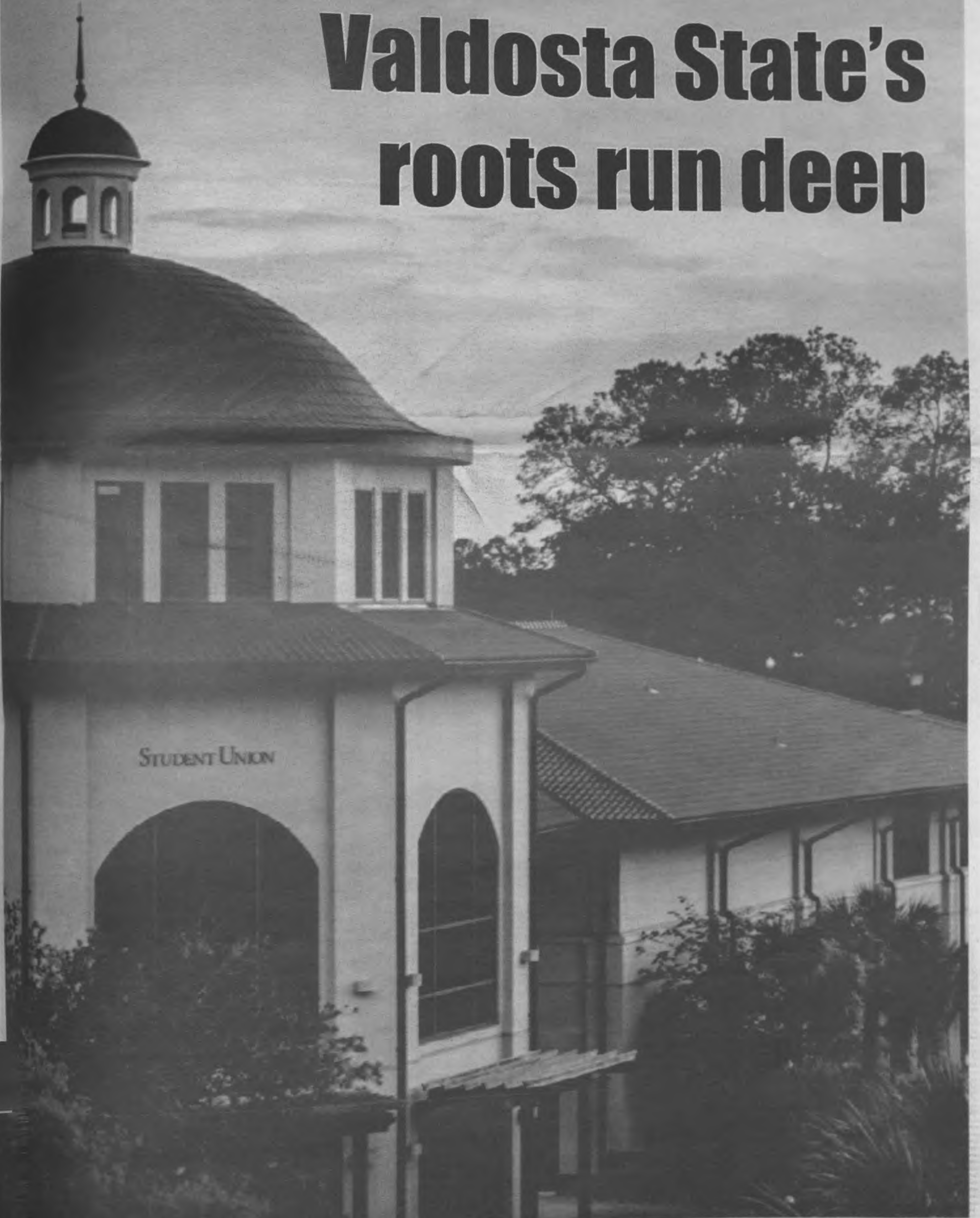


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Valdosta State's roots run deep



he year

Team of the Year

The Spec Sports Desk has come to the consensus that women's basketball will be the best athletic team this season. The preseason rankings for the volleyball and football teams are both very impressive, and you can never count out softball.

However, it is hard to pick against a reigning champ. Women's basketball will likely repeat as GSC Champs, and they have a strong chance to storm through the Division II Tournament and become National Champs.

This team is returning every starter, every bench player and head coach Carley Kuhns is geared up for her sophomore season.

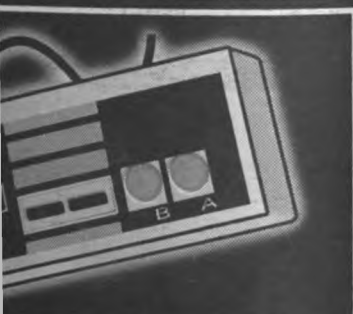
In Kuhns' first season, she was selected as the GSC Coach of the Year and had two first-team All-GSC selections.

This team was fluid, they enjoyed playing with each other and it showed.



The Lady Blazers are the reigning GSC Champions.

All photos Courtesy of VSU



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Voice of the students

Do you prefer early or late classes?



"I prefer late classes because I like to sleep in," said Alan Bettis, Junior, Computer Science Major



"I prefer early classes because football practice. We have meeting, weights, and everything on top of that. You just get your classes over with and you have the rest of the day to yourself," said Denzel Heck, Senior, Computer Information Systems Major



"Morning classes, I like to take a late afternoon nap and get it over with," said Jai Kinsey, Junior, Accounting Major



"I prefer early classes because I can get my classes done and then I can go home and get my homework done at night," said Abigail VanHouten, Sophomore, Communication Disorders Major



"I prefer late classes because I don't like getting up early," said Jake Barte, Sophomore, Nursing Major

Quotes and Photos by Kaitlyn Baich

Do you plan on attending games?

"I ran track in high school, so I'm really looking forward to seeing the cross-country team," said Nia Parker, Sophomore



"I plan on attending a lot of sports events," said Unique Harris, Freshman



"I'm looking forward to attending all of the football games, and I want to see some of the cross country too," said Eddy Musgrove, Freshman



"I plan on attending majority of the football games," said Kameron Middleton, Freshman



"I really just want to see the football team," said Kristina Monsoon, Freshman



Quotes and Photos by Tylaise Christopher

Residents

Bryce Ethridge
NEWS EDITOR
bjethridge@valdosta.edu

For more than 10 years the city of Valdosta has held a celebration to commemorate downtown city life on the first Friday of every month.

On an average First Friday, all downtown restaurants stay open later, serve drink specials and have live music playing.

