

Sept 1, 2016

vsuspectator.com | @vsuspectator

Volume 91, Issue 13

THE SPECTATOR

THE UNFILTERED, UNCENSORED VOICE OF THE STUDENTS.

**VSU opens
versus ASU
with Rivers at
the helm
PAGE 12**

**Getting
in a good
twerk-out
PAGE 07**

**Miller brings
fresh
perspective to
VSU
PAGE 03**

**Follow us on @VSUSpectator on
Twitter for updates on
Tropical Storm Hermine**

NEWS

Criminal Justice awarded

Michaela Leung
COPY EDITOR
maleung@valdosta.edu

VSU's Criminal Justice department has been ranked one of the best in the nation.

OnlineU has awarded the program the No. 13 spot on the 2016 Best Value Online Colleges for Criminal Justice Degrees and No. 16 on the Best Value Online Colleges for Law and Criminal Justice Degrees.

OnlineU is a site that allows prospective students to compare online colleges in the country by cost. The goal of the website is to

provide students with a free way to gain an affordable education. Schools on the "Best Value" list have low affordable tuition, strong student support services and student satisfaction reported in reviews.

"I think it's well deserved because the professors do their best to teach us the subject," said Sameena Farrar, a School Counseling graduate student and graduate of the Criminal Justice Bachelors program. "It makes me feel like my degree is even more valuable and I am proud to have chosen the criminal justice program."

Faculty senate introduces new policies

Bryce Ethridge
STAFF WRITER
bjethridge@valdosta.edu

In the first faculty senate meeting of the semester, the faculty discussed details about upcoming improvements in the administration and various departments.

Interim President Dr. Kelli Brown kicked off the meeting with a few VSU updates, and said "we have reversed the downward trend of enrollment." That was met with applause as she said she hopes it will continue trending upward.

She said that even though VSU's enrollment is up, there's still a decrease in the returning junior and senior population. A question that came up when Brown spoke was if the university attorney would talk to the faculty about speaking to students in political science classes regarding

teachers' political point of view and voting plans, even when it's a violation of academic freedom. An attorney will discuss that further.

The new minor policy, which states that if a minor is involved with a program on campus, he or she can never be alone in a one-on-one situation with an adult. This policy requires faculty to go through special training to handle minors and also requires background checks on various people who come in to handle minors. The policy came from the aftermath of the Jerry Sandusky scandal at Penn State to make the environment safer for minors.

Also on the agenda was the introduction of the new SGA president, Maya Mapp, who the faculty would have to talk to in order to get SGA representatives to serve on various committees. Introduced after that were the 22

new senators throughout the various departments.

Towards the end of the meeting it was stated that faculty should start advocating and pushing up their internal candidates that they want to put in committees. It was then said that all those candidates would be looked at, but if they did not fit at VSU, then they will not be chosen for that position. They need at least five candidates before it's a failed search, but they are not afraid to have a failed search if it's necessary.

At the end of the meeting, representatives from Amarak came to talk about tailgates. While on this topic they said they would be catering the tailgates while tickets would be sold there as well, but its ultimate goal is to build a better community with the faculty, staff and students alike.

LANDSCAPE TECHNICIANS NEEDED!

Full Service Landscaping

AltaVista
LANDSCAPE COMPANY

Helping Make South Georgia...Just a Little More Beautiful

Applicants must:

- Have experience with mowers, edgers, weed eaters, hedge trimmers, etc.
- Be hard working
- Have a valid driver's license
- Be able to take South Georgia heat

16-20 hours per week

Year Round

- Be able to pass a drug screen
- Be honest & customer service oriented
- Be dependable & trustworthy
- Be able to work 4 to 6 hours at a time (some Saturdays)
- Be able to follow directions

If you do not have these qualifications, please don't waste your time.

This is a long term position that is ideal for students. Pay is commensurate with experience.

Interested? Email avlc@mchsi.com

THE SPECTATOR

Recruiting For Fall 2016

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS - PRINT, WEB & MOBILE
ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVES
MARKETING ASSISTANTS
WRITERS
COPY EDITORS
PHOTOGRAPHERS
VIDEOGRAPHERS
ASSISTANT EDITORS

ALL MAJORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY

MARKETING & DESIGN POSITIONS REQUIRE 15 HOURS WEEK-

To Apply:

EMAIL COVER LETTER, RESUME & SAMPLES OF WORK TO:

AIMEE NAPIER, ADVERTISING MANAGER
acnapier@valdosta.edu

OR

GABE BURNS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
gcburns@valdosta.edu

HOSTESSES/SERVERS WANTED

FOR OKTOBERFEST

Sat SEPT 31st -
Sat OCT 10th

LUNCHTIME ONLY
11am - 3PM

CHOOSE YOUR OWN DAY'S TO WORK
IN **LAKELAND, GA**

FOR INFO CALL
229-300-7068



Spectator Classifieds

The *Spectator* prints free classifieds for current students of Valdosta State University only. These must be no more than 40 words, or a \$14.50 charge will apply. Classifieds for faculty, staff, student organizations, student-owned businesses and the general public cost \$13.90 for up to 40 words.

Ads should be sent to the *Spectator* or delivered to our office in 1238 Hopper Hall. The deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday, a week prior. If payment applies, it should be submitted

in a sealed envelope at the time the ad is placed or paid via Mastercard, Visa, Discover or electronic check online through Aimee Napier, Advertising Manager. Email Aimee Napier at acnapier@valdosta.edu to pay online.

Ads must be accompanied by the name and phone number of the person submitting the ad. Students must also submit their VSU Student ID number. Ads must be resubmitted each week, as necessary.

The *Spectator* address is: 1500 N. Patterson St., Val-

dosta, GA 31698. Our email address is spec_advertising@valdosta.edu.

The *Spectator* reserves the right to reject any classified ad. All ads are subject to standard editing procedures. The *Spectator* is not responsible for mistakes due to a submitted error. The categories for classifieds include: For Sale, For Rent, Sublease, Wanted, Roommate, Services, Personnel and Employment.

For Rent

Duplex Available.

2 RECENTLY REMODELED UNITS with Stove, frig, CH&A in each.

611-A Williams Street

- 3 bdrms 1 bath \$650/month
- 1611-B Williams Street
- 2 bdrms 1 bath \$550/month

* Walking distance to VSU's main campus. *
Call 229-292-4400.

For Rent



Student Special

SETH TOWNHOMES
2/2.5, \$595/mo
2415 Seth Place, off Pineview

BLAZER COURTYARD
2Bd/1Bth - \$495/mo
909 Slater St.
(2 Blocks South of University Center)
NO APPLICATION FEE
with VSU ID

*** VSU STUDENTS ***

vsuSpectator.com

YOUR AD HERE * FREE!!!

NEWS

Miller brings fresh perspective to VSU New VP of Student Affairs emphasizes unity, student opportunity

Gabe Burns

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

gcburns@valdosta.edu

A 15-year journey brought Dr. Vince Miller from the bayou to the Blazers.

The Watson, Louisiana native is one of the new masterminds of VSU's administrative retool as the Vice President of Student Affairs. As with new Interim President Dr. Kelli Brown, Dr. Miller said he emphasizes student success.

"President Brown and I started on the same day, and I think we have similar philosophies on student success and asking ourselves how we can benefit students," Dr. Miller said.

Dr. Miller frequently used "potential" to describe VSU. He said the university's recent struggles (admissions, retainment) trace back to a lack of permanent leadership. He said rather than VSU doing anything wrong, the university has "lost momentum" due to the instability.

"There are people here who care," he said. "The infrastructure is in place. The student experience is great. We've got to get more students on campus. We need to get more students enrolled. We need to know how our work retains students. We need to connect those dots."

He said enrollment management, academic support services and student affairs should work in unity, but that's difficult without solid leadership. He said he wants to be a connector.



Gabe Burns/THE SPECTATOR

Dr. Vince Miller comes from Georgia Southern as VSU's new Vice President of Student Affairs.

