

The Ring-tum Phi

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1998

VOLUME 101, No. 10

W&L students on 'Hot Shot' hit list

By Jenn Agiesta
STAFF WRITER

Who is "Hot Shot?"

According to the e-mail Security Chief Mike Young sent to the Washington and Lee University community this week, he's "a black male, early twenties, [with] an engaging manner . . . He is a suspect in recent thefts of property both on and off campus."

The e-mail urged students to report his presence on campus to either University Security or the Lexington police department.

"He has no legitimate business here and we can trespass him just for that," Young said.

Hot Shot's real name is William Hood. He is a 24-year-old Lexington resident with a bad reputation among Lexingtonians young and old.

"If you close your eyes, he'll steal the shirt off your back," one teenaged resident said.

Senior Doug Peddle says that Hood came to his apartment several weeks ago, and acted as if he was an old friend.

"He pretended like we'd met a thousand times before, and it was obvious that he'd been in my apartment before," Peddle said. "It was very unnerving. I didn't know if he was casing my apartment."

Hood has never been arrested or charged for theft, yet many find it easy to understand Young's warnings. He has previously been charged in Rockbridge County with two counts of assault and battery, possession of cocaine, as well as a probation violation.

Of various residents asked about him, none could find anything positive to say, and none wanted to go on record.

According to these folks, his typical scam is subtle. "He won't reach into your pocket and steal your wallet," one woman said.

Young agreed, "He doesn't come across as being very threatening. He has a very engaging manner."

Hood gets to know his victims first. According to Peddle, he's very friendly and uses W&L lingo. He seems like a nice guy, but he's really surveying the scene and trying to figure out what he can take. In early November, it was reported that he took \$140 from the car of a friend giving him a ride home.

But why the sudden notice from W&L security? Recently, a person matching Hood's description has been caught wandering around the dorms and has also been spotted entering off-campus student residences.

Young feels the friendly nature of Washington and Lee students lulls them into a false safety. Most will let strangers follow them into the dorms and leave their doors unlocked.

"We are so nice here that we don't challenge people that we should," he said.

W&L Junior Nancy Reinhart was watching television with her roommates earlier this week when Hood wandered into her house.

"It was scary," she said. "We couldn't get him to leave." Young advises students who live off campus to call the police if they encounter him.

"The police already know about this guy's activities," he said. "He's just not somebody you want to get to know real well."

Peddle agrees. "Be on the lookout," he said.

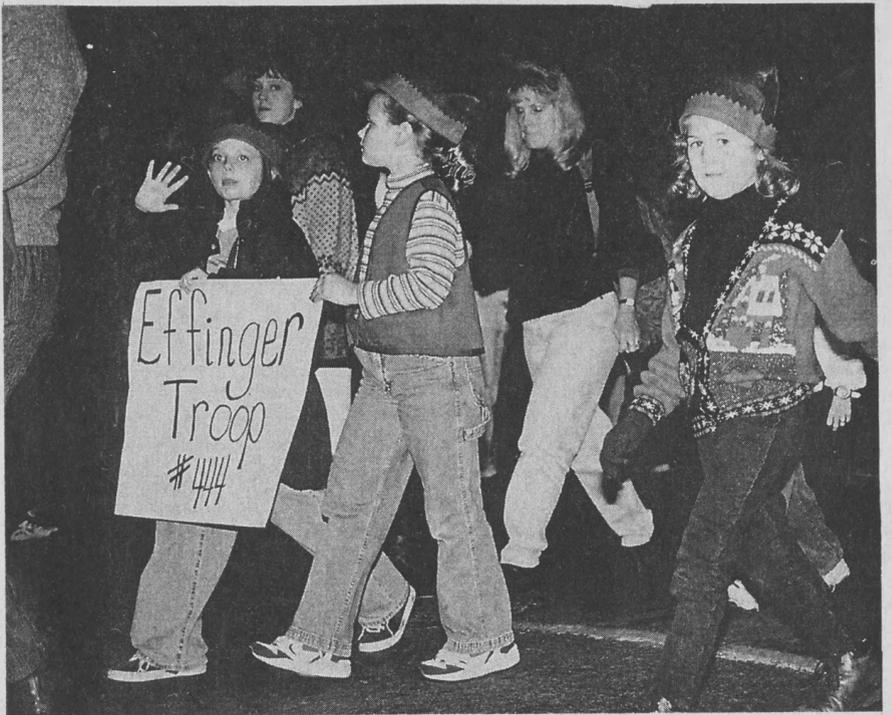


Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS... Girls Scouts march in the Lexington Christmas Parade, which was held Friday, December 4.

Lex crime wave ebbs

By Jenn Agiesta
STAFF WRITER

A November surge in CD and car stereo thefts seems to be coming to an end, according to Lexington's Chief of Police Bruce Beard.

An investigation into the November thefts is ongoing and the police have several suspects.

"It started a little bit before the end of October," Beard said. "Picked up in November, and it seems to have died down now."

The crime wave began over Halloween weekend. Two thefts on the Washington and Lee University campus were reported to police that weekend, one in Graham-Lees Dormitory, the other at the Lambda Chi Alpha house. On Nov. 1, W&L freshman Amy Burke had her discman and CDs stolen from the first floor smoking lounge of the library.

"They were in my bag underneath my carrel," Burke said. "Someone had to have seen me using it, and waited until I left."

Burke's theft was not reported to police. Instead, she turned over lists of CDs to local stores that accept used CDs, in the hoped that they might be returned. They have not yet turned up.

Unreported incidents make it harder for police or security to find the culprits.

"I've heard that a lot of students have had CD's stolen, but not all of them have been reported," Mike Young, W&L Chief of Security said. "If they don't report it, I can't do anything."

Young feels certain that whoever did this is not a W&L student. This theory is supported by the increased number of thefts off campus as well. Several cars were robbed in the parking lot of Stonewall Jackson Hospital during mid-November, another was robbed while parked on the street. Car stereos and CD's were taken in these robberies.

Beard hopes that someone will be caught in connection with these thefts.

"The investigation is moving along, and we have several suspects," Beard said.

Theater professor's film makes CBS prime time

Hallmark presents 'Grace and Glorie'

By Tarah Grant
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Washington and Lee theater professor Tom Ziegler's "Grace and Glorie" will be the 199th presentation of the Hallmark Hall of Fame, television's highly acclaimed showcase of drama specials, when it airs 9 p.m. Sunday on CBS.

Two-time Academy Award nominee Gena Rowlands ("A Woman Under the Influence," "Gloria") and Diane Lane ("Judge Dredd," "Murder at 1600") star as two completely different women — in age, background, ambition and attitude — who end up forging a life-affirming bond.

Grace (Rowlands) and Glorie (Lane) meet when Glorie becomes a hospice volunteer assigned to Grace, a feisty, fiercely independent woman who is recovering from a broken hip. The women give each other help, support — and a whole lot of understanding and love. Their story is a heart-tugging reminder that, even in difficult times, it is always better to embrace life than to live in the past.

In an interview on the film's set, Rowlands said that she hopes "Grace and Glorie" will give the audience a "new appreciation for the fact that we're not alone in this world. Loneliness is, oh, it's the hardest thing. And you just shouldn't do that to yourself," she said.

The television version of "Grace and Glorie" is a Hallmark Hall of Fame production. Hallmark Hall of Fame is television's longest-running and most-honored series of drama specials, having received 77 Emmy awards. The series presents four plays annually by acclaimed writers.

"Grace and Glorie" was born in Ziegler's playwrighting class, Theater 220, in 1989. He asked his students to write a scene with two characters. To provide an example, he did the assignment, too.

"I had been knocking these two ladies around in my head for a few weeks so I wrote the opening ten pages and brought them to class," Ziegler said. "Then every week after that I wrote another ten pages and by the end of the term I had a rough, but finished, draft."

The play, which was inspired by a local woman who was involved with Rockbridge Area Hospice, first premiered at Lexington's Lime Kiln Theatre under the title "Apple Dreams." In 1996, it was produced Off Broadway at the Laura Pells Theatre in Times Square. Starring Estelle Parsons and Lucy Arnez, the play had a successful run but had to close in October because of Parsons' prior com-

mitment to the television show "Roseanne," where Parsons played Roseanne's mother.

Ziegler sold the film rights to Hallmark in October of 1996 for "a pretty big chunk of money" that he had to share with the people responsible for opening the play in New York. Ziegler admits that, in the end, he "did okay."

Transforming the theater script into a screenplay was "exhilarating," according to Ziegler. This past summer Ziegler worked for almost eight weeks on the screenplay with professional television writer Grace McKeaney ("Last Looks"). "The entire play takes place in the single setting of a tiny cabin with just two characters," he said. "In the film I was able to go anywhere, introduce as many characters as I pleased."

The film was shot later in the summer near Waterbury, Conn. Ziegler has already seen the preview tape. "It's very Hallmark and, at least thematically, faithful to the play," he said.

Ziegler plans to watch Sunday's television premiere at his home in Glasgow. "I've invited a bunch of friends to help me cheer and jeer," he said.



Diane Lane and Gena Rowlands star as Glorie and Grace respectively in Hallmark Hall of Fame's adaptation of Professor Tom Ziegler's play "Grace and Glorie."

W&L 'Bulgarians' impress model UN

By Eszter Pados
STAFF WRITER

Washington and Lee University was one of 34 schools to attend the annual Southern Regional Model United Nations in Atlanta a few weeks. As delegates representing Bulgaria, five members of W&L's Foreign Affairs Club "did a spectacular job," senior club member Lizzie Perkins said. "We were a tiny delegation compared to most schools," Perkins said. "But despite this, we as a team and a school were recognized."

Not only did W&L [Bulgaria] stand out in individual committees, but also in the three-day conference at large.

The Secretary General [Mike Richardson] did indeed comment on our performance indicating, that we did do a great job," Perkins said. "Not to be boastful, but we were impressive." Richardson personally requested that W&L return next year, with a larger delegation if possible.

The delegates left Nov. 18, fully informed about Bulgarian foreign-policy, ready to act and think as Bulgarian delegates. According to Perkins, the issues that they addressed at the conference varied from nuclear proliferation to peaceful uses of outer space.

"I was in the World Trade Organizations and we dealt with the recent telecommunications treaty and with intellectual property," Perkins said. "Each [of the five] delegates prepared for three potential topics to debate within the committees of the UN."