"It's a celebration of the heart of the city," Missy Smith, main street coordinator, said.

First Friday includes exceptions to the open container law, meaning citizens can peruse shops, drink in hand.

Smith said First Friday is an effort by the city to get people from all over the Valdosta community to experience downtown.

"We want them (citizens) to

OPINION: Ashley Street

Jacorey Moon
STAFF WRITER
jxmoon@valdosta.edu

On a weeknight the loud music, mesmerizing atmosphere, and the nostalgic 70's dive bar feel will drag you onto Ashley Street Station's (A.S.S.) doorstep.

With bands playing nightly, you're sure to feel like you're living in an episode of your parents' self-proclaimed "Glory Days."

Ashley Street Station is notoriously known for appealing to the rock scene. But, fret not, musical diversity in Valdosta peaks here.

From pop, to rock, to hip-hop, to reggae, this place will suit any music connoisseur's palette.

Along with the diverse music, this place appeals to more than just one group of people. Moms, dads, hipsters, college students, motorcycle clubs, and band members alike join in the festivities and linger at Ashley Street Station.

Live music events happen pretty much every day except Wednesday. Not only does this dive bar have live music, but it also has a jukebox that plays anything that you can of. Although A.S.S. is a bar, the minimum entry age is 18.

One of the best things about Ashley Street Station is the atmosphere. It makes the patrons feel like they're in an old episode of "Cheers".

Although it's about the music, A.S.S. has pool tables, vintage game machines and some new game machines. Plastered on the walls are posters, signed guitars from special bands that play there, quirky pictures, and

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The Spectator prints free classifieds for current students of Valdosta State University only. These must be no more than 40 words, or a \$18.50 charge will apply. Classifieds for faculty, staff, student organizations, student-owned businesses and the general public cost \$18.50 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 Richard Rhett Parker, Advertising Manager. Email Rhett Parker at spec_advertising@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., Valdosta, 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

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Residents celebrate city life with First Friday

Bryce Ethridge
NEWS EDITOR
bethridge@valdosta.edu

For more than 10 years the city of Valdosta has held a celebration to commemorate downtown city life on the first Friday of every month.

On an average First Friday, all downtown restaurants stay open later, serve drink specials and have live music playing.

"It's a celebration of the heart of the city," Missy Smith, main street coordinator, said.

First Friday includes exceptions to the open container law, meaning citizens can peruse shops, drink in hand.

Smith said First Friday is an effort by the city to get people from all over the Valdosta community to experience downtown.

"We want them (citizens) to

come downtown and enjoy it for what it is," Smith said. "A lot of people don't come downtown or don't know what it is, especially VSU students."

Smith said that since their target audience is locals, the city wants VSU students to come downtown instead of focusing on Remerton.

"It's a good introduction to downtown," Megan Loftis, general manager for the Bleu Cafe, said.

First Friday is also good for businesses since they receive a lot of foot traffic during the night.

Red Door Records owner Jessica Ganas said her shop is usually packed on first Friday.

"We have a full house every First Friday," Ganas said. "Standing room only."

Some shops set up small art galleries from local artists on First Fridays

Ganas said Red Door Records

usually gets a lot of business through their live jazz band and monthly art studio.

Loftis said the Bleu Cafe has to prepare for more than the usual amount of customers on First Friday.

"We do almost double business, but we have more people staffed so that it all goes smoothly," Loftis said.

Another reason for the large influx of business is the exception to the open container law on First Friday.

"It's the only night of the month that, legally, they (law enforcement) allow you to have an open container of alcohol outside," Ganas said.

Smith said all participating restaurants carry commemorative First Friday cups that are put out for customers to buy. After filling their cup, customers are able to explore downtown without



Bryce Ethridge/ THE SPECTATOR

The City of Valdosta has different activities for residents to enjoy on the first Friday of every month.

receiving an open container charge.

"The idea is to not go to one place and stay seated," Ganas said. "You get your drink, and you can go into every place downtown."

Smith said the city is currently

working on plans to get a regional audience, but First Friday is still here for locals.

"It's a really good night to have a lot of people come together, hang out and listen to music," Ganas said.

OPINION:

Ashley Street Station, Valdosta nightlife's hidden gem

Jacorey Moon
STAFF WRITER
jxmoon@valdosta.edu

On a weeknight the loud music, mesmerizing atmosphere, and the nostalgic 70's dive bar feel will drag you onto Ashley Street Station's (A.S.S.) doorstep.

With bands playing nightly, you're sure to feel like you're living in an episode of your parents' self-proclaimed, "Glory Days."

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Although it's about the music, A.S.S. has pool tables, vintage game machines and some new game machines. Plastered on the walls are posters, signed guitars from special bands that play there, quirky pictures, and

doodles from the patrons that visit the eccentric bar.

A wall at Ashley Street Station filled with pictures of classic pop and rock artists.

There are multiple parts to this bar, but two main rooms. There's a room for the pool tables, jukebox, and game machines, and there's a room for the live band performances.

If the place becomes too crowded or you just need a breath of fresh air, A.S.S. also has two patios where you can catch your breath before continuing the festivities.

Whenever you're interested in going, Ashley Street Station updates their weekly events on their Facebook page.

While on the page, any patron will be able to see what the cover charge is for each night (if one), and what the drink specials are. For instance, this year VSU students and ladies get in for free on Thursdays. Cover charge is also dropped to seven dollars for the whole night.

A.S.S. is one of the most trendy places that the Valdosta area houses. With its diverse patrons and diverse taste, there's no wonder why this place has been open for years. If you are new to the VSU campus or the Valdosta area, this place is a great starting point.

Photo above, right: A patron at Ashley Street Station sits in front of one of the bar's walls, decorated with hundreds of band posters, signed pictures, guitars and other signs.



Jacorey Moon/ THE SPECTATOR

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Housing department in talks for Langdale Hall renovations

Bryce Ethridge
News Editor
bjethridge@valdosta.edu

On Monday, Sept. 18, the housing department began planning and approving renovations for Langdale Residence Hall.

They are working with Lott and Barber Architects to draw up a blueprint.

"At this time, we are conducting a feasibility study to determine how much it would cost to renovate Langdale for a better residential experience," Dr. Zduy Chu, director of housing, said.

Housing allowed current staff members to attend a renovation meeting and give input, since they're more familiar with issues concerning the residence hall.

Chu said their feedback would be used to help draw up a plan for Langdale.

"We felt that it would be important to have varying levels of input for this project because we know that there are different perspectives to take into consideration," Chu said.