There's a need for more types of services, specifically in diversity and student inclusion as well as leadership and volunteer services, according to Dr. Miller, but all facets of the university must be cohesive to achieve that. He said expanding and uniting are his priorities, and he wants to see students search for and take opportunities.

"I want to see you walk in day one, then see you walk across that stage at the end," he said.

Of course, Dr. Miller was a student himself at one point.

He stayed in-state for college, attending Louisiana Tech University. He said he, as many students do, shuffled through an

assortment of majors in search of a career, from physical therapy to health and physical education.

"I thought I was going to be a ball coach," he said, laughing. "... I liked athletics and always wanted to be around athletics ... it took a while for me to find where I needed to be."

He discovered his "fit" in Management and Marketing. After obtaining a bachelor's degree, Dr. Miller went back to school while working full-time to earn a Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in 2004. He worked at Louisiana Tech as an admissions officer and Director of Orientation and Special Programs for five years. But while

in college, his parents moved to Jacksonville, Florida, which he said prompted him to eventually navigate eastward.

In 2006, Dr. Miller landed at Georgia Southern as the Assistant Director of Admissions, Orientation and Parent Programs (2006-2008). During a 10-year span in Statesboro, he also served as the Director of Special Projects (2008-2011), Acting Director of Career Services (2012) and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (2011-2016).

Georgia Southern was going through a transition period, which opened the door for Dr. Miller to look elsewhere. He said he felt it was the right time in his career to make a move.

"I hadn't been to a job interview in 10 years," he said. "I thought maybe it was time to put my resume out there and see what happens ... I advise students and professionals to look for the appropriate next step ... I needed to challenge myself to grow, but I didn't need to challenge myself in a way I couldn't be successful."

I wanted to look for an institution the size of VSU that would provide expanded responsibility, new opportunities and was that appropriate next step."

VSU was one of four interviews in two weeks, with all the universities being significantly different, according to Dr. Miller. He said he "can't be more pleased with the outcome" and his familiarity with the state will be an important factor to any success.

The familiarity doesn't stop

with the state. He drew parallels between his early days at Southern and VSU today.

"The conversations we're having at Valdosta State today are the same conversations I was part of in 2006," he said. "... What are the mechanisms we need to put in place to better support students, to improve customer service, to better retain students? We need to know what causes enrollment shifts ... What does Valdosta State want to be?"

Dr. Miller praised Georgia Southern's administration and said VSU has the right people in place for the university to excel.

"There's no reason for students to sit and say 'wow, Georgia Southern is doing this' or 'Kennesaw is doing this, West Georgia is doing that,'" he said. "There's no reason Valdosta State can't be there in five years or less."

He added he likes VSU's current student population range (11,000-13,000), but said he could see that number ascending in the future.

School is three weeks in, and Dr. Miller is a couple months in on the job. He doesn't have much free time, but thoroughly enjoys fishing and golfing. He said once everything settles down, he's going to check out the Valdosta golf scene. So far, he's adjusting well to the Azalea City.

"I like everything I see," Dr. Miller said. "This is a friendly, southern community. It's very welcoming, very open-armed."

Storm Hermine arrives

Hunter Terrell

STAFF WRITER

h1terrell@valdosta.edu

With the storm Hermine coming at full speed, VSU is expected to have a stormy Labor Day weekend.

The Weather Channel predicts thunderstorms late Thursday through early Sunday evening.

Interim Chief of Police Alan Rowe emailed students with a tropical storm update early Wednesday afternoon, stating "the storm has slowed and now is not expected to arrive in the VSU area until the late hours of Thursday evening, with the majority of expected rains and wind occurring on Friday."

Rowe encourages students to "please monitor campus emails, registered alert system devices, and social/traditional media for any updates as they become available."

Sophomore Bryan Clark is not really fazed by the expected weather.

"I don't mind the weather. Living in Florida and dealing with crazy weather all the time, a little

thunderstorm won't hurt us," he said.

Opposite of Clark, Junior Kennedy Gray said she is "slightly concerned" about the weather conditions to come. Though she doesn't think classes should necessarily be canceled she does think it would "be in the best interest for the students and faculty. Especially commuters."

Classes and VSU hours of operation will remain the same until further notice.

More information can be found on the VSU website, The Weather Channel, or through student email.

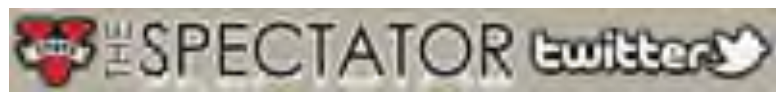
The forecast is as follows:

100 percent precipitation, wind up to 26 mph, and thunderstorms throughout Thursday night and Friday morning.

Friday night is expected to have scattered storms with 40 percent precipitation and wind 10mph.

Hopefully it will be clearing up on Saturday with 20-40 percent precipitation and 4 mph wind.

Sunday could be scattered storms or just partly cloudy with 5-10 mph wind.



Interested in working for The Spectator?

Contact Editor-in-Chief Gabe Burns:

gcburns@valdosta.edu

229-251-8895

THE SPECTATOR
THE UNFILTERED, UNCENSORED VOICE OF THE STUDENTS.

@VSUSPECTATOR



MUCH MORE ONLINE!

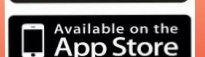
STAY CONNECTED!!



GO DIGITAL AND GET SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT, LIFESTYLE TIPS, BREAKING NEWS AND MUCH MORE!



GET THE APP:



So what are you waiting for?

In case you missed it... 25th Anniversary of The Happening

Tiana Foster
STAFF WRITER
tjfoster@valdosta.edu

As the new school year rolls around, VSU attracts students with its fall annual event, The Happening. It gives students and the community an opportunity to view and learn about the many organizations and businesses Valdosta State as well as the community has to offer. This year was a special year, as it was the 25th anniversary of the event.

On Aug. 25th, many groups prepare their booths on the front lawn and wait for onlookers to come out. With the event scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m., spectators had plenty of time to engage with one another.

Brittany McCloud, VSU alumna, is the proud owner of Hair Maniacs. "I provide hair extensions of different textures, lengths and frontals," she said. She had samples of some of her hair displayed for observers to touch and feel. She was also providing a live demonstration of how she applies a frontal hair piece. This event also gives the chance for business owners to show off their skills.

Erin Wright, senior, criminal justice major, appreciates the chance to be able to see all the new organizations at once. "I like how every year they have

new vendors and it's a chance to see your friends that you didn't get to see all summer," she said. This event not only promotes the business and groups of Valdosta but also serves as a social gathering for some students.

Kiara Washington, junior, and President of "Share in Africa," explain how they are a nonprofit organization that's trying to raise money to support girls' education in Tanzania, Africa. She also goes into detail about how this organization is not only at Valdosta State but also at several other universities. "\$250 sponsors one girl in Tanzania and our goal as an organization is to raise \$1,000."

"I think The Happening is a great way for freshmen to get to know the people and organizations that are on campus and the outside businesses that are in the community as well," said Jalen Lazarus, junior, public relations major and member of The Beauty Movement.

Whether you would like to pick up free prizes or find a new organization this annual event provides opportunities for students to stop by different booths, and learn more about VSU's campus. The Happening offers new and returning students the opportunity network and meet new people.



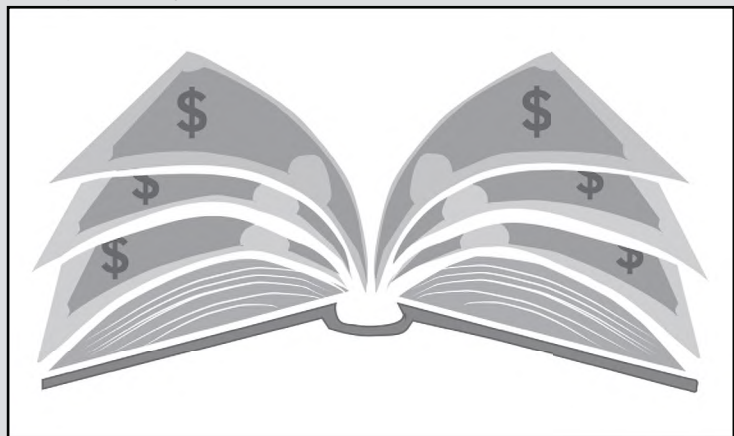
Students gathered on the Front lawn last Thursday. Over 300 vendors and student organizations were involved in the 25th annual Happening, which offers attendees the opportunity to explore their options in the community.