The club had three choices for countries to represent. This year, the club picked India, England and Bulgaria. The ideas were sent in to the MUN coordinator in Atlanta, and he assigned Bulgaria to the club.

"The assignment depends on how many people you have in a group," William Overbaugh, senior club member said, "We only have five, so we got a smaller country."

Club members did not have any formal instruction prior to departure, but professor Symeon S. Giannakos, visiting associate professor of politics at W&L was a great asset to the club.

"I must give Professor Giannakos tremendous credit for helping us pre-

pare with a briefing seminar on Bulgaria and Internet links," Perkins said. "He was key in our overall performance."

Giannakos taught at the American University in Bul-

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Racking up the tickets

By Eszter Pados
STAFF WRITER

With construction of a new parking garage looming, Johnny Bubb, like many off-campus Washington and Lee students, faced a parking problem at the beginning of the school year.

He was not sure if he would be able to park his truck in the Corral or if he would have to find his own parking. Until the problem was resolved, about a week after his arrival at school, Bubb parked in the lot behind his apartment. A lot in which all the spots are either reserved or have two hour time limits. So, Bubb faced yet another parking problem: tickets.

"I would go to class or to eat, wherever, and come back to tickets on my car, constantly," Bubb said. "The most I got in one day was four."

Bubb built up a stack of seven or eight tickets, and did not pay them. He assumed that the late notices had been sent to his parents, and that they had taken care of the tickets. He never received any notification of additional fines at his Lexington address. As a result, the tickets were unpaid for so long that a subpoena was issued, and he had to go before a judge.

The subpoena was not mailed to him, however. Instead, the police department and W&L security searched for him. The police showed up at his fraternity house, in his pro-

fessors' offices and talked to his friends. Bubb finally called security, and went to court.

Judge Joseph E. Hess, who handles all parking ticket problems, brought Bubb's fine down to the minimum after hearing his story. Miscommunication by the police led to a breakdown of procedure, and saved Bubb a lot of money.

The problem is that Bubb's situation is not a singular one. In the month of November, eight W&L students were arrested for non-payment of parking fines. Most were sought by the police working with university security, and led to a court appearance. Chief of Security Mike

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December 7, 1998

OPINION:
X-mas spirit, Senior does student poll, frats aren't all bad

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W&LIFE:
Christmas shopping in Lex, and got Stress?

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SPORTS:
250th Basketball: Boys rule, girls...

PAGES 8&9



Photo by Hollister Hovey/Executive Editor

Professor Ellen Mayock recites a Spanish poem at "La Noche de Poesia," held at the Rose last Tuesday.

UN

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garia, and he shared his knowledge about Bulgarian foreign policy with club members, Overbaugh said.

Furthermore, the club received financial support from both Laurent Boetsch, dean of the college, and Larry C. Peppers, dean of the Williams School, while William Klingelhofer, director of International Education, served as an advocate for the group.

"This aid was crucial as the trip is not inexpensive," Perkins said. "For the upcoming Harvard Conference we will again need much financial assistance."

Upon their return on Nov. 22, the five participants felt good about their performance. Overbaugh and Perkins both said that the delegates were very well prepared, but the only disadvan-

tage they had is that, while other schools have courses designed to prepare students for events like the MUN, W&L only has a club.

Founded in 1994, the Foreign Affairs Club is a recent addition to the university. The members now have a chance to attend prestigious events such as the SRMUN, which is the most prestigious MUN in the South.

Plans for the future include the upcoming Harvard Conference in February. According to Overbaugh, the club took part in the SRMUN to be better prepared for the MUN at Harvard. Similar to the SRMUN, the event at Harvard is the most prestigious MUN in the Northeast, Overbaugh said. The events are held every year, and most club members have been to at least one before, Overbaugh said.

"We also hope to go to an international conference in the near future," Perkins said, "but that would require strong financial support. The MUN is a large undertaking, but thoroughly worth it in the end!"

Perkins said that a higher number of delegates at future events would qualify W&L students to win awards and trips to international conferences. For example, the SRMUN is sponsoring a team comprised of ten outstanding schools that choose one representative. They will send them to Den Haag, Netherlands in the spring of next year, she said.

"What a way to let W&L prove itself to the world!"

The Foreign Affairs club meets once a week on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. in room 8 of Newcomb Hall.

TICKETS

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Young feels that security helping the police is not a problem.

"We assist the police department whenever we can," he said. "We depend upon the police to help us when we need them."

Chief of Police Bruce Beard outlined normal procedure for an unpaid parking ticket. If the ticket is not paid within seven days of the issue date, a late notice is mailed. If there is no response to the late notice, a subpoena is issued for the violator's arrest, and a court appearance follows. Judge Hess normally enforces the cost of the ticket(s), whatever late fines were assessed, and court costs.

Young said, "A lot of times our students neglect returning phone calls from the Police Department for whatever reason, and a lot of the time, we are able to convince them that it is in their best interest to contact the police."

Security's facilitation of the police procedures seems unlikely to stop anytime soon. Students who do not pay their parking tickets should not necessarily expect a visit from your friendly neighborhood officer, but, be warned, they know where you live.



Turn off your computer

University Computing is asking for assistance from all members of the Washington and Lee community in maintaining network reliability in the coming weeks. As many are aware, the current network hardware can keep track of no more than 1,024 computers at a time. This causes problems because there are more than 2,000 computers connected to the campus network. The ever-increasing number of networked computers causes frequent networking interruptions on a large scale, requiring reboots of the networking hardware. Each reboot interrupts all network connections campus-wide for a period of as much as thirty minutes, which disrupts everyone's work.

Unfortunately, the problem will only worsen as use increases leading up to exams. To help avoid the problem, students are asked to turn off their computers when they go to class, and faculty and staff should shut down their computers when they leave for the day. Please note that computers must actually be turned off to release their place in the overloaded memory of the network hardware. UC hopes that this measure will avoid excessive network downtime in the weeks to come. For further details, please see <http://www.wlu.edu/computing/news/net1198.wlu>

Talk about alcohol on campus

Attend an On Campus Talking About Alcohol program Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in room 114 of the University Center.

OCTAA teaches students how alcohol affects their body based on quantity/frequency choices. Attendees will learn to estimate their biological risks for alcohol related problems and to make low-risk drinking choices.

Call the Health Education Office at 462-4501 to sign-up for this nonjudgmental, research-based program.

Lee Chapel holds Candlelight service

Washington and Lee University's annual Christmas Candlelight Service will be held Thursday at 8 p.m. in Lee Chapel. The public is invited to attend.

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols is an ancient form of corporate worship during the Christmas season. The prayers, lessons and hymns tell the story of sacred history from the Creation to the Incarnation.

Music for the traditional service will be provided by the University Chamber Singers, conducted by Gordon Spice, W&L professor of music. Timothy Gaylard, W&L professor of music, will be the organist for the service and, as is customary, readers for the service will be chosen from the University community. Thomas Litzenburg Jr., acting university chaplain will preside over the service.

The annual Christmas Candlelight Service is sponsored by the University Federation, a nondenominational student group that sponsors religious and community volunteer service activities.

Olson Exhibit at Blue Heron

Kathleen Olson-Janjic, associate professor of art at W&L, will have her work exhibited at the Blue Heron Cafe on East Washington Street starting Dec. 13.

The paintings are based on Olson-Janjic's trip to Greece. The public is invited to an opening reception Sunday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

D-hall serves edible study aids

Exam monotony breakers for d-hall patrons will be served in Evans Dining Hall Dec. 11-16. The treats will add a little extra zip to regular d-hall meals, and are guaranteed to relieve some of the stress of studying.

The Snack Bar will also help alleviate the monotony of studying by offering free coffee and soft drinks. The special study aids will be served from 6 p.m. until closing each night preceding an exam day.

Croatian writer lectures at W&L

Dubravka Ugresic, a Croatian writer will present a lecture entitled "The Culture of Gingerbread Hearts" today at 6 p.m. in Washington and Lee's duPont Auditorium.

Ugresic is a writer of international acclaim. Four of her books have been translated into English, most recently "The Museum of Unconditional Surrender" and "The Culture of Lies."

Ugresic has been one of the brave voices who dared to denounce the political and cultural situation in present-day Croatia. As a result, she was forced to leave Croatia. Since 1993, she has been living in exile in Amsterdam and frequently lectures in the United States.

D-hall dishes out Midnight Breakfast

One of the most popular Dining Service events of the year is fast approaching. The annual Midnight Breakfast will be held in the Evans Dining Hall next Tuesday 11 p.m. to 12:15 a.m. Faculty members will be on hand to dish up your favorite breakfast entree.

The breakfast is open to all W&L students. For meal plan holders, the cost is one meal, for University Card holders the cost is \$4 and the cash price is \$5.

Buffet dinner takes students to NY

Evans Dining Hall will be transformed into New York City for the Dining Service's annual holiday buffet. The hustle and bustle of the streets, the elaborate decorations in the store windows and the giant tree at Rockefeller Center will all be part of the display.

Southern Comfort and Jubilee will perform carols for diners. The nationally recognized gospel group Karis will also appear.

The buffet will include roast rack of lamb, braised sirloin of beef, breast of duckling paulette, red pesto couscous with shallots, crab meat salads, marinated hearts of palm and gourmet bread.

This buffet dinner menu will be submitted to the National Association of College and University Food Services for an award in the annual Horton Dining Awards. W&L's 1997 Holiday Dinner won Second Place for Theme Dinner for a small university or college in this national contest.