The main topic housing staff highlighted was changing Langdale



Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Langdale hall is one of seven functional residence halls on campus and houses freshmen and upperclassmen alike. It is a tradition style hall and can house 478 occupants.

le from its current traditional style to suite style.

"There are students who would prefer suites," Mark McNalley, assistant director of housing, said. "That way they can close their door and kind of stay in their room all night long."

The suggestion came from students, who want their own

bathrooms, and resident assistants, who revealed how dirty the community bathrooms can get.

The current Langdale staff also advocated for all resident assistant rooms to have personal bathrooms instead of only a few.

Housing also suggested moving the Student Success Center out of Langdale, in favor of a multi-purpose room.

Another possible plan includes constructing more study rooms and making all floors co-ed.

Vice President of Lott and Barber Architects, Scott Barber, said he's going to use all the suggestions to make options for the building.

"I'm going to start tweaking and see what's going to fit where," Barber said. "I think I heard enough that I can take a first pass at everything."

Barber said he is hoping to have part of the architectural plan drawn up to present at the next meeting, on Sept. 25. Currently, no changes are set in stone.

"We're really afraid to rearrange this thing," Barber said.

Although Converse Residence

Hall has lost the limelight, Chu said both Langdale and Converse are being considered for renovation.

Housing is currently discussing Langdale more because they are aware of how much Converse upgrades will likely cost.

"Converse is a much smaller building with fewer beds, and the renovation needs for that building are less," Chu said. "We are working on Langdale's plan and costs, then we will discuss what the next best step is for the university on both buildings."

Chu said the architectural process will be six to eight weeks long, with ongoing meetings between VSU and the architecture firm.

He also said VSU is expecting the project to cost several million dollars, but are unsure of the exact amount.

"Once we have a better idea of the scope of the project, we will discuss financing options and a timeline for what is realistic to start such a project which could be a year or two from now," Chu said.

Barber said that the renovations would most likely happen in phases, which would focus on one wing before moving on to the next.

"What they're (VSU) is talking about doing is renovating in phases and that might be a three-year process," Barber said.

He said that there are too many students to redo the building all at once.

Since this is just a feasibility study, no plans have been cemented. Housing wants to make sure they don't get anyone's hopes up in case everything falls through.

After the feasibility study is over, Chu said that the construction process will be a long one.

"It could take a couple of years before we see the results of our work today, and that is normal," Chu said. "It takes time for these type of projects."

Converse and Langdale are pending for finances and are waiting for approval from VSU, as well as the university system of Georgia.



Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Scott Barber explains to upper Housing staff and current Langdale staff how the architectural process works.

Do You Know That Philosophy Majors Were Top Earners in 2016?

Philosophy majors were projected to be the top-paid Bachelor's degree graduates in 2016, according to results of NACE's Winter 2016 Salary Survey.

Academic Major	Mean	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Philosophy	\$49,000	\$43,000	\$48,000	\$55,000
Visual & Performing Arts	\$47,600	\$42,000	\$46,000	\$50,000
History	\$46,286	\$40,000	\$46,000	\$50,500
Foreign Language & Literature	\$46,083	\$40,000	\$43,250	\$50,000
English Language & Literature	\$45,438	\$40,250	\$43,500	\$48,000
Liberal Arts/General Studies	\$45,063	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$50,250

Source: Winter 2016 Salary Survey, National Association of Colleges and Employers

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Pine Hall currently home of centralized

Pine

Bryce Ethridge News Editor bjethridge@v

Several divisions VSU Internet Tech department, including support, are relocating for a short while VSU renovation home, Pine Hall.

Located south Union along Oak Hall's first renovation on June 12 of this expects the renovation throughout the semester.

"For now, a lot have been relocated Hall; however, has made space everyone," Chel IT student assistant psychology major

VSU

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Renovations



Ethridge/ THE SPECTATOR
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Bryce Ethridge/ THE SPECTATOR
Pine Hall currently houses part of the information technology department and was formerly the home of centralized advising.



Bryce Ethridge/ THE SPECTATOR
VSU began Pine Hall's renovations earlier this summer and plans to finish construction spring 2018.

Pine Hall gets a face-lift

Bryce Ethridge
News Editor
bethridge@valdosta.edu

Several divisions of the VSU Internet Technology (IT) department, including technical support, are relocating. They'll move for a short period of time while VSU renovates their home, Pine Hall.

Located south of the Student Union along Oak Street, Pine Hall's first renovations began on June 12 of this year. VSU expects the renovations to last throughout the rest of the fall semester.

"For now, a lot of the offices have been relocated to Powell Hall; however, the move has made space limited for everyone," Chelsea Ramsey, IT student assistant and senior psychology major, said.

Overseeing the \$1.27 million project is VSU's own Dan Cody, construction project manager, and Diane Bellflowers, project manager.

"The funding was included in the state legislature's fiscal year 2018 budget that was signed by the governor, as a capital project in addition to the state funds the university receives for operations," Alan Sanderson, Assistant Director of Facilities, said.

The construction business CCH Construction, out of Thomasville, Georgia, is the general contractor over the project. BFB Gladwin Architects, from Valdosta, Georgia, is designing Pine Hall.

"The existing building was very cramped and inefficient and the newly designed space will offer more natural light,

soaring ceiling heights and an open work environment," Sanderson said.

In addition to renovations that will update the building according to the rest of campus, VSU will renovate the interior and exterior of the west wing of the building, which is home to Technical Support.


"Some exterior features added will be new windows, a larger glass storefront entry and window sunscreens. These features will help the building blend better with the campus architecture," Sanderson said. "The benefit of the renovation is to improve customer service and access to IT while enhancing the ability of IT to support the university."

Pine hall will reopen during the 2018 spring semester.




Bryce Ethridge/ THE SPECTATOR
The construction for the renovation of Pine Hall has displaced much of the IT department.

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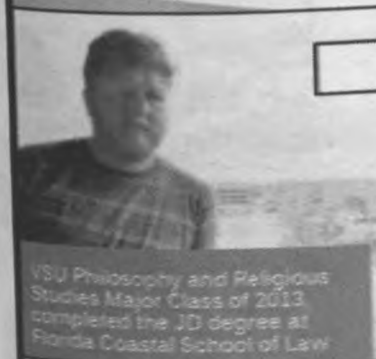
Brittang Bell Turner
"Majoring in philosophy helped me to stand out from other applicants for Law School. Philosophy is one of the very few majors that allows you to do that AND have an edge because of the critical thinking and problem solving skills you develop. By majoring in philosophy, I was already accustomed to this way of thinking which made the transition into law school and then into my career much easier."