Photos Courtesy of Blake Clark and Mayah Cantave



OPINIONS

Our point of view...



Kayla Stoud

Don't break the bank to educate

Nelson Mandela said that education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world. How exactly can we change the world when we can barely afford it?

Paying for college has always cost an arm and a leg. Now it seems like it's costing an arm, leg, heart and soul.

Every year students shell out thousands of dollars to pay for tuition and then shell out even more money to pay for books.

We don't bleed money. It seems like the more we spend money, the "healthier" the university gets. Like a vampire sucking blood from its victims. But it's not just the university that makes money, publishing houses are also profiting from us.

Finding exact numbers for cost of books is difficult, but College Board suggests that the average student spends over \$1,000 a year on books and supplies. That's over 200 Grande Pumpkin Spice Lattes from Starbucks or over 300 Chick-fil-A sandwiches.

Since 2001, new college textbook prices have risen 6 percent per year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

It's hard to understand why there are new editions of textbooks for every subject except money; money that students don't have. So here's a couple of ideas to help students not break the bank.

Imagine a world where introductory classes use the same textbooks. A world where teachers assign homework, assignments, and readings from the same text book. Where professors try to be reasonable. Can you at least attempt to make one edition of a book for all classes in the same major? Or give students at least two weeks to get our books situated or wait until refund checks hit our accounts before assigning assignments in the textbook.

Administrators, hear us out. Why can't the cost of books be added into our tuition instead of making students pay an additional amount for books? It's not much of a secret that teachers can negotiate prices with publishers. Help your students succeed. What about etexts as an option? Some students may not agree with the idea of etexts, but etexts is better than no text at all.

SOIs are Student Opinion of Instruction. These surveys that teachers and administrators ask students to fill out at the end of each semester are not worthless. Complain about your struggles with buying books. One bad SOI doesn't make a change, but it's a start. Hold teachers accountable for lack of resources needed to be successful in a class.

Students, don't worry, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. If you want change, you have to make it happen. Break the cycle. Don't sell your books back to bookstores, share the books with other students. Sell it at lower costs.

In other words, students, do what you can to survive the class. Be the change that everyone wants us to be.

This editorial was written by a member of the editorial staff and expresses the general opinion of The Spectator.

Health Tip *of the week*

A healthy tip from VSU Student Health Center – Make sure that you have completed and provided proof of all required immunizations. “Vaccinations protect you against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including meningitis and cancers caused by HPV infections.”

-CDC.gov

Burkini ban promotes hate

Cynthia Papailler

STAFF WRITER

ctpapailler@valdosta.edu

A picture of a Muslim woman being forced to remove her veil surrounded by policemen on a French beach is going viral, and women around the world of all different backgrounds are rallying behind her.

Any government that boasts “Liberty, equality, and fraternity” as their national motto shouldn't tell a woman that she is being a threat by what she chooses to wear.

In recent French news, many southern French cities have banned burkinis—a full body swimsuit that resembles a diver's suit but much looser—from their beaches. What is shocking is the fact that many of the politicians choosing to ban the swimsuit do not even know what a burkini is. They seem to be blatantly targeting Muslim women.

Some women who cannot afford the 125 euros bathing suits

opt for large t-shirts, black pants, and bathing caps, but are still receiving fines for those types of outfits.

France has been showing more and more Islamophobia since the recent terrorist attacks on the nation and view the burkini as some sort of extremist solidarity.

“It is ridiculous to force a woman to remove her clothing because of her choice to be modest.”

A lot of French politicians and the burkini ban supporters express their desires for Muslim women to conform to westernized ways but fail to realize that the burkini is a way of doing so. The burkini was created by an Australian designer Aheda Zanetti as a way

to help Muslim women blend into westernized society. In most Islamic countries, women aren't allowed to swim alongside men because the wet burkini would outline a woman's shape when wet. It is a big step for them.

It is ridiculous to force a woman to remove her clothing because of her choice to be modest.

Although these bans are taking place overseas, with certain presidential candidate expressing anti-islamic views and anti-immigration, this type of discrimination and bans might wash up on our shores. I think we need to find better ways of sorting through our misunderstandings and a better way of dealing with our fears (which are typically fueled by flagrant ignorance). According to NPR, Islam comes in second when it comes to the largest religion with 1.6 billion followers following behind Christianity. It isn't going away anytime soon and it's best we learn to put aside our differences and get it together.

Starting fall too early Stores push customers away

Olivia Studdard

STAFF WRITER

oastuddard@valdosta.edu

Every year pumpkin spice, bonfires, and football games sneak up on the unsuspecting public, their quiet arrival marked by the decorations that seemingly appear overnight in the windows and aisles of department stores everywhere.

For most people this is a welcome change. A craze is experienced over the decorations, the smells, and the change in weather. Girls go crazy over Starbucks' fall drinks and pull out all of their seasonal clothes.

Students all over campus are praying for cooler weather and for a winning season of VSU football.

“I'm absolutely ready for fall. Fall is my favorite and I'm ready for it to not be so stinking hot outside,” said senior Special Education major Britleigh Rogers. “I've been ready since before school started back.”

However, not everyone is feeling the joy of the season. Ever since stores have been pulling out

fall themed products, people keep looking forward to what comes next.

“Hobby Lobby in particular al-



mctcampus

ways has a habit of jumping the gun on decorations,” said sophomore nursing major Ansley Taylor. “I see the fall decorations and know that within weeks they will have Christmas and Santa in the windows too.”

While some people enjoy see-

ing pumpkin patches in every store window, some people avoid the heightened excitement altogether by shopping in different stores this time of year.

“I usually just avoid all the decorations by not going back to those stores until after the season has passed. So I have to go without my craft fix? That's fine. It's worth the cost,” Taylor said.

It's up to the stores to decide if all the hype is really worth it. They have to decide if the distaste of many customers is worth continually pushing the next season. Allie Troutman, senior mass media major, sees it all as a marketing scheme.

“It's all about getting people to buy more of what they don't really need. I'm guilty of it too,” Troutman said. “But eventually you have to decide if it's worth it.”

Whether the general public is ready for it or not, fall is just around the corner, and stores across the nation are preparing us for the change.

Kaepernick exercises his freedom of expression

Michaela Leung

STAFF WRITER

maleung@valdosta.edu

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick has been the center of controversy lately due to his decision not to stand during the national anthem at during the preseason game in San Francisco. Kaepernick's actions are in protest for the current injustices against minorities in the

United States.

Although he is receiving a lot of backlash, he did not do anything wrong in regard to his contractual agreement with the National Football League. According to the NFL, “Players are encouraged but not required to stand during the playing of the national anthem.”

Some fans and sports commentators have turned their backs on Kaepernick due to his decision,

calling it an “unpatriotic” act and find it to be very disrespectful. However, Kaepernick is simply exercising his First Amendment Right.

This country is founded on the principles of civil rights, and there are people that put their lives on the line to fight to protect these rights. Even though Kaepernick is a public figure, he still has rights and due to the fact that he did not breach his contract, he is

in the clear.

The reason behind his protest is valid. There have been frequent acts of injustice in this country, and he has the right to express his opinion on the matter in whichever legal way he sees fit.

Kaepernick is not the first athlete to take a stand in regard to civil rights. NBA athletes Dwayne Wade, Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James and Derrick Rose have expressed their opinions and

concerns about the treatment of minorities in this country. WNBA teams such as the Indiana Fever and New York Liberty even received a fine for wearing shirts to raise awareness to the cause.