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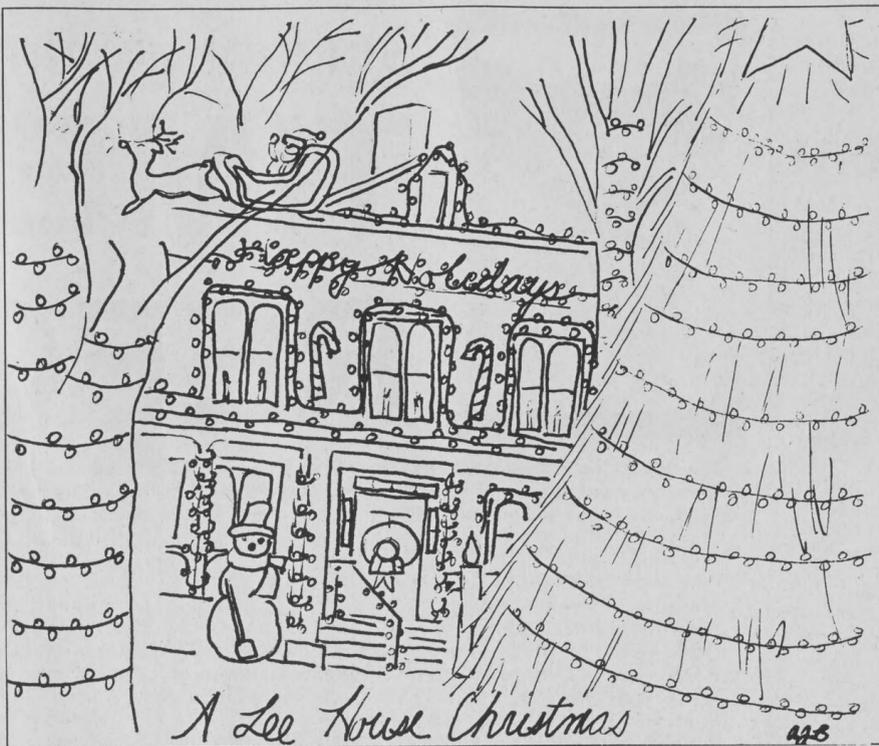
I start listening to Christmas music as soon as the trick-or-treaters disappear. Jingle Cats is my favorite Christmas CD. A Siamese, a tabby and a calico whaling out "Up on the Rooftop" always makes me chuckle. Well, someone pass the plum pudding. It's time to hang the stockings and pick out that perfect Christmas tree.

(Usually I go with my dad to pick out the Christmas tree. We always get the best one on the lot. Dad calls the place, asking when they are getting fresh shipments. We bring a knife to cut the fresh ones open ourselves. Sometimes the service can leave much to be desired. Don't worry, Dad brings gloves so we don't get sap on our hands. Last year we went the Saturday after Thanksgiving, but this year I went to do research at the library so that I would be finished with all my work and enjoy one final evening of the New Orleans social scene. Well, I wish I had gone with paw to get a tree. Thinking about it, the whole excursion reveals typical family hostilities. The two of us yell awful obscenities at one another's choice in tannenbaums. How we ever leave in agreement completely eludes me. Then when we finally get home, we each claim total responsibility for the wonderful choice, unless someone notices a dreaded "hole" in the foliage, then we pin the blame on the other guy. "You should have seen the tree Dad wanted. You remember Charlie Brown's Christmas tree, a real LOSER." Or, "I thought I raised my son to have better taste in trees. Sometime children really have a way of breaking a father's heart." I won't even get into the disputes over decorating the damn thing. Well, maybe just a little. You know that ornament you made in kindergarten with your beautiful face on it. It goes in the front! No matter what the old man says. And when from his comfortable chair in the other room Dad repeatedly warns my brother, Doug, to put one piece of tinsel on the tree at a time, aluminum icicles fly through the house in rebellion. In any case, I wish I had gone with him this year, and I really miss the decorating festivities. Mom serves eggnog.)

Off His Rocker
Stephen Pesce '01

Well, the hip hop happiest season of all is again upon us. I am very excited, I must say. This glorious season always gives me warm, toasty feelings of hope, love and joy. (Maybe the toasty feeling comes from the fact that in third grade, I made the words "hope," "love" and "joy" out of dough. Then we put them in the oven and toasted them until golden brown. Mom still hangs them in the kitchen at this time of year. At least, she better. Mrs. Kilgarlen always had the best craft ideas. We decorated the words with red and green ribbons. They are pretty.)

Oh well, I promise to stop digressing. I hope everyone enjoys this great time of year, a true festival of lights and excitement. Let the spirits past, present, future or the ones added to that heavenly eggnog, move you. Wandering aimlessly around campus (yep, I'm that guy), I noticed some fantastic decorations. Lights and holly and wreaths and bows — well HO HO HO, on Dasher, on Dancer, slap me silly and call me Rudolph. The sensation of itty-bitty snowmen running up and down my spine rushed upon me.



The D-hall's midnight breakfast study break during exam week ranks high on the list of consolations for not being home for the holidays. But the Lee House's holiday decorations remain the greatest consolation. I feel obliged to compliment the Elrods and all involved in the decoration process for a wonderful, heart-warming job. And to all those students in the dorms, seeing a luminescent glow of holiday spirit emanating from windows touches my foolish heart. I noticed some students took the time to

deck Gaines Hall with boughs of all sorts — toy soldiers, stained glass, chlorofluorocarbons snow.

While the seasonal joys of Washington and Lee prove quite acceptable, there truly is no place like home for the holidays. In less than two weeks, I'll be back home. On Christmas morning, I'll compliment Dad's choice of a tree. He'll tell me what a great job I did decorating it. We'll both tell Doug how the tinsel really adds the final sparkling touch to the masterpiece. And everyone praises Mom's fabulous Christmas cookies.

Well, I'm going to decorate a gingerbread house. Merry Christmas everyone. Happy Holidays, and Seasons Greetings.

"Lights and holly and wreaths and bows — well HO HO HO, on Dasher, on Dancer, slap me silly and call me Rudolph."

STAFF EDITORIAL

Wake up and smell the coffee, not the Kahlua

'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the land
All the students were merry
And too drunk to stand.

They were screaming at SAE
While Betas passed out
And the bottles were shattering
On the floor of Phi Kap's house.

Let us make a simple connection for those of you who just won't get it: alcohol impairs judgement. Hence, drunk people do stupid things. Most of the time, it's funny to laugh about how you spent the night on intimate terms with the toilet talking to monsters, but how many of us wake up The Morning After in shame?

How about some facts: Of the multiple cases before the SJC every year, the majority are alcohol related. One of the two rape cases tried before the SFHB last year was alcohol related. At least three of the withdrawals in the face of an EC hearing during the last three years have been alcohol related. How many of you can agree that getting kicked out of school over some beef jerky you were too drunk to pay for is stupid? But of course it wasn't his fault,

because he was drunk. Out of all the lame excuses we use to justify our asinine actions, how many times does that one see daylight?

The fact is that the student body of Washington and Lee just won't learn. We haven't learned one damn thing from the deaths of Jack Bowden and David Thompson. We just toasted them the first Friday night after we put them in the ground. They are dead. And we'd give a million to one odds that they wouldn't be if they hadn't had anything to drink on the nights of their respective deaths.

An alumnus just sent a disturbing letter to the editors of both papers, detailing the death of his alcoholic friend, and tracing the beginning of the problem back to Washington and Lee University. We shake our heads, and say how tragic, and go out and get drunk a bottle of Jim Beam in his name.

When will we consider the possible consequences of our actions? When will this stop being something that happens to other people, and become our turn? Our turn to get arrested, our turn to have a terrible feeling about what might have happened the night before, our turn to die?

When it is your turn, be sure to a lot

about how you're a victim, and how it wasn't your fault because you were drunk. Everybody will care just as much as they have in the past.

The solution is not to call for an end to drinking, and it certainly isn't BYOB (cheers to the brain trust that came up with that one). While the administration gets up and preaches every year on Parent's Weekend about what a big problem alcohol is and details all the noble things being done to combat it, the administration hasn't done anything. It has not attacked the problem in an effective manner, and the chances that it'll get a clue anytime soon are, um, dubious at best.

But the fact remains that it's not necessarily a problem of the administration. There's a major element that has to come from the student body. After all, there's only so much of the way that Johnny and Dave can hold my hand before I have to make my own decisions. And then comes the hard part: accepting responsibility for them.

It's just not that hard to drink responsibly, W&L. Cut the apathetic alcoholic bullshit and get a clue. You can't find your honor in your alcohol.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dad appreciates Phi coverage

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you for your coverage of my daughter's struggle. She is doing wonderfully and a full recovery is expected.

More to the point, our family is overwhelmed at the support from Washington & Lee — its faculty and the student body. Absolute strangers have stopped me in my patrols to wish Teel well and offer their support and prayers.

I am a graduate of Emory & Henry College and I have read with interest the recent history W&L has with Emory in football. Next year, however there'll be no one at this game cheering more wildly for the Generals than this officer.

Most sincerely,
Kenneth Hoeffel

Fraternities get a bad rap

Today I take a break from my self-proclaimed moniker and instead focus on the positive aspects of the fraternity system, integral part of life here at W&L.

The prevalence of the Greek system was something I worried about when I applied to this school. I saw fraternities as bastions of booze, debauchery and altogether a poor investment of money and time. I dreaded the pressure to join one and the possible social stigma if I decided not to.

It didn't take me long on campus, however, to change my mind. Fraternities here are what they were originally meant to be: groups of guys who share a brotherhood that goes beyond alcohol or the opposite sex. Time after time I hear stories about pledge classes vacationing together, house mothers making cookies, and a serious, old-fashioned loyalty to fellow frat brothers.

The little, friendly intricacies of fraternity life seldom get published; granted, it would be a difficult task. The positive aspects far outweigh the negative ones, however.

Most houses perform some service work at various points during the academic year. Campus publications do the frats a great disservice by not reporting them. Both Chi Psi and Sigma Nu have annual blood drives. Chi Psi and Phi Delta Theta, along with two sororities, helped clean up Goshen Pass. Kappa Sigma and Phi Kappa Psi, once again along with two sororities, sponsored a barn dance with Catholic Campus Ministry and Habitat for Humanity; proceeds went to the Habitat's building fund. Out of curiosity, who remembers this? Even though I knew I would be writing this article weeks ago, I really had to dig to find this information.

Time after time, the student body and the administration have put the negative aspects of fraternity life under a ridiculously powerful microscope. True, shorter, more civil pledging periods and more individual responsibility on the part of every student would help, but these people forget that 130 years of fraternity tradition simply don't evaporate overnight. I have full confidence that the majority of houses are trying to adjust accordingly. Besides, anyone stupid enough not to say no and allow his genitals to be electro-shocked deserves any negative feedback he might get. Several people are being punished for the actions of a few irresponsible others, and frankly, that sucks. Given no other option, these things will change; however, a degree of patience is required.

What members of the W&L community must ask themselves before they open their mouths regarding the Greek system is this: Am I actually accomplishing anything by saying this, or merely shooting my mouth off? Will the way in which I present this information be received in a positive manner? The Greek system might need to change, but the best way to do that is a change of attitude among individual students, not ridiculous sanctions that are inconsistent with General Lee's idea of a value-based (not rule-based) community. Only when this occurs will there be any tangible results.