VSU Philosophy Major Class of 2012, now with the firm of Speed, Setz, Mann & Trivett LLC in Lawrenceville, Georgia




Alex Lawhorne
"My philosophy major not only allowed me to have interesting classes with engaging professors and passionate fellow students, it prepared me for law school and my career. I am grateful I chose to be a philosophy major and I believe it has helped me to be a better lawyer, citizen, and human being."

VSU Philosophy Major Class of 2012, now with the Georgia Legal Services Project in Albany, Georgia




David Gregors
"My education in Philosophy and Religious Studies at Valdosta State has been an invaluable asset in my pursuit of a career as an attorney. Anyone interested in pursuing a career in law or any other profession in which complex, abstract, or ethical issues may present themselves would be well advised to begin their pursuit in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Valdosta State University."

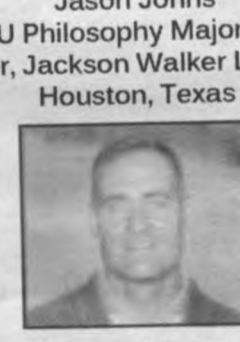
VSU Philosophy and Religious Studies Major Class of 2013, completed the JD degree at Florida Coastal School of Law




John Robbins
VSU Philosophy Major 1982
Defense Attorney
Birmingham, Alabama



Jason Johns
VSU Philosophy Major 1999
Partner, Jackson Walker Law Firm,
Houston, Texas



Lance Eric Neff
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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

New app helps users get 'SERV'D from home

Veronica You
SPECIAL EDITIONS EDITOR
vmyou@valdosta.edu

A new delivery system that will bring groceries right to a customer's door launches this month in Valdosta.

SERV is an application that can be downloaded on a mobile device and will allow users to get groceries delivered in as little as nine taps. SERV is simple to use, allows users to pick which store to get groceries, and is secure.

Jeff Brown, founder of SERV and VSU alumni, started this business to help those who did not want to or had a hard time getting access to the grocery store.

"I was doing homework one night and didn't want to get groceries or fast food," Brown said. "I was tired of eating the large tender box. I was wondering how I could automate this process that is groceries."

SERV customers can download the application and create an account. Then they can choose a preferred store, choose their items and pay. SERV sends a confirmation email and then a "serv-ant" delivers the groceries. If that item

is sold out or unavailable, a "serv-ant" will contact the user, and they can substitute it with a different item.

SERV is a Georgia Grown business, meaning that SERV supports buying local produce and products produced in Georgia.

Some proceeds of the profits will also go to Feeding America, which is a United States based nonprofit organization made up of over 200 food banks. These food banks help feed people through soup kitchens, food pantries and other community based agencies.

"That's one of the causes that we believe in," Brown said.

Brown graduated from VSU in 2017 and has a degree in office administration. Prior to studying at VSU, Brown played soccer at Holmes Community College in Jackson, Mississippi.

Brown said that SERV was not his first idea for a business, but it was the first that he acted on.

His prior business idea was a charger that could drain the battery of one mobile device to charge another one. This was before portable chargers existed.

Brown did not act on this idea and said a couple years after he



Jeff Brown at The Happening located on the VSU front lawn.

Nikky Johnson/THE SPECTATOR

thought of the idea, he saw something similar on Kickstarter.

The hardest part about starting his own business was putting it together and working with differ-

ent people to make his dream a reality.

His advice to anyone who wants to start their own business is: "If you have an idea, don't

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ALUMNI Wes

Darla D
CONTENT
dldunning@

Students who r the stairs leading floor of the Stud two large canvas in daylight and n photographs show tails of the camp greenery. What s know is that the taken by a fellow

Wes Sewell, th tographer of Wes raphy, opened hi phy business 12 found his passion while attending

Sewell receive of Administration VSU was still kn State College. A thought that he v business and foll footsteps.

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Sewell agreee and felt that it w combine busine

"I always lov said. "It just see to tie the two to got the mechan ness works on t tell you the trut that you could r photography. I I photography st I didn't know p you to do this."



Wes Sewell Pho

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Wes Sewell develops passion into a business

Darla Dunning
CONTENT EDITOR
ddunning@valdosta.edu

Students who reach the top of the stairs leading to the second floor of the Student Union can see two large canvas photos of VSU in daylight and nighttime. The photographs show the vivid details of the campus and the vibrant greenery. What students may not know is that these photos were taken by a fellow Blazer.

Wes Sewell, the owner and photographer of Wes Sewell Photography, opened his own photography business 12 years ago after he found his passion for photography while attending VSU.

Sewell received his Bachelor's of Administration in 1990 when VSU was still known as Valdosta State College. At first, Sewell thought that he wanted to pursue business and follow his father's footsteps.

His wife, Donna Newberry-Sewell head of the VSU English Department, noticed his passion for art when they met at VSU.

"When we were dating as college students at Valdosta State College, we both enjoyed photography," Newberry-Sewell said. "He had his grandfather's old 35 mm camera, and my parents had bought me one for Christmas one year, so we both took lots of pictures. His love of photography really developed, though, when he returned to college."

She knew Sewell could turn photography into a job, so she told him that it was time for him to go back to VSU to receive his Bachelor's of Fine Arts.

"When I became a professor at VSU, Wes worked as an assistant manager at Walmart in Thomasville," Newberry-Sewell said. "I encouraged him to pursue a second undergraduate degree in art from VSU because he loved his art classes in college, but he was already too close to graduating with a degree in business administration to switch. When he returned to college for the second degree, he excelled in his art classes, including design, jewelry making, and photography classes."

Sewell agreed with his wife and felt that it was necessary to combine business and art. "I always loved art," Sewell said. "It just seemed a natural fit to tie the two together. I kind of got the mechanics of how a business works on the front end. To tell you the truth, I didn't know that you could make money from photography. I knew there were photography studios out there, but I didn't know people really paid you to do this."

Wes Sewell, the owner and photographer of Wes Sewell Photography, holds one of the many cameras he uses to take photos of his clients.



Photo courtesy of Wes Sewell Photography

Wes Sewell, photographer and owner of Wes Sewell Photography, holds one of the many cameras he uses to take photos of his clients.

When Sewell came back to VSU to pursue his Bachelor's in Fine Arts, he started working for The Spectator, VSU's independent student newspaper, as the advertising manager.

If it was not for The Spectator, he would not have found his passion for photography.

"I loved that job," Sewell said. "I knew everyone in town. It kind of helped me blossom into this job too because we always needed pictures for The Spectator, so I would go to the sporting events and take good pictures."