There is no telling when the buzz surrounding Kaepernick will die down but hopefully it will be seen that he was not in the wrong.

OPINIONS

Periods not a luxury and tampons are essential

Hunter Terrell

STAFF WRITER

h1terrell@valdosta.edu

It's about time more states eliminated the tax on feminine products.

On July 21, New York became the 11th state to terminate the luxury tax placed on the most common feminine product, tampons.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo commented to multiple news sources: "This is a regressive tax on essential products that women have had to pay for far too long and lifting it is a matter of social and economic justice."

The other 10 states are as follows: Oregon, Montana, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Alaska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

Also, New Jersey and Pennsylvania are the only two in the country that specifically exempt toilet paper.

The Pennsylvania tax code exempts "disposable diapers, incontinence products, [and] toilet paper" right alongside feminine



wikimedia

hygiene products.

Among other products, New Jersey exempts toilet paper, facial acne cream, and even certain lip balm from its sales tax.

Furthermore, sanitary products in the remaining 39 states' tax laws can fall under the "luxury tax," which applies to products or services deemed nonessential.

To make things more awkward, this tax is also sometimes referred to as the "sin tax."

This tax has been imposed on women since 1965.

Viagra, birth control, medicated condoms, and other gender-based products are exempt from sales tax.

Marissa Gray, senior, said that it's unfair: "Why should we have to pay a tax that others don't. It's not that it's taking a large amount of money, it only adds up to around \$60 a year, but I just think it's seriously unfair."

Even President Obama acknowledged this unfair treatment, telling YouTube star Ingrid Nilsen back in January: "I have no idea why states would tax these as luxury items. I suspect it's because men were making the laws when those taxes were passed."

Many feminists, politicians, and other parties have created petitions and performed protests with hope to bring attention to

this sexist tariff.

On average, women pay about \$7 per month for 40 years of tampons and sanitary napkins. "I shouldn't have to add more money on top of that. Nothing about having a period is luxurious," said Gray.

Online petitions, statistics, general information, and protest information can be found on various state websites, the Huffington Post, Time magazine, and YouTube.

It's great that women can purchase the products they need for less in more states, but it should be all states.

How would America react if women treated these sanitary products as nonessentials like the tax classifies them?

In 2015, two women in the UK held a "free bleeding" protest, where they decided to show parliament what it looks like to treat tampons as "nonessential," according to the New York Times. It wasn't pretty.

We shouldn't have to see a woman freebleeding to realize tampons are essential.

Babysitters deserve better wages and more respect



pixabay

Evelyn Dunn

STAFF WRITER

e1dunn@valdosta.edu

Stay at home moms are demanding more respect; for people to understand that it is a full time job to take care of a child. According to Goudreau at Forbes.com, their job can be broken down into ten different responsibilities, all consisting of things that require just as much attention to detail like any other job.

Goudreau estimated that stay at home moms should be making \$115,000 annually; a hefty load considering how under estimated it is. But what about babysitters that do the same duties for

a lower price? They have a very important job too, shouldn't they be just as respected?

It is a big responsibility to watch over someone else's child, and yet babysitters have gone underpaid. According to Care.com, babysitters only made \$13.44 an hour last year, and they performed all the same responsibilities as stay at home moms do.

Depending on the targeted city or town and the cost of living in each area, babysitting rates can fluctuate from \$16 an hour to \$8 an hour, estimating around \$700 a week. According to babysitters around Valdosta, they are paid roughly \$10 an hour depending on what the family can afford. Is

this a fair wage? It seems slightly lacking, although it does matter how many kids there are and what duties are expected to be performed during the day.

"...if a full-time stay at home mom deserves more respect, and nannies are paid fairly for the same work, then why shouldn't babysitters as well?"

What of professional help, do

they get paid well and are highly respected? Nannies are certified and professional caregivers, so they are typically paid more for their experience. They can be live-ins, where they work full time, or live-outs; similar to a babysitters job.

According to Care.com, nannies have rates that can go up to \$20 an hour, and they could even be full time, which is more expensive.

So, if a full-time stay at home mom deserves more respect, and nannies are paid fairly for the same work, then why shouldn't babysitters as well?

They perform the same duties and require the same amount of

skills necessary to take care of children. Absolutely all of them deserve to be paid well, because this specific job usually involves juggling five things at once.

Stay at home moms are right to demand more respect for what they do, although they are not typically paid for it, there is something rewarding about the experience.

This being said, there is no reason why babysitters should be underpaid for it as well. Yes, these are hard times economically, but they are taking care of one of the most important things in your life. Therefore, this issue needs to stop being overlooked.

Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief:

Gabe Burns

Managing Editor:

Mayah Cantave

Opinions Editor:

Julia Rodriguez

College Life Editor:

Kelsey Dickerson

Sports Editor:

Kyle Dawson

Photo Editor:

Blake Clark

Web Editor:

Kayla Stroud

Multimedia Editor:

Darian Harris

Social Media Editor:

Tyra Mills

Copy Editor:

Michaela Leung

The Spectator Staff

Business Staff

Advertising Manager:

Aimeé Napier

Business Manager:

Anna Wetherington

Asst. Advertising Manager:

Meaghan Bitters

Circulation Manager:

Hunter Terrell

Graphic Designers:

Kahlil Slader

Reporters/Photographers

Shanice Barnes, Kimberly Cannon, Jada Dukes, Evelyn Dunn, Brice Ethridge, Ray Pack, Cynthia Papailler, Olivia Studdard, Hunter Terrell, Carlius Williams

Faculty Advisers

Dr. Pat Miller

Dr. Ted Geltner

Cindy Montgomery

Contact Us

VSU Spectator

Hopper Hall, Room 1238

1500 N. Patterson St.

Valdosta, GA 31698

Newsroom

(229) 333-5688

Advertising

(229) 333-5686

Business

(229) 333-5686

Fax

(229) 249-2618

E-mail

spec@valdosta.edu

Adv. email

Spec_Advertising@valdosta.edu

Letters to the editors should be no longer than 500 words in length. Letters are subject to editing for style, length, grammar, and libelous material. Not all letters are published. Letters should be typed and turned in with a disk, or e-mailed as an attachment by Tuesdays before 5 p.m. Letters must include name, year in school, major, job title or other appropriate identification and phone number for verification.

Opinions expressed in the Spectator other than editorials are opinions of the writers of signed columns and not necessarily those of the Spectator and its staff. All rights reserved. Reprints by permission of the editors. Views in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the Valdosta State University administration, faculty and staff.

EDITOR EXPERIENCE

Getting in a good twerk-out



A group of twerk class attendees, including Spectator editors Julia Rodriguez and Kelsey Dickerson, before the doors opened with the dance club president Chelsea Warren, center holding a frame made for the event.

Alyssa Wise/ for THE SPECTATOR

Kelsey Dickerson

COLLEGE LIFE EDITOR

kedickerson@valdosta.edu

Putting in time on the elliptical or lifting some weights in the gym can be a great way to blow off steam at the end of a long week of studying, but a group of women got together last Friday to put on a class for a different kind of workout.

"We wanted to do something that everyone would come out to and in this day and age, twerking is fun, it's something that everybody would want to do, so we said 'you know what, let's

have a twerk night,'" said Tahirah Cornwall, VSU Dance Club's vice president.

The club thought the glow in the dark twist would attract more participants, and it did.

Admittedly, some people seem to understand how to move their bodies much better than others, but almost everyone enjoys letting their hair down and shaking out their frustrations every once in a while, so after a suggestion from The Spectator's Managing Editor, I decided to attend.

The class was at 6 p.m. on a Friday in the Cyprus Room at the University Center. On our

way inside, a girl also attending the class greeted me and friends I brought along with and excited "Y'all going to twerk!"

Before class, every participant received glow stick jewelry and a chance to take a picture inside a cute dance-themed frame the club had created for the event. When the doors finally opened one of the girls shouted that we were about to "get it right."