Poison Pen
Mike Agnello '02

TALKback: What do you want from Santa this year?



"A GPA above a 2.0 this term."

—James Person '01



"Two and a half weeks of sleep."

—Maggie Fagan '02



"Free tuition."

—Wade Hess '02



"A TV and VCR for my dorm room."

—Alana Ovsepian '02

The Ring-tum Phi

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The Ring-tum Phi is published Mondays during the undergraduate school year at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA. Funding for The Ring-tum Phi comes primarily from advertising and subscription revenues. The Washington and Lee Publications Board elects the Executive Editors, but The Ring-tum Phi is otherwise independent.

The Ring-tum Phi welcomes all responsible submissions and letters. All submissions must be in the Phi office, room 208 of the University Center, by noon on Friday to appear in that week's edition. The Ring-tum Phi reserves the right to edit submissions for content and length. Letters, columns and "Talkback" do not reflect the opinion of The Ring-tum Phi Editorial Board. Advertising does not reflect the opinions of The Ring-tum Phi or its staff. This newspaper observes current court definitions of libel and obscenity.

The Ring-tum Phi
208 University Center
Washington and Lee University
Lexington, VA 24450
Telephone: (540) 462-4060
Advertising Office: (540) 462-4049
Fax: (540) 462-4059
E-mail: phi@wlu.edu
http://wlu.edu/~phi

Annual subscription rate: \$30

Senior launches review of student government

Student governance at Washington and Lee University has always proven to be an interesting phenomena.

Steeped in tradition, often cited as one of the unique characteristics of our university,

Over the Hill
Patrick McCormack '99

our system has, until recently, suffered from an attitude of benign neglect. So long as it didn't interfere with or disrupt the lives of "the most contented student body in the nation," most students were more than happy to ignore it.

Until recently, within the last several years, a quiet revolution of sorts has taken place within our governing institutions. While students generally may have been apathetic toward the changes, you may recall some of the more drastic changes: the Student Conduct Committee changed to the Student Judicial Council, the University Hazing Board was created, fraternity rush moved to the winter term despite the nearly unanimous opposition of Greek students and so on.

Noticing that the judicial system once heralded for the simplicity and effectiveness of the "single sanction" had become far too complicated, the Board of Trustees took action to examine the problem and make recommendations for solving it. A preliminary report was issued, and now, after some two years of meetings, a commission is nearing the completion of its work. Within a few months a final report will be sent to the Student Affairs Committee and the faculty, and another minor revolution may take place.

These recommendations, however, will only pertain to the student judicial system; any critical review of the larger governing structure must necessarily come from the general student body. Having been an active participant in student government for the last four years, and having become somewhat disaffected in the process, I began to wonder whether or not now might not be the time to make such a review. After all, if we'll be altering such an important aspect of our system as the judicial process, might not the whole thing be in need of reform?

As I say, I've been very active in student government — working on the White Book Review Committee, serving on the Student Judicial Council and attending SAC meetings and occasional open forums. Despite this experience, I knew that my opinions alone would be worthless if contrary to the general student opinion.

With this in mind, I proposed the idea of holding a student body convention. I abandoned the idea once convinced that it would not be practical. Lacking any other means of canvassing a large number of students, I turned to the notion of taking a poll.

I remain fully aware of the criticism that inevitably follows when someone conducts a poll. The sample size may be too small or unrepresentative, or the questions may be biased. I tried to limit these inevitable objections by conducting the poll as responsibly as I could. I obtained a randomly selected list of students from the registrar and conferred with Professor Robert McAhren, an expert in polling.

While I was unable to make enough time to attain his assistance for interpreting my poll results, I do believe that my results should be considered more accurate than most of the polls conducted on campus. I include a section detailing my methods at the end of this article.

The 13 questions I chose can be divided into three categories: those that seek to gauge how familiar students are with our current government (questions 1, 2, 3 and 4), those that try to determine how confident they are in the system (questions 5, 7, 8 and 9), and those that reflect how willing students would be to consider alternatives to the current government (questions 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13).

I was surprised by a number of the results, but a few general trends emerged. First of all, students are not at all familiar with the current system. The majority cannot name any of the Big Five Officers, and practically none have read the Student Body Constitution.

Secondly, students are fairly confident in the major judicial boards. Although I wonder what the source of this confidence is, given how little we collectively know about our system, I was not surprised at this result.

Finally, students are very willing to consider some significant changes to our current plan — especially if they are viewed as increasing the democratic nature of our system.

The difficulty lies in the fact that, whereas students are willing to consider changes in theory, there may not be any particular alternative which could gain the support of a majority.

Nevertheless, I plan to set forth several amendments to the Student Body Constitution within the next few weeks that will attempt to fix what I view as the most glaring flaws to the current system. It seems that something must be done with that document, if only for the fact that it has seriously fallen behind the times (it still refers to the SCC, for example).

I understand that there is a considerable amount of institutional inertia which will oppose any change to the status quo, but I believe that, should you approach these proposals with an open mind, most of them will appeal to your common sense.

I also want to make it clear that I have no hope for personal gain from this process. I'll be graduating in a few months and, having already incurred the indemnity of several student leaders, I have even considered dropping the matter altogether. I continue for the sole reason that I believe much can be done to improve our university (at least as far as student government is concerned), and as an elected officer it is my duty not to ignore this fact.

I hope that you find the results of my poll to be as thought-provoking as I have. I encourage you to watch this paper in the next several weeks to learn the reasoning behind my positions, and also to watch for the signs that will advertise the student body referenda by which we will determine, once and for all, what the student body government should be.

Methodology:

I conducted the poll by telephone with the assistance of a fellow student, calling students at all hours of the day trying to get their responses. Of the 80 undergraduates originally selected by the registrar, I polled 69. Of the 30 law students, I spoke with 24.

If there was a student who was unavailable (either out of the country or with an unlisted phone number), I substituted the student of the same gender and class year closest to the original name in the student directory.



Student government at W&L: TIME FOR REFORM?

Question 1: Can you name the Big Five Officers? (Here I listed the office, and waited to see if the student could name the officer.)

None Correct: Undergrad- 55.1% Law- 37.5%

One Correct: U- 25% L- 45.8%

Two Correct: U- 10.1% L- 12.5%

Three Correct: U- 5.8% L- 8.3%

Four Correct: U- 2.9% L- 0.0%

Five Correct: U- 2.9% L- 0.0%

General Observation: Beth Formidoni is the most well-known of the officers, followed by Greta Richter. Practically none of the students can name the EC and SJC Secretaries.

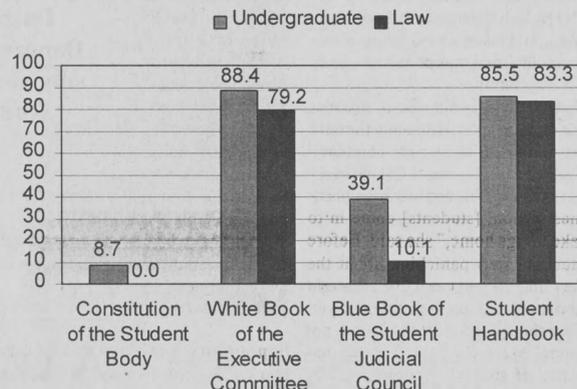
Question 2: Can you name your class officers, EC representatives, and SJC justice? (Although I didn't ask the students to name these people individually, I was curious to see if they were more familiar with their class officers than with the school-wide officers.)

Yes: U- 47.8% L- 70.8%

No: U- 52.2% L- 29.2%

General Observation: Law students and freshmen were most likely to recall their officers. My explanation? Law students have smaller classes, and are more likely to know their officers, while freshmen elected their officers only a few weeks ago.

Question 3: Have you read any of the following?



General Observation: Despite the fact that the EC tries to ensure that everyone reads the White Book (remember the pledge you signed in your first year?), a surprisingly large number have not. Students cite the fact that the Handbook is available every year during matriculation for their familiarity with that document.

Question 4: Overall, do you consider yourself well-informed about current student government issues? (I did not specify any particular issue, relying on the student's own estimation of his or her knowledge.)

Yes: U- 29% L- 29.2%

No: U- 71% L- 70.8%

General Observation: Students at Washington and Lee don't know much about the issues their leaders face. Whether this is through a lack of communication on behalf of the leaders or a lack of interest from students, I can not judge.

Question 5: How effective do you think our current student government is in representing general student opinion to the administration? (Here I asked the students to rate their answers on a scale of 1-5, 1 being Not Effective, 3 being Neutral, and 5 being Completely Effective.)

Not Effective: U- 2.9% L- 0.0%

Barely Effective: U- 8.7% L- 8.3%

Neutral/No Opinion: U- 42% L- 58.3%

Somewhat Effective: U- 44.9% L- 33.3%

Completely Effective: U- 1.4% L- 0.0%

General Observation: Students don't seem to have strong opinions about how effective our current leaders are at representing student interests to the administration, but if they do have an opinion, it tends to be positive.

Question 6: Would you be willing to support a ballot initiative to reorganize our current system of government if such a reorganization made it more reflective of the general student body's views? (Here I didn't specify any particular initiative, but was curious to see if students were willing to consider a change. Despite the yes/no nature of the question, some students refused to form an opinion without more information.)

Yes: U- 85.5% L- 83.3%

No: U- 8.7% L- 0.0%

No Opinion/Need More Info: U- 5.8% L- 16.7%

General Observation: Although students are generally confident in their government, they are very interested in proposals that would make it more responsive to student interests.

Question 7: How confident are you in the ability of the EC to adjudicate honor violations? (Here I asked students to rate their confidence on a scale of 1-5, 1 being Not Confident, 3 being Neutral, 5 being Very Confident.)

Not Confident: U- 1.4% L- 0.0%

Barely Confident: U- 14.5% L- 12.5%

Neutral/No Opinion: U- 10.1% L- 12.5%

Somewhat Confident: U- 39.1% L- 58.3%

Very Confident: U- 34.8% L- 16.7%

General Observation: Undergraduates have stronger feelings about the EC on both extremes than do Law students.

Question 8: How confident are you in the ability of the SJC to adjudicate conduct violations? (Here I used the same answer scale as in question 7.)