When Sewell started taking photos of football games, people started to see his name in the byline under the photo and began asking him to take pictures of their weddings. Sewell booked three weddings the first year he worked at The Spectator. The second year, he booked 16 weddings, and during his third year he booked 33 weddings.

Because of the connections he made in the community while working as The Spectator advertising manager, Sewell was able to kick-start his business.

"It was extremely scary," Sewell said. "I went to my wife and told her that I am going to quit The Spectator and open up my own photography studio."

Sewell usually books 45 weddings per year at his studio. On one occasion, Sewell said that his studio booked 60 weddings in one year.

"Weddings are tough," Sewell said. "Not only are you working all day on Saturday, it takes 10 or 12 hours to edit those. You have to meet back with the bride, show them their pictures and several you to do this."

consultations after the wedding." But, Sewell said he is grateful for the path his career took.

"Photography kind of happened to me," Sewell said. "I always loved photography but I didn't go through college saying 'I want to be a photographer.' I just kind of went back to school for art and knew that I always loved it and was good at it. I was good at pottery, painting, and drawing. Those three were the ones I was best at. When I went to The Spectator, photography just kind of found me. It just kind of gravitated and people saw my pictures in The Spectator and it happened."

Sewell's favorite memory from when he was a student was the beauty of the campus.

"I loved the campus," he said. "I've been on a bunch of other

college campuses and there is not another campus that has the beauty that our campus has. With the Spanish moss and the trees, there is not near as much beauty on other campuses as there is on ours."

Sewell said that his favorite thing about running a photography business is that he never does the same thing twice. One day he could be taking photos of a one-week old baby and the next day he could be flying in a helicopter doing aerial pictures.

Sewell's experience in photography ranges from getting paid to take photos of presidential candidate Donald Trump, climbing into the lion's cage at Wild Adventures to take photos of the lions, and traveling to Greece to take photos of a wedding.

"His love of photography really developed, though, when he returned to college."

In addition to his downtown business, his family plays an important role in the photo's too.

"I wonder if any non-royal children's lives have been as documented as those of Tucker and Parker, our six-year-old twins," Newberry-Sewell said. "They can be seen running down the beach wearing superhero capes on the side of Wes's studio downtown, and their baby pictures grace the walls of doctors' offices."

He still keeps close ties at VSU, where he has been on the board for VSU's alumni association, planning activities for homecoming and choosing the award for the most distinguished alumni every year. He is also on the party planning committee.

"Both degrees inform his current business," Newberry-Sewell said. "He learned management techniques from his first degree and polished his talents and skills with the second degree. His personality completes the package, allowing him to coax smiles from reluctant kids and make wedding days less stressful for brides and grooms and their families. He's very good at what he does, and his success reflects well on Valdosta State University."

home



Johnson/THE SPECTATOR

inate; don't wait," Brown an idea is nothing without

Events

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&
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Homecoming
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**ECORE,
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Photo courtesy of Google Maps

Wes Sewell Photography is located in downtown Valdosta.

Halim Faisal, LCSW
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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Rodney Carr returns to VSU

Darla Dunning
Contributor
ddunning@valdosta.edu

Dr. Rodney Carr returned to his alma mater as the new vice president of student success.

For Dr. Carr, this is more than just a job, but the opportunity to transform students' lives at an institution that has been there for his family during tragedy.

"I can't believe that I have the job that I have, because I get to go to work and change people's lives," Dr. Carr said. "It's an amazing job. I don't feel like I go to work every day. I feel like I'm coming in to a place where you can connect to people and change people's lives. At the end of the month, they surprise you with a paycheck."

Since his position is in a fairly new area, he addressed how he is going to help the Student Success department grow with a simple metaphor.

"It's a new kind of area," said Dr. Carr. "We kind of talked about it being like clay on a potter's wheel. We are all going to spend some time putting our hands on that clay to mold it like we want too."

Dr. Carr added that the retention rate is a key component for his job in student success.

"Your incoming class is increasing and getting larger each year which is a rare anomaly in the state of Georgia south of Macon," Dr. Carr said. "A lot of the colleges are doing some different things and trying to come up with a common vision, and working with those colleges on what we can do, what their efforts are and how they are going... is one of the key initiatives that we can come up with."

Dr. Carr oversees three areas as vice president of student success: learning, institutional research, the Dual Credit Honors Academy, the Student Success Center, marketing and creative services, communications, admissions, orientation, financial aid, the Registrar's Office, advising and the Centralized

Advising Office.

VSU is not an unfamiliar place to Dr. Carr. He received his Master's of Public Administration here, and his daughter earned her undergraduate degree in athletic training at VSU.

So, when the opportunity came up to apply for the Vice President of Student Success, he gave no hesitation.

"It's one of those things, I kind of get picky about where I'm choosing to apply to and so I had some experience with VSU," Dr. Carr said. "I know there is a lot of passion in people and great people who work there, so I was excited to see that opportunity come up."

With 28 years working at multiple universities in the state of Georgia, Dr. Carr's work in student services and academic affairs began at the age of 19. He started at West Georgia College where he met his wife and where, one could say, his story began.

"I feel like I'm coming in to a place where you can connect to people and change people's lives."

"I'm a firm believer in 'everybody has a story,'" Dr. Carr said. "I've got one just like everyone else has one."

Dr. Carr started off in law enforcement, so there have been several career hurdles along the way. He said that the greatest obstacles were "created by himself."

Though, he has always listened to two of his former bosses who influenced him to aim higher and surround himself with good people.

Dr. Carr said that one of his bosses has always told him "to aim higher and don't settle for where you are." This motto and his boss' encouragement pushed him to go to graduate school and get into administration.

Dr. Carr and his wife are

parents to three children and are foster parents to their youngest.

"It's not always been very easy, but it has always been very rewarding," Dr. Carr said. "People tell me, 'I just don't understand how you do it' and I tell them, 'Its children that are looking for somebody to give them a secure and safe place and give them unconditional love.'"

Their oldest daughter, who graduated from VSU, just completed graduate school and is working with the Houston Clinic out of Columbus, Georgia.

During her time at VSU, a tragedy struck their family which resulted in VSU taking measures to help.

This tragedy and the way VSU approached the situation was a main reason as to why Dr. Carr chose to work at VSU.

"...our daughter, while she was about to start her senior year, was dating a young man at VSU, and

he was killed in a car accident a week in a half before classes started," Dr. Carr said. "And so seeing her get out of a car and walk to the campus a week later was really, to me, amazed at how strong she was. And I thought to myself 'I hope one day I can be like her'.