The room was just big enough to comfortably fit the 50 plus girls who showed up to dance, and it seemed like everyone's excitement levels spiked once we were allowed in. Some par-

ticipants were so eager that they started to dance before the class even started.

The class itself was more of an intense dance work out than the twerking tutorial I had expected, but it was such a great workout that I would gladly do again.

The glow in the dark theme added a little extra fun to the class and there were just enough people in attendance to allow for a certain level of anonymity that made everything more comfortable. Girls shouted encouragements to each other as we did across the floor routines. Everyone seemed to be have a good

time, regardless of skill level.

"Dance club is an organization for all students, majors and non-majors of the dance department, to come together and have an environment where you can dance," Said junior Jourdan Evans, dance club Public Relations Chair. "We're making a community where we do outreach through dance marathons and after school programs. It's a community-wide dance organization."

The Valdosta State Dance Club meets every Friday from 2 to 3:15 p.m. and covers a variety of dance styles.

Popular app extending lines and wait

Some students complain that service at Moe's way too slow

Hunter Terrell

STAFF WRITER

hlterrell@valdosta.edu

One of Valdosta State's favorite dining options, Moe's Southwest Grill, has relocated from the retail center of Palms dining to the student union, adjacent to Chick-fil-A, where Nathan's used to be.

Moe's still offers Homewreckers with a side of guacamole as well as maintaining a welcoming atmosphere that is created by the employees, but students now say the wait is worse than ever before.

"I do not understand why it takes so long," said Marisa Whisnant, junior, who felt the wait was ridiculous. "I stood in line for at least 20 minutes. The employees are great and always make my chicken tacos to my liking, but it literally takes too long for them to bring the time spent in line down."

Ryan Nottage, junior, proposed a likely reason to the time spent waiting: "While standing in line, I noticed that every two in-person

orders, they put a Tapingo order in between, if they have to," he said. "That's the only possible explanation for it being so time consuming. I'm scared to see the lines when Which Wich is finally put in."

Tapingo allows students to place an order ahead of time, basically skipping the line. Students can place orders at Moe's, Starbucks, Valdosta Bread Company, and other places on and off campus.

Meagan Tyler, sophomore, loves Tapingo: "I always place an order so I can pick up in between classes," she said. "I'm an impatient person so the faster, the better. Also, I am so excited about Which Wich. It may not be in the roomiest place, but it is something new."

Aramark plans on revealing Which Wich to VSU students sometime mid-Sept.

Moe's Southwest Grill will continue serving up quesadillas, stacks, and endless tortilla chips to the whole VSU community.



Blake Clark / THE SPECTATOR

Students and staff wait in line at Moe's during a lunch-time rush. Which wich will open where Moe's line forms now.

COLLEGE LIFE

Mural brings community together

“Words that Unite” more than words to some students

Olivia Studdard

STAFF WRITER

oastuddard@valdosta.edu

A new barricade wall mural has appeared in the Valdosta Mall, and is capturing the eyes of shoppers who enter.

The mural is titled “Words that Unite” and is prompting people to find words in the word search that have a positive meaning. The mural was unveiled just in time for back to school shopping, and will be in place for the next several months.

The wall includes over 150 words in both English and Spanish including peace, patience, unity, and exploration. After finding a word on the wall you are encouraged to take a picture and post it to social media using the hashtags #wordsthatunite and #valdostamall.

In the past few weeks, Valdosta State University students have found much more than words in the word search.

“The first word I found was peace, and for me it was so much more than a word on a wall, it was a light at the end of a very long week at school,” said sophomore communication disorders major, Layne Brock. “College is great and I love what I’m studying, but sometimes you just have a hard week, and you need some reassurance that you’ll make it through.”

This is not the first mural of its kind that the Valdosta Mall has displayed. In January of this year, a mural about “In my life I hope to...” appeared on the wall surrounding construction.

“It’s a pretty good attempt to bring the community together in the middle of all the crazy that’s happening in the world

today,” Sydney Marro, junior early childhood development major, said.

“It was a nice surprise when I walked into the mall looking for some shopping therapy and there was this word search prompting me to find the good in the day.”

Citizens of Valdosta are enjoying looking at the word search and finding new words every time they visit the mall, and sharing them with their friends and family.

“Children are funny. They understand when people are angry and sad. I was able to use this mural as a way to explain to my three-year-old about how people really can be nice to each other,” said 31-year-old, Valdosta native Chris Miller.

The mural will be in place until a holiday themed display takes its place in October.



Kelsey Dickerson/THE SPECTATOR

Children play and draw on “Words that Unite” mural while their parents watch. The mural will be on display until October.

Fire Pit hosts pep rally to boost school spirit



Valdosta State University

Valdosta State Red Hots and cheerleaders perform at the 2015 pep rally for the Carson Newman game



Kelsey Dickerson

COLLEGE LIFE EDITOR

kedickerson@valdosta.edu

A new student spirit organization called the Fire Pit is kicking off the season with a pre-game pep rally tonight.

The VState Fire Pit, which is a representation of the student section at VSU, is headed by students who want to see an increase in school spirit all over campus.

In years past pep rallies have only been held before the homecoming game, like last year’s blackout rally, but the Fire Pit has taken the initiative to create a more laid-back rally focused on and created by students.

“It will look a little different,” said Col-

leen Kavanaugh, VSU senior and key Fire Pit member.

There won’t be a stage at the pep rally, but interim President Kelli Brown will speak and a dance competition between male and female athletes will be included in the show. Two student MCs will work the event.

The rally will begin with the season hype video recently posted on the Valdosta State Instagram and will end with a speech from coach Kerwin Bell.

“[The fire pit] was created to start a match of the culture of school spirit we used to have,” Kavanaugh said. “The long-term goal is that the organization will

not be needed.” The group hopes that the VSU student section will become known as the “Fire Pit” and will be something that every student wants to be a part of.

Student section attendees to Saturday night’s game will be supplied with powder paint to throw up during key points in the game. A group of about 10 students which the Fire Pit calls “the pit” will lead the section in cheers.

Between the Twitter proliferation of #slamtherams and #committobelit the pep rally and Saturday’s game seem to promise a boost in school spirit.

College uses Pokemon Go to boost enrollment

Unconventional classes a useful tool to attract student interest

Kimberly Cannon

STAFF WRITER

kecannon@valdosta.edu

While pursuing the Facebook profile of Fresno City College, screenshots from the game Pokémon Go are scattered throughout their feed. Perhaps this is because of the game’s popularity, or maybe it is because Fresno City College offers course credit to its students for playing Pokémon Go.

The college posted a picture of a flyer on August 8, 2016 that advertised for Physical Education Class 6: Pokémon Go.

That image has received a lot of attention since, but Fresno

City College is not the only college to offer an unusual class.

If walking isn’t a lively enough activity or if video games are not of interest, Florida State University offers an interesting physical education class of its own.

Florida State University takes the goal of reaching new heights during your college career literally with their circus class. Students are provided the opportunity to learn aerial acrobatics and basic rigging.

Heights in college physical education courses appear to be a common theme as Cornell University offers a tree climbing course. However, there are a variety of out-of-the-norm college courses that don’t require physi-

cal activity. Cornell University offers a course called Horton Foote to Honey Boo Boo: South in the US Imaginary, so you can examine what the south is all about.

Abnormal classes are not in place just to provide students with that extra elective they may need. Unusual classes can also be taken advantage of to earn core credit or credit for another required course that may be a little lackluster if the class is formatted the typical way.

For example, Assistant Professor Ricardo Castro at the University of California allows the students in his engineering course to use science to examine the plausibility of some the most

famous comic-book heroes’ powers in his Materials Marvels: The Science of Superheroes course.

All of the classes mentioned above are not offered at Valdosta State University but VSU offers some interesting classes of its own.

VSU offers an 18+ rated Psychology of Sex course, that focuses on conspiracies in American politics, and a course on the classic films of the 1970s, just to name a few. Look within the Valdosta State campus for interesting and unusual classes.