Not Confident: U- 2.9% L- 0.0%

Barely Confident: U- 8.7% L- 16.7%

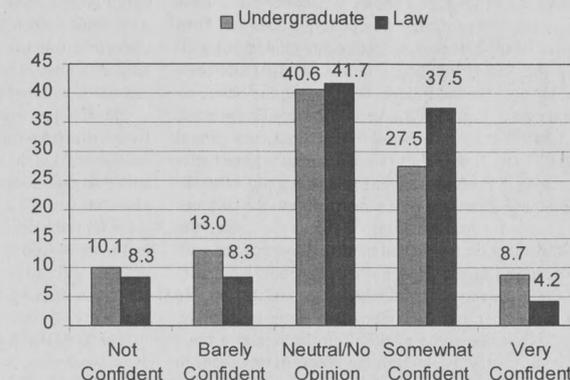
Neutral/No Opinion: U- 21.7% L- 41.7%

Somewhat Confident: U- 40.6% L- 29.2%

Very Confident: U- 26.1% L- 12.5%

General Observation: Law Students aren't as concerned with the SJC as Undergraduates, and both groups are less confident in the SJC than the EC.

Question 9: How confident are you in the ability of the Student Faculty Hearing Board to adjudicate cases of sexual misconduct? (Again I used the same scale as in question 7.)



General Observation: Although still fairly confident in the SFHB, that opinion significantly trails both the EC and the SJC.

Question 10: Do you favor disclosing the names of convicted students from any of the previously mentioned judicial boards? (Students could choose any combination of the three or none of the three.)

None: U- 47.8% L- 70.8%

SFHB: U- 46.4% L- 25%

SJC: U- 33.3% L- 25%

EC: 23.2% L- 29.2%

General Observation: Students generally support the current rules governing confidentiality in judicial cases. Women, at least among the undergraduates, are more willing to support disclosure of names than men.

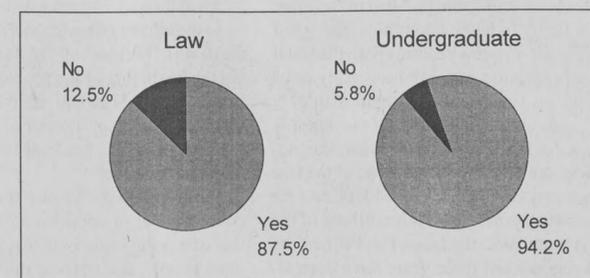
Question 11: Do you think the goal of the EC should be to oversee the Honor System or to represent and administer the student body? (I asked this question to see which of the EC's main functions were considered to be its primary purpose. A few students refused to rank the two alternatives.)

Oversee the Honor System: U- 72.5% L- 87.5%

Administer the Student Body: U- 23.2% L- 12.5%

No Answer: U- 4.3% L- 0.0%

Question 12: Currently the annual student budget appropriations are made by the members of the EC in closed-door sessions. Would you support a ballot initiative to involve a wider representation of the student body in these decisions?



General Observation: Students seem to want more influence over, or at least more knowledge about, how their activities fees are spent.

Question 13: Currently the annual appointments to student/faculty committees are made by the members of the EC in closed-door sessions. Would you support a ballot initiative to involve a wider representation of the student body in these decisions?

Yes: U- 82.6% L- 95.8%

No: U- 17.4% L- 4.2%

General Observation: Students are about as willing to open up the appointment process as the budget process.

What do you think?

What do you think about McCormack's poll? Should student government at Washington and Lee University be reformed? Write a Letter to the Editor. E-mail us at phi@wlu.edu.

In January, the campus chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists will seek to find out if students want more openness in government proceedings. In a university-wide poll, SPJ will ask students to vote on whether student judiciary bodies should disclose the names of students who are found guilty. The results of the poll will be published in both university newspapers.

Make your list, check it twice and start Christmas shopping in Lex

By Elianna Marziani
STAFF WRITER

Christmas: a time for family, talks by a fireplace, gingerbread men and sugar cookies, Christmas caroling, hot chocolate with lots of marshmallows, snowflakes... and a mad rush to the mall and other stores to find Christmas presents for everyone from your mom to your best friend to your dog.

The Christmas season is a very busy time for everyone, full of decorating, baking, shopping and planning. Though it is a very busy (and sometimes stressful) time of year, it can be a lot of fun. There is nothing like finding the perfect gift for someone special in your life, the gift you know he or she will absolutely love.

Sometimes this task is harder for a college student, since students are greatly limited in time, money and shopping locations. Washington and Lee University students are lucky, though. Since Lexington is a tourist attraction, it has many fun places to shop, most within five or ten minutes of campus.

These shops offer students a way out of the where-to-buy-what-for-whom dilemma, and the result is a crazy boom of activity for shopkeepers and students alike.

In between helping customers, answering phones, gift-wrapping items and offering snacks to her customers, Patti Neofotis found time to say that at Christmas, "it's busier than the rest of the year" at the Corner of Lexington Gift Shop, located (appropriately) at the corner of Nelson Street and Main Street.

The Corner is a small gift shop that sells all sorts of items, including stuffed animals and Beanie Babies, picture frames, scented and decorative candles, lamps, cards, figurines and dishes. Students enjoy coming to this shop to buy for family, friends and boyfriends or girlfriends typically, Neofotis said.

She said, "When they have reasons to shop, we get a good portion of students in here." What do students prefer to buy? "Jewelry they really like, they buy a lot of candles... around Christmas they buy more things for mom: cassette tapes, glasses, wine," she explained. She is expecting a lot of Beanie Baby sales this year, yet she said that one cannot be sure what product will sell best any year.

She defended student planning, too, saying, "[Students] are pretty well planned out... I'd say 95% of them are planned out," not last minute shoppers.

Junior Lee Dunham, who shops at the Corner of Lexington, is in the minority then. She has done none of her Christmas shopping yet and does not know when she will find the time to do it.

"I don't know what I'm buying anybody. I think I'm going to have to do it all at home in the mall over Christmas break," she said. For her friends at W&L, she said, "I'm going to buy some pretty nice gifts for my close friends and then just get cards for everybody else."

She likes shopping at the Corner, saying, "I think they have cute things... little girly gifts." For gifts for other people, she offered Wal-Mart as a solution. "If it's not there, you don't need it!"

She said that she plans to get things that people can actually use. "Christmas ornaments are nice," she said, "but if you don't have a tree..." As for what she wants herself? "I usually go for useful things... either useful or really expensive," she said.

Virginia Born and Bred, located on Washington Street, is another of the popular stores student shoppers enjoy visiting. It is a gift shop with a special emphasis on Virginian products. It sells all sorts of knick-knack gifts, including Robert E. Lee paraphernalia, collector books, t-shirts with Virginia slogans, Virginia souvenirs, little stuffed animals, Christmas ornaments, figurines, picture frames, plaques, candy, nuts, coffee, jellies, scented candles and soap, dishes and other goodies.

Ginger McNeese, who works at the shop, said that a lot of students come in to buy Christmas presents, mainly for their families. "A lot of them buy W&L things, but it's sort of across the board [as for what people tend to buy]. Everything is pretty popular," she said.

"Around the end of the Christmas season, [students] come in to take things home," she said. Before students start panicking about the fact that they haven't even thought about what to get their families yet, they should realize that they are not alone. McNeese said that the majority of student shopping at Virginia Born and Bred is "definitely more last minute" than planned.

Some students searching for a special gift for a mother, sister or girlfriend are happy with what they find at the Victorian Parlour Gift Boutique on Main Street. This shop is devoted to items from the Victorian era, offering oil lamps, crafted candlesticks, Victorian cards, decorations and other items for sale.

Ernestine Hockaday, owner of the Victorian Parlour, said that, although it is



Freshmen Selen Okcuoglu and Amanda Fischer explore the fashionable gift options at Papagallo on downtown Main Street.

Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

pretty busy all year long in her store, at Christmas, "It's wild. W-I-L-D, exclamation point!" Hockaday found that students were not necessarily last minute shoppers in her shop.

Poppet Nelson of the Cocoa-Mill Chocolate Company on Nelson Street said that Christmas is the busiest time of year for the shop. Cocoa Mill offers all sorts of gourmet chocolate, from truffles and nonpareils to fudge and specially shaped chocolates.

Nelson said, "Truffles are popular, fudge is popular with the students, but [student purchasing trends] depend on the time of year." Students come in to buy gifts for all sorts of people, but Nelson noted that they very often come in to buy "hostess gifts" for the parents of friends they will spend break with.

There is no "best time to buy" at this shop, and Nelson said, "Once you get into the real Christmas season it always stays pretty constant, busy all day long." She is expecting an onslaught of students over the next two weeks, as her experience has been that for student shoppers, "it doesn't matter what it is, it's always last minute."

Freshman Veronica Griffith enjoys Christmas and the shopping that goes along with it.

"It's fun when you're not rushed for time, because you get to think about what you want to get for each person, what they want," she said.

She has not yet experienced this "fun," though, since she, too, has not even begun to shop. She plans to buy for W&L friends next week in the downtown Lexington shops, and then she will shop for family and other friends the first week she gets back home for break.

She does not know exactly what she will buy people. "It depends on the person... I like to shop for individuals," she said.

Mass shopping may be easier, but shopping with one person in mind is always much more personal. Unfortunately, it takes a lot more time. Observers will probably see many students splitting time between the Colonnade and the downtown Lexington shopping area within the next week or so.

The Christmas shopping season has officially begun, but with all the fun little shops in Lexington, W&L students should have no problem finding great gifts for everyone on their lists, even if they wait until the last minute.



Sophomore Liz Powers and her "little sister" Rachel Lynch browse the goodies in Hamilton-Robbins on Main Street downtown.

Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

Stressin' your way through exams? Help is just a deep breath away

By Ginger Phillips
FEATURES EDITOR

There are only 18 short days until Christmas. Before they can open the presents and chug the eggnog, however, Washington and Lee students must face the less exciting task of taking final exams. Along with exams there inevitably comes stress, and lots of it.

"Everybody's really freaked this week," senior Kelley Joy said. "All everyone pretty much talks about during the last few weeks of the term is exams and how stressed they are."

Stress, despite what many people think, can be caused by both good and bad changes that occur to the body. It can safely be said, however, that the high stress level prevalent on campus is due not to worrying over what to buy your mom for Christmas, but what to tell her if you don't pass multivariable calculus.

During this week and exam week itself, the carrels and fish bowls in the library will be filled with students attempting to survive the stress of finals without killing their roommates or jumping off of the footbridge.

One of the biggest causes of stress for many students is that they think that they simply don't have enough time to get everything done.