Although, it wasn't my child that was lost, watching your children battle that and watching Valdosta State's response really got me excited when this opportunity came up."

Their middle daughter is in college at the University of West Georgia, which causes a bit of a struggle for their family since they are fans of the VSU Blazers.

"So now there is a little struggle in our house, because she is at the University of West Georgia and so I told her 'Sorry, we can't cheer for you anymore,'" Dr. Carr said laughing.

According to Dr. Carr, their 16-year-old son is extremely interested in attending VSU as well.

After working at West Georgia College, Dr. Carr worked at Polytechnic State University, which has now been consolidated with Kennesaw State.

From there, he worked at



Photo courtesy of Bainbridge State College

Dr. Rodney Carr is the vice president of student success. Carr graduated from VSU with a Master's of Public Administration.

Middle Georgia State University and then to Bainbridge, where he served as Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs. Now, he will relocate to VSU with his family.

In addition, the faculty at VSU enjoy Dr. Carr's positive energy and his willingness to help VSU succeed. Dr. Richard Carvajal, president of VSU, said he is thrilled to add Dr. Carr to the team.

"He brings a proven record of success from multiple institutions in our University System, and he has built a reputation as one of Georgia's best higher education leaders," Dr. Carvajal said. "In particular, he brings tremendous experience in leading efforts to increase retention, progression, and graduation numbers, and I look forward to the difference he will make in those areas."

Dr. Carr said that he will always have an open door and wants to be

able to listen to the voices of the student body.

"We need to hear what we are doing well and what we are not doing so well," Dr. Carr said. "It's hard to know how to meet needs when you don't know what they are. And so I like to understand, very clearly, what needs are and what their expectations are. And then, just as well, the students need to know what our expectations are. I can't expect you to meet my expectations if you don't know what they are."

In turn, Dr. Carr's main focus is on helping students at VSU and listening to their stories.

"Everyone has defining moments in their lives," Dr. Carr said. "There's over 11,500 people there that are students that have stories to tell and how VSU has challenged them and changed their lives. That is one thing that I am excited about is being able to tell people's story."

DIY pr

Dorms take the warmth and h even better. Do It Yourself pr be made in just a couple hour

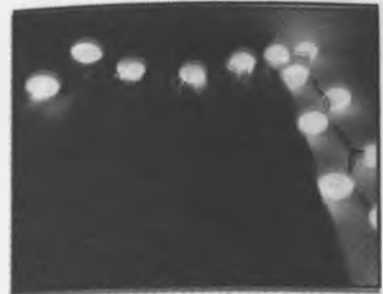


Photo Courtesy of www.gurl.com

Ping-Pong Ball Lights

You can create a string of Christmas lights that look more exclusive.

By cutting slits into the sides and then sticking ping-pong balls on the lights around the wire, you can add a more broad lighting into your room. Don't hesitate to use multi-colored Christmas lights either.

Use a hot glue gun to hold the ping-pong balls in place.

A pack of 100 ping-pong balls are very affordable and you'd only use a bit over half of them. That leaves you with extra to put up just in case you are a big fan of ping-pong.

Usually, families have extra Christmas lights laying around, so you can ask your parents to mail them to you so you can construct this project.

When you are done, find that perfect place to hang your creation. Just make sure you place them near an outlet.

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Health Tip:

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DIY projects for your dorm room

Dorms take the warmth and happiness with you from home. A big part into the college process happens to be dorm shopping. Doing it on a budget is even better. Do It Yourself projects add pretty, personalized touches to your dorm room with ease. These DIY projects are simple, budget-friendly and can be made in just a couple hours. From old jars to useess Christmas lights, dorms can truly become a creative sanctuary of art.



Photo Courtesy of www.guri.com

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When you are done, find that perfect place to hang your creation. Just make sure you place them near an outlet.



Photo Courtesy of Pinterest

Picture Garland

Thinking outside the box is simply a must when personalizing your dorm. With the picture garland, you can put the old picture frame to rest.

Pictures are a great way to blend both family and friends from home into your room. So, hang your pictures like garland with a long piece of twine and clothespins. Yes, clothespins.

First, cut pieces of twine to fit across your wall. Then, securely tape both ends of the twine to opposite sides of your wall. This forms the base for your project.

Lastly, finish by attaching the photos onto the twine with clothespins. These clothespins can be bought at your nearest dollar store.

You can never have too many pictures, make a whole wall of garlands if you want. It can change the whole perspective of your room. Now, step back and gaze upon your masterpiece.



Photo Courtesy of Pinterest

Jewelry Hanger

A box or stand for jewelry can range from \$20 to \$35. This may be a hefty range considering the price for the actual jewelry itself.

Instead of buying a stand for your precious gems, grab an old wooden hanger and metal hooks to make a jewelry hanger.

This project can be made with \$5 or less, if you do not have the materials already.

To create, you must first drill holes 1.5- to 2 inches apart into the inside of the hanger to insert the metal hooks.

You can purchase these hooks at your nearest hardware store.

You can make as many of these as you want. You can also tailor them to the types of jewelry you have. Make one for necklaces, the other for bracelets and even for earring too.

Afterwards, simply hang all of your elegant jewels. You will never have to dig around your jewelry box again.

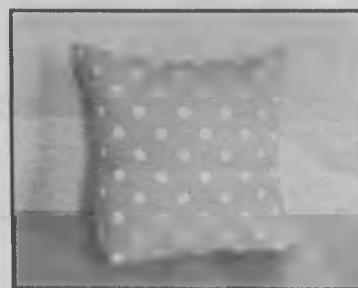


Photo Courtesy of www.etsy.com

Polka Dots Cushion

Do you have a boring cushion in your room that just doesn't seem to want to stay on your bed in the middle of the night? This polka dot cushion project will become your best friend with just a few quick steps.

First, wash, dry, and iron your cushion cover to get a clean surface.

Next, take your favorite color paint and a champagne cork and dip into the paint. Take a piece of paper to practice at first. Practice makes perfect!

Once you've nailed the technique of dipping, get to work on the fabric cushion.

Don't hesitate to place as many polka dots as you want, it's your creation.

Then, leave it out to dry. Drape a tea-towel over the cushion cover and take a cool iron and quickly run over to fix the paint in place. Snuggled under you, your cushion will finally stay on your bed.



Photo Courtesy of www.yesterdayontuesday.com

Splatter Jar Pencil Holder

Pencils go missing after each class and they need a home to always go to. Here is a quick craft that is useful and will also add a price of decoration to any living space.

