the unspoken way someone carries himself that is defined by his confidence and style.

The most swing-worthy performance, URBN 202: Urban Legends, featured William and Mary’s Bboy break dancing club. Members of Bboy did air moves and it was the most impressive move of the night. Members of the group used their energy and confidence to make up for the lack of enthusiasm among other members, who failed to get the crowd growing. The majority of performers were out of step and went through their routines mechanically. Perhaps the stress of the end of semester exams and papers had dampened their moods. Compared to other dance performances at the College, such as last year’s Born 2 Bhangra and this semester’s Expressions show, the Syndicate is simply no match. Other College dance groups always meet the crowd’s expectations with their lively and festive dances that excite and entertain. Hopefully, the Syndicate next show will be much more polished and vibrant, so as to live up to the hype. They are scheduled to hit the stage again next semester on April 3rd.

The Drillmaster of Valley Forge makes history compelling

Lockhart’s writing is quite engaging, and I must confess that many a night I told myself, “Just one more page,” until I looked at the clock and realized it was 3:00 am. The Drillmaster of Valley Forge is a real page turner, delivering not just a good historical account of an important figure, but a darn compelling story too. Lockhart can count his name in the list of enjoyable historical writers like David McCullough, Joseph Ellis, and Jay Winik. An especially admirable quality of the book is that it is not overly long, nor does it deal with the less compelling material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life. Only the first chapter goes into the material of the Baron’s life.
The Finer Side:

Letter-writing 101: the perfect thank-you note

There is, of course, a right way to write a thank you note. DO make it long — take the time to express your gratitude. Make sure to include things like why you liked the gift and how you will use it. For money and gift cards, include what you will spend the money on. Telling the person how you used their gift makes them feel like the gift they gave was appreciated. DON’T say you returned it (even if you did). If it’s something you do end up returning (either because you already had it or absolutely hated it) then think about how much you appreciated the thought and time they put into getting the gift for you. DO hand-write your notes on nice stationery. DON’T dash off a simple email. Everyone sends off quick emails.

Sitting down and taking the time to put pen to paper shows the person who gave you the gift that you care. It shows you not only appreciate the gift that they gave you, but that you value the time it took to get it for you, and that you care about the person himself. Writing a thank you note in nice stationery shows you will use it. For money and gift cards, include what you will spend the money on. Telling the person how you used their gift makes them feel like the gift they gave was appreciated. DON’T say you returned it (even if you did). If it’s something you do end up returning (either because you already had it or absolutely hated it) then think about how much you appreciated the thought and time they put into getting the gift for you. DO hand-write your notes on nice stationery. DON’T dash off a simple email. Everyone sends off quick emails.

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Staff Editorial:

Facility fee break down the beginning in transparency

When students and their parents access William and Mary’s Financial Operations website, fees which are paid to the College as part of enrollment are now more clearly broken down. Prior to this important change made in late November, only the allocation of general fee was specified. Now, for the first time, the allocation of undergraduate students’ facility fees has been fully clarified.

This recent action by the administration and Vice President Sam Jones is to be commended. We wish to applaud the greater move toward transparency in College finances, however the fact that this action was not taken earlier is still troublesome. Going forward, we believe it wise for administrators to treat student’s funds as they would their own budgets: with frugality and the ability to determine where money is going. Such accountability ensures a reduction in wasteful spending as well as instills a basic trust with the community: that the College is behaving responsibly.

However, recent improvements in fiscal transparency with the facility fee on the Financial Operations website should not be an end. Students are still owed an explicit breakdown of fees on their e-bills, which has yet to occur.

In the future, it would also be wise for the administration to enhance transparency on other fronts, particularly on the status of William and Mary’s endowment given the recent financial crisis. We believe that this is just a necessary first step for the College, as there are many other areas of the school’s operations which could benefit from enhanced openness.

Thank you from all of us at The Virginia Informer

The Informer is an independent publication and does not receive any public funding, unlike other publications at William and Mary.

We would like to especially recognize some of our private supporters.

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The Virginia Informer is a nonpartisan group registered as an official student-run organization at the College of William & Mary, and a member of the Associated Collegiate Press.

SEAC’s Eco-house not the right idea for lean times

These days there’s no “chique” quite like trying something tried before, and SEAC is following that trend with a petition for an “eco-house.” It’s not quite the bold (persistent?) experiment that has failed before: an attempt to officially enthrone so-called sustainable living in Residence Life’s panopoly of interest houses was made several years ago. Putting aside the fact that the first “eco-house” was abandoned after less than three academic years, what, and at what cost, does the College prepares the final formation of a strategic plan; it must seriously consider the concerns and advice of alumni. As curing outsiders, often tested in the marketplace, alumni are prepared to offer advice on a plan to make the College more successful, and to change course on certain issues.