"I feel extremely stressed out right now," junior Susan Terzian said. "There just isn't enough time to do all of my

work and still get some sleep. It feels like I work constantly and only stop to eat - that's the only way I get it all done."

Others are more worried about projects and papers than the exams themselves.

"A lot of professors assign projects that are due at the end of the semester, and it's really hard to finish all of that and study for finals at the same time," sophomore Faniry Rakotoarisoa said.

The exam experience is new to quite a few W&L students this year. Next week the freshmen class will have its first encounter with those large manila envelopes with the blue books hidden inside, and many of these newcomers are beginning to feel a little stressed.

"The fact that I'm here in the library on a Saturday afternoon should prove that I'm stressed," freshman Matt Brill said. "I'm trying to finish a paper now so that I can study for exams, but basically I'm trying to block it all out. If I think about everything I have to do I just get more nervous."

"I don't feel too worried about exams yet," freshman Kate Mobley said, "but I'm just waiting for the stress to hit me."

If the freshmen are just becoming familiar with the exam period, the seniors are inveterate exam takers and many have finally learned how to overcome all the worries.

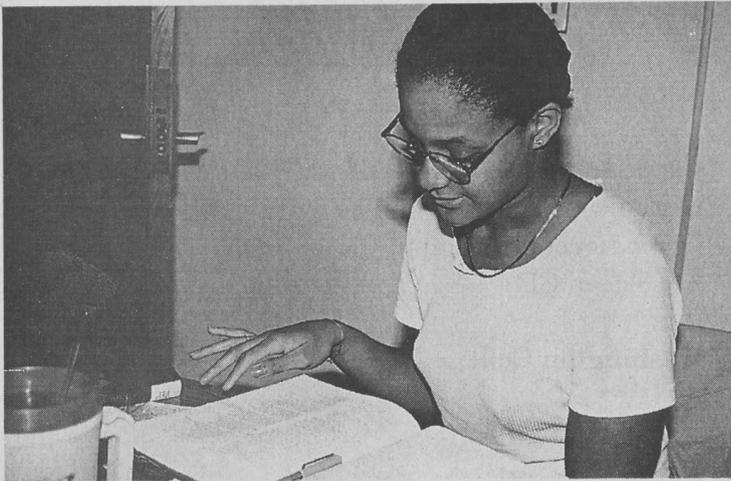
"I'm really not very stressed, and I definitely have things under control," senior Stephen Guenther said. "Of course I'm a little more bogged down than usual, but you can't avoid that."

"After you've been here for four years you learn how to deal with stress," Joy said. "Exam week is still really hectic and stressful, but you're used to it by the time you're a senior."

What can those students whose nerves have not been calmed by time and experience do when the stress of exams begins to weigh them down?

Making a plan of action and not procrastinating can only make studying that much easier.

"I don't feel fully prepared for finals, but I'm getting ready for them by being organized and making time sched-



Junior Khrist Stone hits the books in the quiet atmosphere of Leyburn Library. A great way to reduce stress is to begin studying for those exams early!

Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

ules," Rakotoarisoa said.

"You just have to sit down and do it," sophomore Bisrat Hailemichael said. "You'll never feel prepared if you procrastinate."

By following this advice it is possible to keep your body on a regular time clock. If the normal functions of your body are disrupted by too little sleep or changes in diet, you are more likely to become over-stressed.

If you feel fatigued or over-anxious, then you need a break.

"When I'm feeling too stressed out I'll go rent a movie or go out of town for dinner," Terzian said. "You should try to do something so that you're not working constantly."

"I just go to the Palms for a break," Joy said. "Sometimes my friends and I will watch a movie or do something relaxing to relieve a little stress."

Final exams are a stressful burden for most students, but there are ways to deal with them. When it's four o'clock in the morning and you're still in the library writing a twenty page paper and studying for tomorrow's physics final, take a few deep breaths and remember that in the long run, everything will be all right.

Or you can just try that age old cure that junior Riley Greene says relieves all worries - "Sex."



Art by Hollister Hovey/Features Editor

Century-old message: yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

In the spirit of the holiday season, The Ring-tum Phi is pleased to bring you a reprint of one of the most famous editorials of all time. This editorial appeared in The New York Sun in 1897. It caused an immediate sensation and was reprinted annually until 1949, when the paper went out of business.

This piece and explanations of the editorial's background can be found online at <http://www.barricksinsurance.com/virginia.html>. Enjoy, and may you and yours have a very merry Christmas.

— Erica Prosser and Ginger Phillips

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*:

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's

so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus? signed, Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus.

The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof

that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay ten times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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Find That Special Holiday Gift!

Give Mom an elegant Belleek or Donegal China vase from Ireland for under \$40.00! Or select a tartan wool tie or scarf for Dad under \$25.00—wrapped and ready to put under the tree!

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This year, avoid crowds, lines with click of computer mouse

By Erica Prosser
FEATURES EDITOR

It's the most wonderful time of the year, a time of mistletoe and snow and Santa Claus...

And it's also a time of circling parking lots to find a space, fighting your way through the crowded malls and racing from store to store before the other customers beat you to the last available Furby in the entire tri-state area.

There's a reason why shopping in malls has recently been linked to increased heart rate and blood pressure in men.

Still, there's hope. It's the '90s, after all, and with today's technology, a new means of shopping has emerged: online shopping.

Before you shriek and bury your head at the thought of trying to buy things over the Internet, consider this: online shopping has become easier and safer than ever before. You never have to deal with other customers or salespeople. And as for parking spaces? Don't bother. If you have an Internet browser and a credit card, you're all set.

But how to go about this new and exciting adventure in shopping? Never fear. Just a few quick lessons and you'll soon be on your merry way.

First, the ways you go about this process can vary. If, for example, you know for sure that you want to get your little sister a Cinderella Barbie doll, go to www.toysrus.com and look under "dolls." It's there, along with a huge selection of other toys sold by the Toys 'R' Us chain. Do you think you want to get Uncle Irving a Hickory Farms gift set? Head to www.hickoryfarms.com and select what you like. Or how about a nice new mystery thriller for Dad? Your one-stop source for books is www.amazon.com.

See a pattern? Most major chain stores have online ordering on their web sites, and other services specialize in a wide selection of similar items, such as books, flowers and CDs.

What if you don't have a particular store in mind, or what if you have no idea what to get that special someone this year?

Rejoice, for there is help for you, too. Many online services provide shopping help and "mall" store selections for the undecided shopper. Try out shopping.yahoo.com, www.imall.com and www.santa.com for help.

Have something specific but outrageous in mind and don't know where to look? Go to a search engine like www.yahoo.com, enter your idea in the search window and let the list of related web sites come to you. Yes, that collectible Star Wars Yoda figurine is out there somewhere, just waiting to be purchased.

Which brings up another point: be careful of online auctions and trading sites. Beanie Babies, Furbies and other hard-to-find items can be purchased for a (usually exorbitant) price at these places, but there's usually no way to tell if the sites are legitimate. You would often be buying from other individuals who are trying to unload the stuff, and you are each pretty much on your honor to fulfill your parts of the business contract.

Most of the time, these sites are fine and no one has any complaints. When in doubt, though, stick with the more reliable

shopping spots.

So you've arrived at the Disney Store online through disney.com, you've selected the plush Mickey Mouse Santa Christmas ornament you want, and you're ready to check out. How do you know that your credit card number is safe?

Online order forms that are safe use an encryption process to protect your precious numbers. To see whether or not the order form is secure, look for security information on the browser you use.

With Netscape, for example, the open "security" padlock on the toolbar at the top of the browser will close and become surrounded by a yellow aura. The tiny little padlock in the lower left hand corner of the window will do the same thing. This is your indication that the site is safe (most online order forms won't become secure until the page that asks for your mailing and credit card information comes up, so don't worry if you don't see the padlocks close right away).

If you still don't feel safe entering your credit card number online, relax. Most sites offer phone numbers that you can call to order merchandise if you're still squeamish.

Finally, online ordering can be fun for those who don't have any money to spend. You can send e-cards, e-kisses and e-flowers for Christmas to other people who have e-mail accounts. You fill out the information, and the recipient will get an e-mail message featuring an electronic greeting from you. Dozens of sites offer these free services; check out Yahoo! or another search engine to find web sites that provide these features.

There you have it, a basic guide to Internet shopping! See, that wasn't so awful. Now you have alternatives to battling your way through malls and outlet stores. You can save both your sanity and your shoe leather at the same time. Sit back, relax and just click the mouse.

You might decide you like it.

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250th Basketball Tournament Highlights Weekend

Men's team loses in final minutes

By Brendan Harrington
STAFF WRITER

The Washington and Lee men's basketball team has made some tremendous strides since they posted a 2-22 record in the 1996-1997 season. The Generals took another step in the right direction this weekend at the Warner Center, playing some excellent basketball in the 250th Celebration Tournament.

After defeating Middlebury College 74-61 on Saturday, the Generals (2-4, 1-1 ODAC) lost a heartbreaker to an excellent Washington University team 66-64 as sophomore Will Ballard missed a three-pointer at the buzzer.

"Whenever you have host your own tournament you want to win it," W&L head coach Kevin Moore said following the tough loss. "But except for a couple stretches we played great basketball this weekend. We've come a long way since our first two games in Sewanee."

"It was a tough loss, a couple of things didn't go our way down the stretch, but we are starting to come together," added sophomore guard Chad Braley. "It's been a good weekend, we've really turned it around since Sewanee, we're playing twice as good now as we did then."

The Generals led 26-24, but the Bears (3-4) went on a 17-6 run to take a 41-32 lead with 14:16 left to play. The Bears took their biggest lead of the game at 50-40 with 10:29 left in the game before the Generals went on a 10-2 run to cut the lead to 52-50 with 7:42 left in regulation.

With 5:34 left in the game and the Bears up 58-52, junior Rich Peterson was called for his fourth personal foul and then threw his mouth guard on the floor because of the call, prompting the referee to call a technical foul on Peterson. Not only did the Bears get four foul shots and possession, but the technical foul also counted as Peterson's fifth personal foul, sending the Generals' best player to the sidelines.

"Rich's technical is disturbing," Moore said. "It was a good foul call and for Rich to react like that you have to expect that the official is going to do something... Rich knows he made a big mistake."

Fortunately for the Generals, the Bears only scored three points as a result of the play after they made three of the four foul shots but turned it over on the awarded possession, making the score 61-52.