With this unique jar, you can keep up with your pens and pencils with a jar designed by you. The splatter jar can be comprised of your favorite colors.

First, grab white paint. This will serve as the coating around the jar and the canvas for your artwork.

Then, grab as many colors as you want and begin splattering them upon the jar in rapid speed.

Try to do this on an old sheet or concrete surface.

Lastly, leave out to dry. Once it's dry, simply place anywhere in your dorm! Your pencils will be in good hands!

Prince Robinson Jr.
STAFF WRITER
parobinson@valdosta.edu

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People Poll: Why do you volunteer?



"People always need help and volunteering is the perfect way to do that. It feels good to help people and you never know when you are going to need help yourself."
- Alyssa Rollins, sophomore nursing major



"I volunteer to expose myself to the community and to further my education. I feel like it betters myself for the future."
- Andrew Elan, sophomore biology major

"It was something that I was taught. As I get older and began to read the bible, I realized that it is not only the right thing to do but it feels good."
- Cameron Taylor, sophomore finance major



"I volunteer because it is helpful to the community and others. It also helps teach us life lessons and also gives us insight to what the community really needs."
- Will Chambliss, junior economics major



"I like to volunteer because I know it isn't just helping me but someone in the community. Whether it's the animal shelter or a can food drive it's not just about getting hours but it's a good feeling."
- Stephanie Stanley, junior theater major



SUCCESS leads VSU cleanup

Kelsey Dickerson
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
kedickerson@valdosta.edu

Students Uniting Change with Commitment through Empowering Strong Service (SUCCESS) mentors, are teaming up with other VSU organizations to clean up Valdosta.

According to SUCCESS president Chelsea Warren, the idea came from one of SUCCESS's members, Daughtry Melton. Melton originally presented his suggestion to the members of the group, who reached out to other organizations.

"Everyone was so willing to collaborate with us," Warren said. Organizations involved include the Black Student League, Habitat for Humanity, Collegiate Women VSU, Relay for Life and others. In total, volunteers number over 200.

"Right now, we have 23 amazing organizations that have teamed up with us to help clean the community," Warren said.

In addition to man power, some organizations have donated supplies like gloves, trashbags and vests to aid the clean-up efforts.

People in the Valdosta area who need help cleaning up their property can contact the group via email at successfulcleanup@gmail.com. Residents and business owners should include their location, images of the debris, and preferred date and time for cleanup.

"Once we receive this information, we immediately drop it within our GroupMe," Warren said. "The volunteers simply like

the message indicating that they can help at that specific location."

Irma swept over Valdosta on Sept. 11, leaving several residents with downed trees and debris.

Georgia Power workers were still restoring power to some 1,433 residents three days later

According to Warren, the group has reached out to the commissioner and others in VSU to offer their services.

On Sept. 18 members of the group including Warren met with the Superintendent of Public Works, and began work on Sept. 19.

Warren said students interested in volunteering their time independently should email her at cawarren@valdosta.edu.

Students involved in organizations on campus should check with their organization, as some members may already be involved.

Javier Clark, a senior math major, is one of the many SUCCESS clean-up volunteers.

"Chelsea mentioned that they were putting together a clean-up effort and I knew it was a great

way to make a difference," Clark said.

In addition to his work with SUCCESS, Clark chartered a community service organization on campus called Circle K, part of one of the largest student-led service groups in the world.

Through Circle K, students can volunteer at the Georgia Sheriff's Youth Home and donate to the local nursing homes.

According to Clark, volunteering has enhanced his passion and desire to make a difference in the lives of others.

"My favorite memory from volunteering was last semester when Circle K and the National Council of Negro Women went out to the Georgia Sheriff's Youth Home to grill and interact with the kids," Clark said.

Clark suggests other students seek out and ask about the different ways to get involved with one of the many organizations at VSU.

"There are numerous amazing organizations around VSU and if one has a passion for serving others then regardless of which group they join they can't go wrong," Clark said.



Cheelsea Warren



Javier Clark

Health Tip:

Call the Student Health Center at 229-219-3200 to schedule a flu vaccine. The vaccine is available to students for \$10 and faculty/staff for \$20 (flex, cash or check). On Oct. 5, the Health Center has partnered with Walgreens to have a free flu clinic for the first 100 students that bring their VSU ID to the Health Center on the 2nd Floor Patient Education Room. The event will be from 12-4 p.m.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Mike Smith and Andrew Farace

Andrew Farace
STAFF WRITER
amfarace@valdosta.edu

When Mike Smith took over Smitty's Package store from his father in 2002, it was already a successful entity. Smith has devoted himself to continuing that success.

Smitty's Package Store was opened in its current location in 1999. Smith was a student at Valdosta State University from 2000 to 2005.

Smith was drawn to VSU because he grew up in Valdosta and wanted to play baseball.

Smith played baseball for two years for the Blazers ending in 2002. The team was conference champions while Smith was on the team. He played in the minor league, and then came back to graduate with a finance business degree in 2005. Smith's mother and father are both VSU graduates.

Smith has been involved with VSU ever since he graduated. He is now actively serving on the VSU Alumni Board and his wife is Alpha Delta Pi Alumni Adviser. He is also a member of the V-state club, which aims to help raise funds for athletics. Sports are not the only thing that he tries to help, however, because over the summer he volunteers at Peach State Theater.

"It's such a great opportunity for the community to be able to help fund the theater and the arts," Smith said.

At Smitty's, Smith hires VSU students and when they graduate, he tries to do his best to help them find permanent jobs. He has had



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SU cleanup

they way to make a difference," Clark said.

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Javier Clark

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Day! E Combo

WE ACCEPT FLEX (75)

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Smith and Smitty's are a packaged deal

Andrew Farace
STAFF WRITER
amfarace@valdosta.edu

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"It's such a great opportunity for the community to be able to help fund the theater and the arts," Smith said.

At Smitty's, Smith hires VSU students and when they graduate, he tries to do his best to help them find permanent jobs. He has had

eight students who have worked for him who now have careers in the liquor industry.

"VSU's growth and success is going to be the key to this community. The schools need new degrees, more students, and to win at sports to grow more, since Valdosta's growth depends on the school's success," said Smith.

Being involved in baseball at VSU helped him with leadership, teamwork, time management, hard work, dealing with adversity, and dedication. The business school classes he took helped him greatly in running his liquor store, he said.

"I have total respect for the business school and what they are doing over there," said Smith.

Smith advises current students to be prepared.