Courses with topics or teaching methods that are oddly intriguing may open students’ eyes to what they are really passionate about and what they might want to have

a career in. If someone takes the course on classic 1970s film, a love for history might be uncovered. By creating a science class that incorporates elements that are popular in modern culture, students may discover an interest for science.

The Pokémon Go course and other unconventional physical education classes influence students to be physically active and could help improve the health of the current generation by integrating an activity that appeals to their interests or their sense of adventure.



DID YOU

KNOW?

According to cydiaguide, Apple's iPhone wasn't the first iPhone.

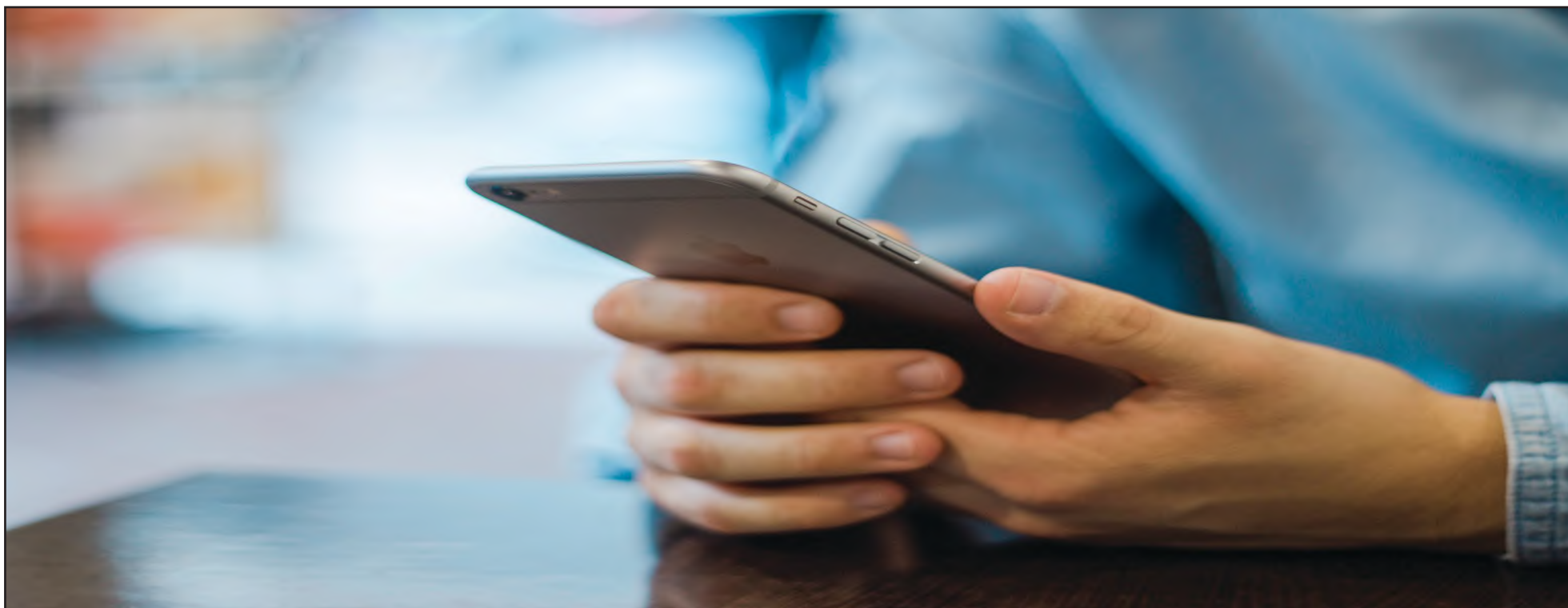


Photo Courtesy of Pexels

Apple will release the iPhone 7 on Sept. 16.

Waterproof iPhone hitting the market?

KELSEY DICKERSON
COLLEGE LIFE EDITOR
kedickerson@valdosta.edu

Apple's yet-to-be-released iPhone 7 model made a splash in the rumor mill this summer as fans and information leakers stalked the internet with speculations over its new design.

The new iPhone model is slated to be launched in-store on the 16th of this month, with pre-orders kicking off on the 9th, according to popular smartphone leaker Evan Blass in a tweet he made earlier this month. The unveiling of the new model before sale will allegedly occur on the 7th, according to Forbes Magazine.

The biggest buzz around the release seems to stem from the phone's rumored waterproofing.

Two patents recently granted to Apple suggest that the waterproofing is in the works. An Aug. 9, patent includes information about optimizing the camera for underwater picture taking while another patent from July of this year details a new internal membrane which will waterproof the speakers of new iPhones, said an article from TechRadar.

Beyond the patents, Apple may be making some changes to the external hardware of the iPhone 7 that will increase its water resistance.

For months now tech sites have been reporting that the headphone jack will be dropped from the new phone and will only be able to be used by insertion in the new, slimmer, lightning port or with Bluetooth capabilities.

The rumors seem to be plausible, as leaked mock-ups of the new iPhone's cases seem to only include an opening for the lightning port, and Apple has been working

to create new wireless EarPods, according to MacWorld, a site for news and tips from Apple experts, in a rumor-roundup.

Though the end of the headphone jack would eliminate an entry point for water, a petition on sumofus.org for Apple to keep the jack has accrued over 300,000 signatures.

The removal of the headphone jack "will singlehandedly create mountains of electronic waste -- that likely won't get recycled" said the petition.

Apple also has plans to ditch their clicking home button for a static one that will rely solely on haptic feedback, further increasing waterproof performance and slimming the phone down, said one Appleinsider article.

Though it seems that the iPhone 7 will include some water-resistant upgrades, most rumors can neither be confirmed or denied until the phone's big reveal.



Photo Courtesy of Flickr

NFL games make their way to Twitter

HUNTER TERRELL
STAFF WRITER
htterrell@valdosta.edu

The National Football League (NFL) made an exclusive deal with Twitter with intentions of providing a live stream of Thursday Night Football games to a global-wide audience.

The 2016 NFL Regular Season, a total of 10 games, will be streamed completing the league's "Tri-Cast" distribution model of broadcast (NBC/CBS), cable (NFL Network), and now digital platform (Twitter).

Partners since 2013, this new deal will allow free, live streaming video to over 800 million registered and non-registered users on the Twitter platform via cell phones, tablets, computers, and connected television.

The partnership also includes in-game highlights as well as pre-game broadcasts from the teams, giving fans an interpersonal experience before, during, and after the games.

Kelsey Townsend, junior, finds this new option for watching football "innovative and well-rounded."

"I think it's interesting that the NFL is making this adaption for their fans. This is opening a new gateway for audience and maybe even expanding the audience. The tech-savvy generation is really going to like this," she said.

Twitter, based in San Francisco, wanted the Thursday night games because of their popularity. Each game drew an average of 13 million viewers during the 2015 season.

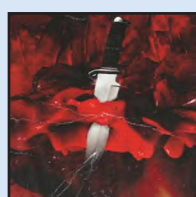
This deal cost Twitter an estimated \$10 million to stream all 10 games and to promote minimal, exclusive advertisements.

With Twitter increasing their live-streaming efforts, so are many of their rivals. Snapchat and Facebook are working on deals with media companies to obtain live-streaming rights to sporting events and entertainment. Instagram is also interested in experimenting with live products.

All of the companies are competing for video advertising dollars, as marketers have slowly begun to shift money to online promotions and away from television advertisements.

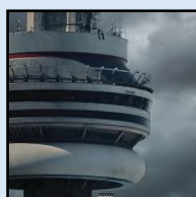
≡ Listen Now

Shuffle Playlist: Staff Favorites



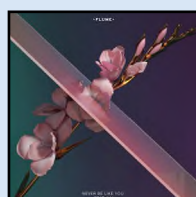
No Heart
21 Savage | Savage Mode

-Emperess of Editing



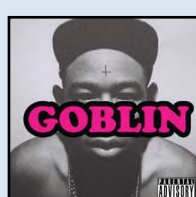
Too Good
Drake ft. Rihanna | Views

-Lifestyles Liaison




Never Be Like You
Flume | Skin

-Kween



She
Tyler the Creator | Goblin

-The Big Opie



Future Swag
Young Thug | No My Name Is...