The Generals trailed by nine with 4:21 left and three-pointer looked to be in serious trouble, but W&L scored six straight points to cut the lead to 65-62 after Ballard nailed a three-pointer with 1:22 to go.

The Generals got the ball back with 52 seconds left after a Washington University turnover but Bears guard Ryan Patton stole the ball from Braley on an excellent defensive play and the Generals were forced to foul him.

Patton, who was 7-7 from the line at the time, made this first free throw but missed the second, giving the Generals the ball back trailing 66-62 with 30 seconds left to go. Senior point guard Kevin Cobbin scored a bucket on the other end to cut the lead to two and then quickly fouled Patton, sending him to the line with only 8 ticks left on the clock.

Patton missed both of the shots and the Generals got the rebound. They had no time outs remaining, so they quickly dribbled it up into the front court where Ballard attempted a three pointer but was blocked by Washington University student Dave DeCreff. He got his own rebound and then fired up one more three-pointer at the buzzer. The last-second shot hit the backboard and front rim and then fell to the floor, giving the Bears the two point victory.

"In a game like that there is about ten different things that if you do them differently then maybe you win the game, but I'm really proud of the way the kids battled back."

"We wanted the big trophy, but we played hard all weekend," Cobbin said. "It doesn't feel good right now, but we showed a lot of heart coming back from nine points down with only four minutes left."

Senior center David Cerven scored a game-high 20 points to go along with nine rebounds and was named the tournament's most valuable player. Sophomore forward Chris Alexander added 14 for the Bears and was named to the all-tournament team along with Cerven.

For the Generals, Braley led the way with 17 points and Peterson and Cobbin each had 10. Braley and Peterson were selected to the all-tournament team.

The Generals shot 39% from the field compared to 49% for the Bears. The Generals won the battle of the boards 35-27 while the Bears led in turnovers 22-21.

"It was a heck of a Division III basketball game," Bears head coach Mark Edwards said. "Both teams played with a lot of intensity and a lot of heart."

W&L host Emory and Henry on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

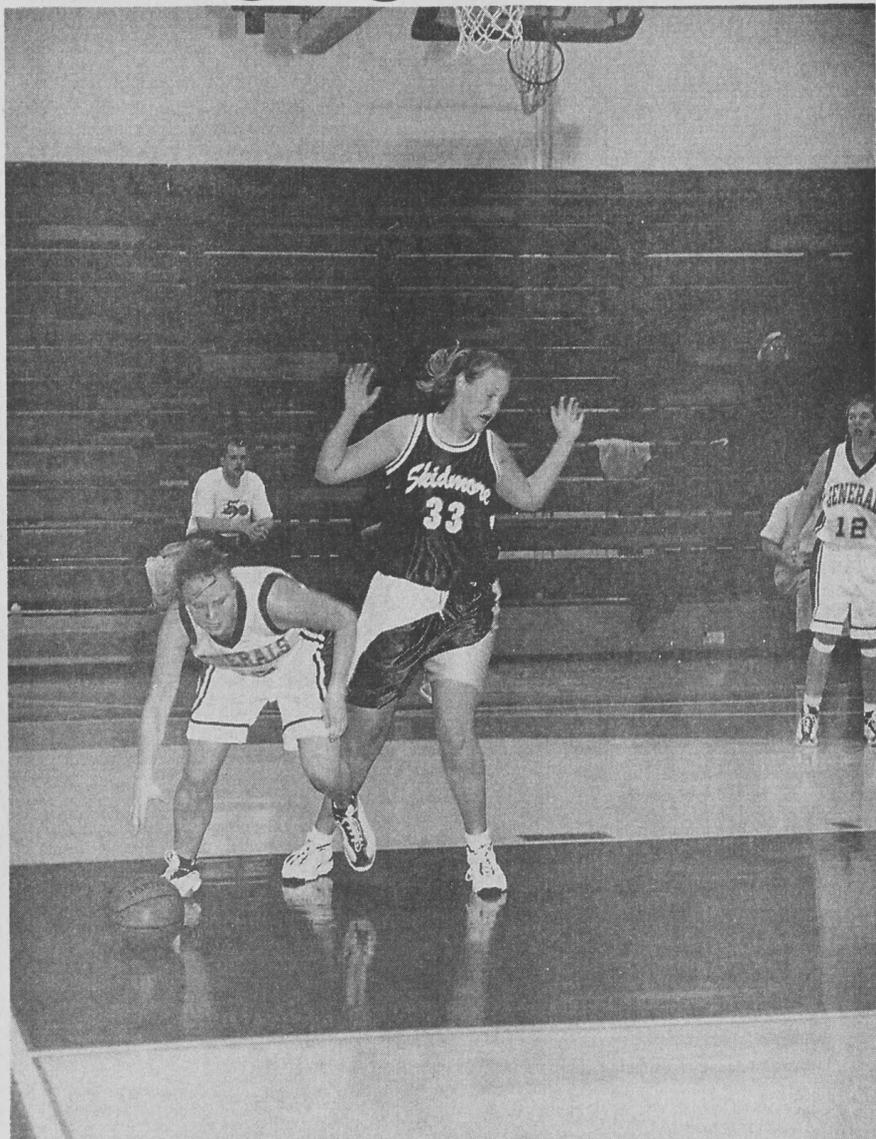


Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

Members of the W&L and Skidmore teams fight for a loose ball at the 250th Tournament.

Women's team loses consolation

By Tod Williams
STAFF WRITER

Last week, the Generals hosted its first tournament in the team's six years of existence, the Washington and Lee 250th Celebration Basketball Tournament. Before this year, the team held a 7-4 record in invitational tournaments, including the championship at a Carnegie Mellon Tournament last year.

From now on, the Generals should stick to being guests at such tournaments.

The team lost its consolation game to Skidmore College 65-52 early Saturday evening, just after the team had lost its first round game in the tourney on Friday night to Middlebury College 52-40. W&L also lost to Randolph-Macon 65-59 on Tuesday, in its only ODAC game so far this year.

The Generals, off to a 1-4 start this year, had a rough time in the tournament, losing the consolation round game to Skidmore. W&L saw the lead only once in the game, and

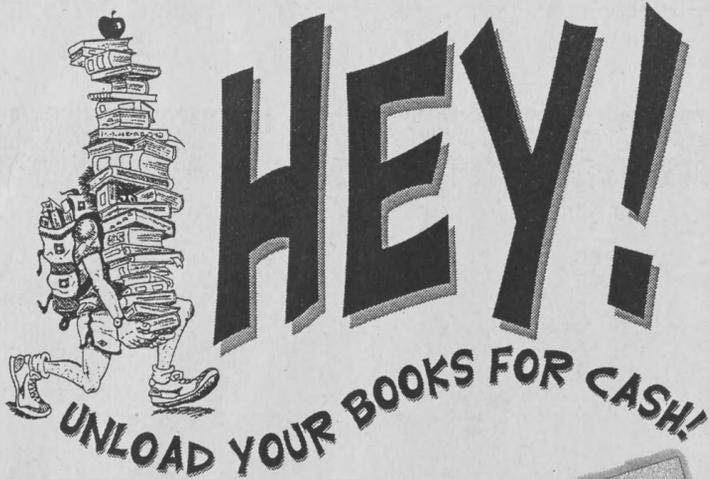
the Thoroughbreds led by double digits four times in the first half.

The Generals players were very much in the game going into the locker room, down only four, 36-32. The Generals did pull within two points with a little more than eight minutes to go in the game, but the run was quickly ended. Skidmore went on a 15-2 scoring run to end the game.

The Thoroughbreds had three ladies in double digits, as All-Tournament selection sophomore forward Sarah McEachron led the team with 17 points. Senior guard Heather Mitchell dropped in 13, and Heather Martin added 11 points on the day.

Junior guard Ansley Miller led W&L in the scoring column with 15 points. Miller was also 8-8 at the foul line. Senior forward Chrissy Burghardt, W&L's sole All-Tournament selection, pulled down eight boards for the Generals. Freshman Alison Kudlacik was 2-4 from behind the arc.

Kudlacik paced herself to double digits in each of this week's three games, coming off the bench twice to do so.



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Take a breath of fresh air . . .

. . . and find out how the women's swim team did on page 9.



Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

Swim team wins ODAC meet

By Steele Cooper
STAFF WRITER

The Washington and Lee women's swim team won its first ODAC meet on Tuesday against Randolph-Macon Woman's College. W&L took first in 10 of the 12 events with strong performances from returning veterans and a solid freshman class.

Three freshman women finished first in their individual events. Freshman Kristen Bonnema won the 200 free. Fellow class mates Laura Ingoldsby and Maggie Fagan finished first in their events. Ingoldsby swam her 100 free

with the winning time of 59.46 seconds, and Fagan posted a 1:08.83 to win the 100 fly.

Junior Lauren Beckenhauer totaled two first place finishes on Tuesday. Beckenhauer won the 100 back with a time of 1:05 and the 500 free with a 5:45.01.

Junior Lauren McKeever won the 100 back with a time of 1:16.00. Fellow junior Lezael Haynes came in first in the 200 back with her time of 2:27.28.

Seniors Margaret Hoehl and Laura Goodwin also posted wins in their events. Hoehl led the pack in the 200 fly with a 2:19.09, and Goodwin took the 200 breast with her 2:50.69. W&L swims today at Sweet Briar at 7 p.m.

CONSOLATION continued from page 8

She earned the start in Saturday evening's game. "I've really learned a lot this year from the coaches and the team," she said, "and I'm just playing the best I can."

"It's nice to start, but it's a real team effort every time we play and practice," Kudlacik said. "Everyone contributes and works really hard."

Kudlacik has contributed seven of the team's ten three pointers. Last season, the Generals scored only a total of 19 three pointers, all of which came from Miller, who has scored the other three this year.

Head coach Terri Dadio Campbell knows that the freshmen will have a major impact on the season. She said that a freshman will be on the floor at all times during the season, as has happened thus far.

Four freshmen have comprised seven of the 15 starting positions in the last three games.

On Friday, W&L actually led Middlebury College at the break, but the Panthers eventually pulled away for the 52-40 win.

The first half was definitely dominated by scoring runs. Middlebury took quite a while to get warmed up in the game. The Generals led off with an 8-0 run, holding the Panthers scoreless for the first six minutes. Middlebury then went on an 18-8 run to steal the lead from the Generals. W&L ended the half on a 7-0 run to take a 26-23 lead into the locker room.