While we understand that the new strategic plan is early in its development, more discussion of topics that must be addressed for the College’s future is not sufficient. Ambiguity at this early stage is to be expected, but at the end of the day the College must directly take on the issues which we are currently lacking or otherwise failing to address.

One goal that must be identified in the plan includes addressing the College’s financial situation. William and Mary’s endowment. Prior to the recent financial turmoil, the College possessed an endowment value of roughly $4.874 billion, or 67% of tuition revenues, in the fall of 2006. The creation of a strategic plan. This committee, in combination with the BOW and College community, is to have a plan presentable to the Board by next April.

In observing the initial actions regarding the strategic plan thus far, it is positive to see so many different elements of the College integrated into the discussion. Not only have students and faculty been kept in the loop, but input has also been sought from family members and alumni. Input from the latter group is vitally important, and since the College prepares the final formation of a strategic plan, it must seriously consider the concerns and advice of alumni. As curing outsiders, often tested in the marketplace. Alumni are prepared to offer advice on a plan to make the College more successful, and to change course on certain issues.

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Ultimately, accountability will be essential in determining whether this plan just looks good on paper or its contents are actually being implemented. The inclusion of a five-year assessment of strategic goals, as has been proposed, is a step in the right direction. Prior to actual implementation, while still in the drafting phase, all elements of the college community should continue to be included in the discussion, even solicited for their opinions if necessary. We await the decision to actually include these differing voices in the final proposal, with particular emphasis on the positive role that alumni can have on a successful future for the College.

One of the first initiatives that Taylor Reveley announced upon assuming the presidency of the College in September was the creation of a strategic plan. This act was commendable, given that the College has been lacking in an overall direction for over 15 years. The need to create a definable plan for the College’s future is absolutely necessary.

In an email sent out to the campus community on October 2, the formation of a Planning Steering Committee was announced to formulate a new comprehensive strategic plan. This committee, in combination with the BOW and College community, is to have a plan presentable to the Board by next April.

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Don’t get your tips from Lips

The Informer has long-documented the unfair treatment of Lips’ staffers by the Publications Council. Last semester, when Lips’ founder Annie Brown (’10) attempted to receive money from the Pub Council, she was denied under the auspices of the publication not having a “glossy” cover, as one administrator so aptly phrased his justification. It didn’t take much to connect the fact that Mr. Mark Constantine, Assistant VP for Student Affairs, was keenly of subsidizing Lips’ content with College funds — especially given the College’s poor media representation over the past couple of years which resulted in decreased alumni support. That being said, I believe that support for fairness can be distinguished from content endorsement.

Several times, I have perused editions of “W&M’s only zine FOR women BY women.” Last spring, I was struck by the bold claim on the opening page: “brought to you by the women of William and Mary” since the majority of females on campus were everyone’s voice in a discussion, but this claim was still rather sex. The legitimacy of sexual advice from college students is changing the current state of campus discourse, although this is a view these topics.

The buzz around Lips is the promotion of a “sex positive” campus. In reality, what does this translate to mean? Clearly, not everyone with a story to tell is ignorant on the tops Lips tries to address. But it does seem like college students go out of their way to weigh in on things which are not necessarily prepared to comment on. Interestingly, erotica magazines have been popping up at universities all over the country. However, I do not foresee this trend being welcomed in Hampton Roads.

Want to change Williamsburg? Opportunities abound

When I spoke with Mayor Zeidler for the last issue of The Informer, I asked her how students could contribute to Williamsburg’s future. One of her answers caught me off-guard: She suggested William and Mary students apply for positions on the city boards and commissions. Students? Really, Mayor Zeidler… we are sleep-deprived enough!

Flash forward to two weeks later. Of the six positions on the mayor’s slate, I could not stop thinking about her suggestion. Isn’t the city supposed to work for us? Where would William and Mary be without the students spending their free time (80%+) hard-earned cash? So, shouldn’t the mayor and the commissions cater to our Williamsburg interests?

It was only then that I began to consider the three thousand students. Having students serve on boards and commissions is an excellent idea. It would integrate the various factions of the community and students and give the William and Mary constituency a true role in local government.