-Bankroll Kyle



DID YOU

KNOW?

According to Super Mario's creator Shigeru Miyamoto, Jackie Chan indirectly influenced the game.

Sudoku X

*Complete the grid so that every row, column, diagonal and 3x2 box contains every digit from 1 to 6 inclusive.

Good Luck!

4					9		8	
9		8	4	6	7			
					2	9		3
	8	1		9				
	5						6	
				8		3	9	
5		4	2					
			9	4	8	6		2
	6		3					9

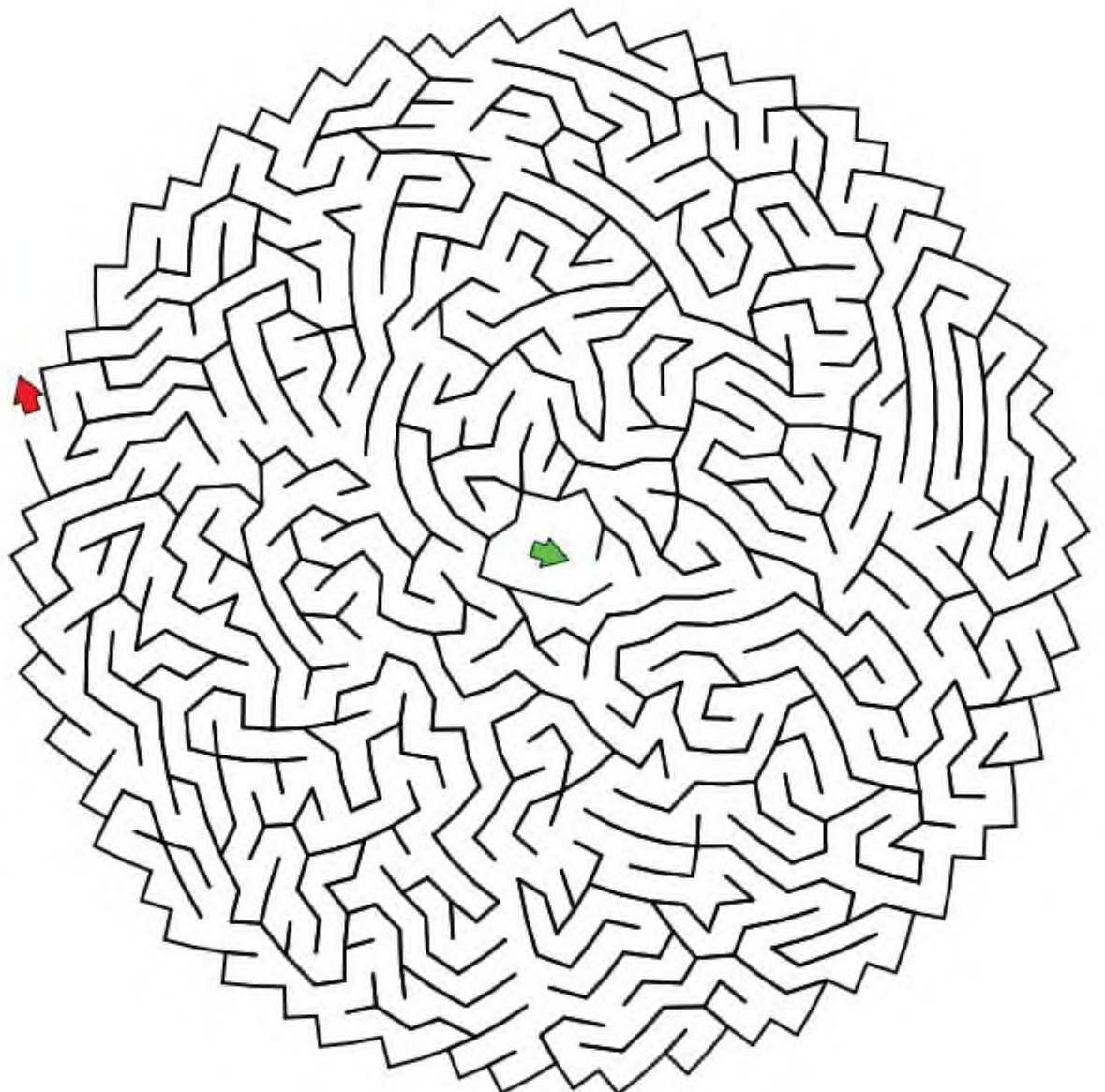
*** For the solutions head over to our site at VSUSpectator.com!

Word Search

K B Q R Z N I D D O G S R H X N F
 K K E H F Y M Q B W I A V V M H L
 Z E R O C S H R M H N U J A T S U
 G W R Q F C O E A E T A R G A T T
 M R M R N I E C K P M I P D E E E
 Z I I A L S Z W H A N T K D B E M
 X E L L N W I G Q A L P E O E P A
 J B P K L Q L V T G P F N L L R E
 L V A U E B E E S Y A N L E L E R
 S T R A I N M E B U C S E U T I C
 W Q E I Y A A W P D H P T U N Y F
 C I M J H X R Z H O S D A E Z M D
 B A S T E U A A V I H S V O A A M
 B N B A U N C B W S P C D L R M O

- Baste Beat Blanch Broil Caramelized
- Chop Cream Cube Fillet Flake
- Flute Grate Grill Marinate Mix
- Pare Peel Saute Score Steam
- Steep Strain Whip

Can you make your way through our maze?



Go check us out on social media!

Twitter:
@VSUSpectator

YouTube:
ValdostaSpectator

Website:
vsuspectator.com



DID YOU KNOW?

Rebecca Nolin, head coach of VSU women's soccer, was named captain of Chelsea Ladies Football Club in England and had trials with the England Under-18 squad.



Kimberly Cannon/THE SPECTATOR

The VSU Women's Soccer team has been practicing for the season opener, which will now be held at home against Auburn University at Montgomery due to rain from Tropical Storm Hermine.

Soccer will open at home due to rain

Kimberly Cannon
STAFF WRITER
kecannon@valdosta.edu

In preparation for tropical storm Hermine, the VSU women's soccer team's first game of the season against Saint Leo University has been canceled. The new opener will be at home against Auburn University at Montgomery in Valdosta at the VSU Soccer Complex at 5 p.m. "We have been focusing on ourselves during preseason and trying to get a few kinks out," Rebecca Nolin, VSU head women's soccer coach, said. "Our main priority is to make sure we

are organized in all positions so everybody knows their roles."

Nolin said the team was starting to focus on upcoming opponents they will face. The team has been training and had an inter-squad scrimmage this past weekend to practice for future games.

Nolin said she has confidence in her players' abilities this season.

"We expect to win all home games and qualify for the conference tournament," Nolin said.

The VSU women's soccer team was the Gulf South Conference (GSC) Champion in 2014.

With 11 freshmen and 5 transfers on the Blazer's women's soccer team, more than half of the roster this year consists of new members on the team.

However, Nolin views all of her players, new and returning, as valuable assets for the team.

"All players are key for us in all positions," Nolin said. "We need our forwards to score goals, midfielders to create and score goals, defenders to prevent goals and the same with our goalkeepers. Our players off the bench are also very important for us. We have great depth this year and are very fortunate to have them come

off the bench and keep the level very high and competitive."

Madison Cutts, a returning sophomore who plays as forward and midfielder, was the leading goal scorer for the team last season, scoring three goals, two of which were during the game against Clayton State in which the team won.