The second half was not as bright for the Generals, however. The Panthers began with an 8-0 run to recapture the lead at 26-23 with 17:23 left in the game. And from then on, it was the Panthers' game. The Generals were held to only 17 points in the half while the Panthers came away with 34. Kudlacik led the Generals with 12, while Burghardt added 11 and seven boards.

Senior forward Kelly McCarthy led the Panthers with a double-double. She had 13 points and 12 rebounds.

In the tournament's championship game, Washington University of St. Louis, the defending national champions, fought off Middlebury for the 79-68 win. In Friday's other game, Washington defeated Skidmore to advance to the championship.

Last Tuesday, the Generals came to within two with less

then a minute to play against Randolph-Macon. Unfortunately, the Yellow Jackets scored the last four points in the game to clench the 65-59 game.

W&L had produced an exciting late second half comeback, scoring 12, as the team chopped down the Jackets' 14-point lead.

The game stayed close the entire first half, as Macon took a 35-30 lead into the break. But the Jackets came out to play in the second half by starting with a 15-6 run, which gave W&L a 50-36 lead.

The Generals then abolished what appeared to be Macon's domination as they went on a 23-11 run to come within two, at 61-59.

The Jackets then put the game out of reach with four points in the game's final minute.

A pair of seniors and a pair of freshmen led the Generals both on the court and in the scoring column in the game.

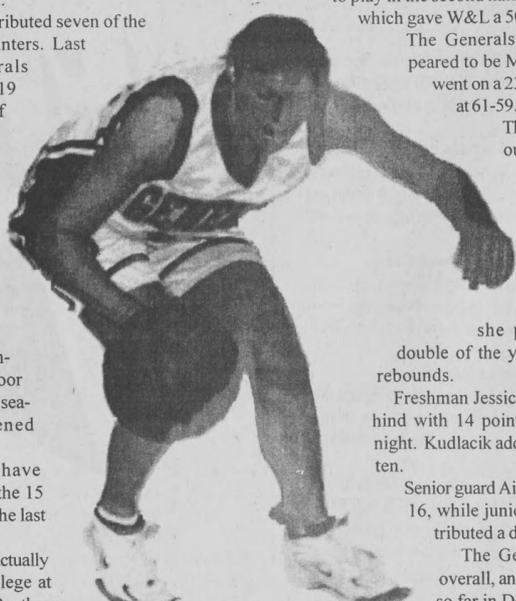
Burghardt led the team as she posted her first double-double of the year with 16 points and ten rebounds.

Freshman Jessica Mentz was not too far behind with 14 points and eight boards on the night. Kudlacik added 11 and Miller dropped in ten.

Senior guard Aimee Beightol led Macon with 16, while junior center Renee Zando contributed a double-double performance.

The Generals currently sit at 1-4 overall, and 0-1 in the ODAC. Winless so far in December, the only win came from a game at Villa Julie, which was actually four days before Thanksgiving.

On Tuesday, the W&L team will look for a win as it travels to Randolph-Macon Women's College for a 7 p.m. game.



Mounted Generals ride to top of class

As of Thanksgiving, the Washington and Lee Mounted Generals are ranked second in the region, a few points behind Ferrum College and far ahead of Hollins University, which holds third place. Senior Lydia Nichols leads the team with her 7th place ranking, and seniors Christine Starer and Sarah Rector, as well as junior Lindsay Gatling are also ranked in the top 50 for high point riding. Several riders have already qualified for individual Regionals.

On Nov. 18, W&L defeated 15 schools for the Team Championship at Southern Virginia. These are the results of the show.

Open Equitation on the Flat

- First — Senior Lydia Nichols
- Third — Senior Sarah Rector
- Fourth — Senior Christine Starer

Open Equitation Over Fences

- Second — Junior Lindsay Gatling
- Fourth — Senior Lydia Nichols
- Fourth — Senior Sarah Rector

Intermediate Equitation Over Fences

- First — Sophomore Annabelle Wirth

Novice Equitation on the Flat

- Second — Freshman Staunton Binstead

Novice Equitation Over Fences

- Sixth — Freshman Staunton Binstead

Advanced Walk Trot Canter

- First — Senior Wendy Kimble



Photo courtesy of Lydia Nichols

Track runs at VMI

The W&L women's track team competed at the VMI Indoor Tournament on Dec. 5.

The performances were highlighted by Amy Calce's 15th place performance with a time of 8.00 in the 55-meter dash and her 16th place performance in the 200-meter dash with a time of 30.82.

Nicola Carpenter finished in 19th place with a time of 33.65 in the 200-meter dash. Britt Shaffer finished in 14th place in the the 55-meter high hurdles with a time of 10.31.

Both the men's and women's teams will travel to Lebanon Valley on January 23 for their next meet.

— Courtesy of Sports Information

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Holiday gifts for spoiled rich W&L brats

By Kevin McManemin
My COLUMN, BERNIE

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But look out! Crashing through the brick wall is Professor Wheeler in the battle-ready Wheeler-mobile® with Dabney Stuart in the machine gun turret. BLAM BLAM BLAM! Warren and his thugs are torn to shreds like a poor thesis.

(Castle Payne Hall Action Playset® sold separately)

The Abortion of the Month Club

The perfect gift for that irresponsible yet irrepressibly popular girl on your hall. It's the gift that keeps on giving for the girl who keeps on giving!

W&L dress-up book

What should Chad and Wescott wear today? Should they wear their khakis and blue polo shirts or khakis and dark blue polo shirts? It's up for you to decide in this 42-page, 4-item dress-up book. Minutes of fun!

Virtual pledge

From the makers of the electronic toy sensation Tamagotchi comes Virtual Pledge, the frat-tacular new game that's sweeping the Greek world. Be sure to force feed your virtual pledge beer and dip and heap abuse on him daily so that one day he'll grow into a brother — but feed him too much and he'll go to the infirmary. Play fun games with Virtual Pledge including Clean-the-Puke, Paddleless and Lineup (the game they won't tell you about at the rush dinner).

Off the Wire

fictitiously reported by Kevin McManemin

Santa's reindeer Dancer and Prancer come out of closet

The North Pole — In an announcement that stunned both humans and elves alike, Santa's reindeer Dancer and Prancer have come out of the closet and admitted to being practicing homosexuals. "We're here, we're deer and we're queer," Dancer said at a press conference earlier today. "Get used to it, honey."

The other reindeer are reportedly shocked by the announcement. "Well, Prancer's always been a bit . . . err . . . flamboyant, but Dancer too? I never would have guessed," Blitzen said.

This latest scandal comes only weeks after Rudolph admitted to having nose implants. Rudolph has battled rumors that he's gay for years. "There's something funny about that guy. He never joins in any reindeer games," Santa said.

Massive elf layoff sends North Pole economy south

The North Pole — The once bustling North Pole economy is in shambles after Santa let go nearly 450 elf workers at his toy factory.

"I had no choice," Santa said. "Making free toys for all the children in the world just isn't profitable. I had to lay off the elves to remain competitive in the marketplace."

The elf layoff has devastated other segments of the North Pole economy, such as the tiny pointed hat industry and the tiny shoe industry.

Santa's toys will now be made by Indonesian gnomes for seven cents an hour.

Starr puts Clinton on naughty list

Washington — Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr submitted a 1,400 page report to Santa Claus detailing reasons why President Clinton should be put on the "naughty" list.

"President Clinton has been a bad, very bad boy this year," Starr concluded. "He does not deserve the Sony Playstation he asked for."

Clinton blames the report on the "right wing conspiracy" against him.

The Last Word would like to wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa, Smashing Boxing Day, Wonderful Wiccan Winter Solstice, Happy Yanomamo Sun God Feast, Bleak Nihilist Day, or a good whatever bizarre holiday your particular sect in our fractured society celebrates.

English Department Action Figures



Mary "The Scout" Smout

Ilm "Warlord" Warren

Miller Warrior Princess

designed by Hollister Hovey

Very good movie gives audience very bad feeling

by Brian Prisco
PHI MOVIE GUY

1 2 3 4 5

(Wait until the matinee showing)

"Very Bad Things" is not so much a movie as a life changing experience. After seeing this horrifying graphic film, I left the theater, as did much of the audience, clutching my head in my hands and mumbling, "Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ." It was THAT vicious. "Very Bad Things" was written and directed by Peter Berg (Chicago Hope), a first timer behind the camera. I am not sure what drug he was injecting, snorting or smoking, but it should probably be outlawed and destroyed. The savage comedy strikes at every single aspect of society that could be considered wrong and shows it in all its brilliant glory.

The movie has an outstanding cast. Jon Favreau ("Swingers") is

about to get married to Cameron Diaz ("Something About Mary") and before the day is through, he and his buddies go out on a rampaging, all-out bachelor party bonanza. It's a drinking drugging whoring crazy whooptido, until Jeremy Piven (P.C.U.) accidentally kills the hooker. Which is a shame, cause she had quite a pair on her.

Then, the movie breaks down into a grotesquery that Quentin Tarantino would vomit at.

The twisted death in this movie is not so much the point, it's the fact that you don't really see it coming until it is too late, and then it hits you all at once. It's like taking a sledgehammer to the cerebral cortex. Which might be one of the only items not used to kill someone in this movie.

The plot runs smoothly and quickly, and is well played out by everyone. Christian Slater is surprisingly dire, Daniel Stern takes an out-of-the-norm turn as the only semi-vigilant family man with morals (limited though they are) in this gruesome gathering, and Diaz is just frightening. Berg described her character as "Martha

Stewart on acid." I'd say more like "Martha Stewart on PCP and crack." The ending is wrong on so many levels, but it fits this movie perfectly. I wouldn't dare spoil the horrid effect it had on me, so just go and see it for yourself. Seriously.

The question that most people have put to me is "Yeah, but would I want to see it?" I felt dirty because I laughed a lot during the movie. A whole lot. More than I should have. And I left the theater feeling evil. How can I answer it?

Well, a comparison. "Pulp Fiction" involved a scene where someone gets his head blown off in a car and bits of brains and blood are everywhere. "Single White Female" involved a scene where a woman jams a high heeled shoe into a man's eye socket. This movie makes them look like kiddie films. So there.

Sound like your cup of tea? If you don't like savage violence or twisted humor, this is not your movie, do not even waste your time. But if you dig sick shit, hey, this is definitely the flick for you.



The cast of the wonderfully twisted comedy "Very Bad Things."