First, definitions are important—and my definition of “our” Williamsburg could not have been more incorrect. There are not two cities of Williamsburg, one of students and one of residents. There is only one Williamsburg. And this united Williamsburg, despite the conflict that may occur, is the place students choose to call home for four years. But it is currently filled with more than just college kids. Our city government must appease all Williamsburg residents — a near impossible task. What does this mean for students? It means that some of the decisions city makes may not be what we hoped for. Students should not take this as a poor town and gown relations, but recognize that local government must cater to diverse interests. Business owners and permanent Williamsburg residents already serve on the boards and commissions; only with student representation can we make Williamsburg truly ours.

However, the principal reason students should apply to join these commissions is that they are a tremendous opportunity. I am sure many of you have already submitted cover letters comprised of filing, answering phones and typing up briefs. Sure, we were getting “real world” experience. But was it real experience? I think not. Serving on a city board is a unique opportunity to actually have your voice heard, and to actually make change that affects Williamsburg. This is an internship on steroids and a real opportunity to work for something you believe in.

Additionally, I cannot think of a better way for students to learn and grow both academically and personally. Students on commissions would gain real hands-on experiences as well be encouraged to pro-student policies, linking the College and City and forging beneficial relationships. Serving on a commission is a rewarding in other ways. Although local government may not seem glamorous, being able to point to the specific changes you helped make would be rewarding. On the other hand, the changes you make will also serve as real examples to future generations proving beauty is that these positions are not an incredible commitment.

The monthly meetings are less time-consuming compared to the Student Assembly’s assumed advocacy position. The only difference is that serving on a commission is not like being president of mock trial or model UN… it’s a real position with real power.

William and Mary students often complain about their feeling of powerlessness when it comes to life on and off campus. Change this. Ask the community to stand together. Whether you identify as a Democrat, Republican or Independent, it is time that students come to the area surrounding the College, so I ask the community to stand together. Whether these people are enemies to society or otherwise, these people are enemies to society and they need to be shown just what we think of them. If you need more convincing just visit www.godhatestheworld.org. Let’s not waste this golden opportunity to stand up for our rights and make changes. That is the beauty of Williamsburg. As the mayor said, “small is good.” I can’t think of any other college town of William and Mary’s caliber that encourages students to hold government positions. We can do this. Students can possess the power to change policy and make history. All it requires is an application.

The most hated family in America has now made its way to the Hampton Roads area to protest the military. The Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) is a radical group from Topeka, Kansas, and is not associated with any mainstream Baptist Church. It is headed by Fred Phelps, and his members preach a hate theology aimed at gays, Catholics, Swedes, Americans, Muslims, Jews — essentially everyone but themselves. The WBC has roughly 70 members and most of them are related to Phelps by blood, marriage or both. They are notorious for picketing the funerals of fallen soldiers and AIDS victims. It has been a long time coming, but Virginians have individuals expressing their cloud of filth and songs of ‘God Hates the World’ to close to home in Virginia. While in Pittsburgh on Nov. 25, not only were they protesting the funeral of an American soldier, but they were also protesting the University of Virginia’s annual celebration of the American flag. “We are people who love you, and who deeply regret that we do not love,” they declared. At the Pittsburgh picketing, those present were a twenty-two-year-old daughter Megan Phelps-Roper, and an unidentified young boy. Shirley confirmed that she would be going to all of the picketing stops in Virginia, including Yorktown on December 3. Ideally, I would have loved to see a large flock of students go there and show them how much they were not welcome.

Westboro Baptist Church unwellcome in Hampton Roads

“If your parents did not teach you about the hate your Lord our God has then it is not my problem.” When questioned further about the hateful nature of her beliefs, she answered very loudly, “Are you accusing me of spreading hate to my children,” to which my friend answered “Yes.” After that, Shirley referenced “Yes,” to which my friend answered “Yes.” After that, Shirley confirmed that she would be going to all of the picketing stops in Virginia, including Yorktown on December 3. Ideally, I would have loved to see a large flock of students go there and show them how much they were not welcome.

While in Pittsburgh on Nov. 25, not only were they picketing the funeral of a fallen soldier, but they were also protesting the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, which they claim are spreading the wrath of God. For example, they claim that the university has had the audacity to come to the area surrounding the College, so I ask the community to stand together. Whether these people are enemies to society or otherwise, these people are enemies to society and they need to be shown just what we think of them. If you need more convincing just visit www.godhatestheworld.org. Let’s not waste this golden opportunity to stand up for our rights and make changes. That is the beauty of the Williamsburg. As the mayor said, “small is good.” I can’t think of any other college town of William and Mary’s caliber that encourages students to hold government positions. We can do this. Students can possess the power to change policy and make history. All it requires is an application.
Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah from all of us at The Informer!

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