The team also includes two new goalkeepers, freshman Ashley Thompson and junior Alyssa Curtis was chosen as one of the top newcomers to the GSC along with freshman midfielder Brittney Benedict, according to the 2016 GSC women's soc-

cer preseason release. Curtis and Thompson will take on the position which was left open by VSU alumnus McCall Gardner, who was a member of the 2015 All-GSC Women's Soccer First Team.

Nolin set the same goal for the team this season as she has had for the team in previous seasons.

"Our expectations always remain the same each year, which is to win and challenge for the Conference title," Nolin said.

Robles looks to lead as a senior

Julia Rodriguez
OPINIONS EDITOR
jrodriguez@valdosta.edu

Kayla Robles, a senior on VSU's women's soccer team, has always owned a soccer ball and it seems she's been kicking it around since she could walk. She viewed sports as a way to reach out and make friends. As she grew older and her skills improved, sports became a passion.

Soccer developed into a favorite of Robles because of the freedom players have. Their coach guides them but ultimately it is the players who make the game and control its outcome said Robles.

She came to VSU and proved herself as an important player from the start of her first game. With each year her abilities enhanced, and she became even

more important.

She is excited for this season and shares the goal with her team of protecting the field and being undefeated at home.

"We are competitive in practice but we build each other up too," said Robles. "Everyone of us can make an impact on the field."

Robles is always pushing herself to be better and has been a positive influence at VSU both on and off the field. She is involved in the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, which allows the voices of student athletes to be heard by attending an annual summit held each July with the Division II Management Council. There members of the SAAC have an opportunity to interact with members of the Management Council on proposed NCAA legislation and current Division

II issues.

Additionally, she has been a VSU Ambassador, which involves going to different events and representing VSU where she has met with donors, boosters and potential students.

Robles has also been an orientation leader for two years where she uses her experiences in athletics and other organizations to introduce incoming students to many opportunities on campus.

When Robles can find time to relax in her busy schedule she enjoys passing time with friends, meeting new people and generally being social.

With much determination, she hopes to have an impressive season, which starts next Monday against Auburn University at Montgomery.



Valdosta State University

Kayla Robles looks to lead the Blazers who have 16 new players on the team.

Next Week:
A look at junior cross country athlete Tyra Holloway, VSU's fastest runner from 2015.



Valdosta State University

The Spectator is looking for Sports writers. If you're interested email Kyle Dawson at kkdawson@valdosta.edu. No experience needed.

SPORTS

WEEK ONE

VSU opens versus ASU with Rivers at the helm

Gabe Burns

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

gcburns@valdosta.edu

The highly anticipated Kerwin Bell era kicks off at Bazemore-Hyder Stadium Saturday.

VSU hosts Albany State in its season opener. It's the third straight year the Blazers open against the Golden Rams, with the previous two resulting in victories. But the fanfare is stronger than usual with Bell at the helm.

"We're going to call it Blazer ball," Bell said on his weekly radio show Monday evening. "... We're going to try to have a lot of fun, score a lot of points, be exciting and be a well-coached football team. It all starts with our preparation and I think our kids have done a tremendous job. We're ready to get going."

The focus is on Bell's vertical offense. Fortunately for the former quarterback, he has a signal caller who fits the bill schematically in Roland Rivers. Rivers, who played sparingly in 10 games behind starter E.J. Hilliard a season ago, flashed a cannon arm and above average athleticism, meaning Bell's offense caters to his strengths.

The Blazers replace all-time leading rusher Cedric O'Neal with Jovon Robinson, who was expected to start at Auburn before being dismissed from the team. Some NFL scouts said they consider Robinson a draftable talent, which is an enormous add for a VSU team which had questions about its run game.

Bell has been preparing his offense since January. Within a few days of accepting the job, he took personal time to watch the quarterbacks and receivers informally

practice and offer tips, according to players.

Off the field, the coach made a quick impression on his players. Receiver Dallas Baldner praised Bell shortly after meeting him.

"You don't have to dig deep to find out who he really is," Baldner said. "You just know he is who he says he is and that's that. He's made it very clear that he's a man of his word and he's going to make sure that Valdosta State Football is everything and more. I believe in him and I believe in what's to come."

VSU's defense is coached by James Rowe, who was most recently the secondary coach at the University of Florida. Under Rowe, Florida had two 2016 first round picks (Vernon Hargreaves III and Keanu Neal) and three 2016 All-Americans (Marcus Maye, Jalen Tabor and Hargreaves III). Bell said he is thrilled to have Rowe on board, referring to him as a budding "star" in the coaching world. The defense impressed in the Aug. 27 scrimmage, and the "Black Swarm" is projected to be formidable again.

Meanwhile, the Rams have been mired in the middle. ASU collected a 33-19 record over the last five years, but has missed the playoffs three consecutive seasons. The Rams won the East side of the SIAC for the second straight year, but dropped both conference championships. The team brings back 12 starters from the 2015 squad (6-4).

ASU finished with the SCIA's first ranked offense. Running back Jarvis Small, two-time conference player of the year, returns for his final stint as a Ram. Quarterback Caleb Edmonds, who previously



Valdosta State University

VSU Head Football Coach Kerwin Bell will start his VSU career Saturday.

led the conference in total yards with 2,027, will be under center. The offensive line kept three of five starters. ASU will again rely on explosive plays to get over the postseason hump.

The Rams' offense hasn't looked so dynamic against the Blazers, however. It lost to VSU 38-10 in 2014, and 21-13 in last year's opener. Small was held to 86 yards on 19 attempts in 2015 (his third-worst outing of the year). ASU's defense, led by D2Football.com All-American Grover Stewart, will have to force turnovers if the Rams are going to pull an upset.

Bell said he believes fans play a substantial role. He's called for community involvement since

his opening press conference. He wants Blazer fans to be loud and in droves.

"This is a tremendous program, but we're just trying to do some other things to make it even better," Bell said. "It all starts with our community. We want to make sure that we get really good support. People ask me all the time about Valdosta State, what's the difference and what makes it so special; it's the people. People here love football, they love Valdosta State University, the Blazers. There's been a lot of great tradition here, so I'm hoping we keep building on that."

The first opportunity to start building arrives Saturday at 7 p.m.

Bell expects Blazers to be like a family

Juston Lewis

STAFF WRITER

justlewis@valdosta.edu

There is a new era upon Valdosta State football, the Kerwin Bell Era.

In January, Bell was named new head football coach for VSU. Being the new coach has come with many obstacles.

"You can't have a bunch of individuals," Bell said. "You try to get everybody on board and get the train rolling."

Bell also stressed the importance of family. He said he wants his players to treat each other as family and keep the same values of a family.

"If we can trust each other, take care of each other and believe in each other, we've accomplished something pretty big," Bell says.

In order to build that sense of family, Bell said he will look to certain players on the team to set an example and be leaders.

"Kenny Moore stands out extremely well and also Egim Etta-Towa is an extremely hard worker," Bell said. "Those two stand out on defense. Even though Roland Rivers is a young guy, a redshirt sophomore, he's our quarterback. People are looking from leadership out of him and he shows that every day. Jordan Germany at running back and Josh Adams on the offensive line are guys that I think are natural leaders."

When asked what it would take to bring a fourth national championship to VSU, Coach Bell said that staying healthy and coming together as a team were the key.

As far as health, injuries happen. Bell said that he and his staff will have to make proper adjustments if and when they come, which he said has to do with the family mantra that he preaches.

"Just take care of each other," Bell said. "Greatness doesn't just happen."

Bell also said he told his players to take care of their school work, take care of their bodies and to continue to work on themselves as a player. He reminded players that they are students first and athletes second.

"I want to do right by our players, on and off the field," Bell said.

That is not to say he doesn't have a national championship on his mind. Before breaking practice down Bell told his players, "We got a National Championship to win!"

The Blazers open their season in pursuit of VSU's fourth title this Saturday at 7 p.m. against Albany State.



Valdosta State University

Redshirt Sophomore Roland Rivers will guide the new Blazer offense under Bell, who is not scared to stretch the defense with a variety of long passes.

Follow us on Twitter:
@VSUSpecSports