"Of course make good grades and go to class, but I think the biggest thing to do is work and volunteer to build up your resume. It is really important to meet people and make connections."

He adds that values are important as well.

"I think the key is to work hard, not only in school, but also outside of it to learn about work ethic," Smith said.

After Smith graduated from VSU, he stayed in Valdosta because of family. As an only child, he felt a responsibility to help his father with the store. Smith's father started the business 30 years ago. It has been at the current location since 1999. Smith has been running their liquor store for the past 15 years, and his father still runs the family's tobacco shop in Lake Park.



Andrew Farace/THE SPECTATOR



Andrew Farace/THE SPECTATOR

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FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Seth Willard of Urban Lights Photography

Seth Willard is the photo-editor of The Spectator at VSU. Willard started his own photography business named Urban Lights Photography this past spring.

Willard's work is known for his use of outdoor scenes and the incorporation of naturally lit settings.

Urban Lights Photography was created to exhibit Seth Willard's artistic style of portrait photography. Urban Lights launched their website in July 2017 which features a client showcase of each shoot Willard has done.

Willard was raised in Atlanta, Georgia and the name Urban Lights spawned from his admiration of the urban photography scene in Atlanta.

Willard's camera of choice is the Sony a6300 with the Sony E PZ 16-50 mm F3.5-5.6 OSS lens.

Christine Zeigler, a client of Seth Willard, said "I thoroughly

enjoy shooting with Seth because he has a unique point of view. He doesn't just take photos from straight on, instead he uses different angles to create unique perspectives. It is a great technique that I have not seen in many photographers from around here."

Urban Lights Photography is based out of Valdosta, Georgia but regularly does photo shoots in Atlanta, Georgia as well. The company was given the opportunity to cover SweetWater 420 Fest last April.

Willard looks to continue creating unique and creative photographs to expand his portfolio.

His most recent photo set included the use of fairy lights, which gave a soft light to the photos. During the editing process, he used gradients of cotton candy colors to add a new dynamic into the highlights and shadows. Adobe Lightroom is the software that he uses to

edit photos and finds that this software allows him to best manipulate the lighting and color.

Urban Lights Photography website can be found at urbanlightsphoto.wixsite.com/urbanlights

Models (left to right) Top: Kimsley Agüero, Laron Foy, Emily Scarborough. Left Middle: Laron Foy. Middle: Pumpkin, Savannah Buice, Christine Zeigler. Bottom: Noah Willard, Christine Zeigler, Taylor Tidaback

If you are a photographer and are interested in being featured in The Spectator, please email srwilard@valdosta.edu



Hill he

Juston Lewis
SPORTS EDITOR
justlewis@valdosta.edu

Sactown be ready, Jeremiah Hill is blazing towards you after signing an NBA contract.

Hill inked a deal with the Reno Bighorns, the NBA G-League affiliate for the Sacramento Kings. This opportunity came after he participated in an invitation-only tryout with the South Bay Lakers.

The Savannah native transferred to VSU in 2014 during his sophomore season after spending his freshman year at Savannah State University.

During his senior campaign in 2016, Hill had a standout year for the Blazers. He helped the Blazers to a 27-6 record, which was enough to win the Gulf South Conference regular season title.

Hill lead the Blazers in points, steals and assists, all while boosting VSU Basketball to the national spotlight. Hill's efforts led to him being recognized as a National Association of Basketball Coaches All-American.



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Hill headed to the NBA G-League

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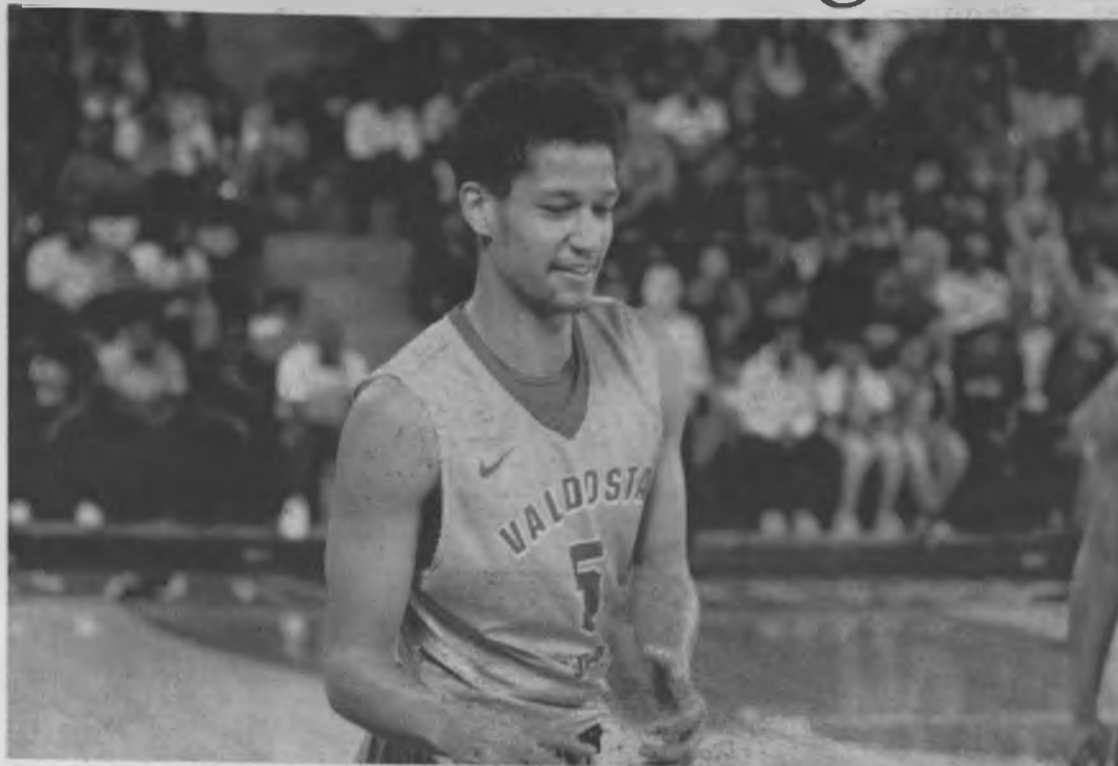
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This accolade just complimented his First Team All-South Region, GSC Player of the Year and First-Team All-GSC awards.

Hill was a force when it came to scoring the basketball. He scored 626 points in his final season and joined the esteemed 1,000 point club for VSU men's basketball. That is a feat that has only been done twice in the past decade.

Hill told the Spectator prior to his senior season that he had aspirations of continuing his playing career post-graduation. He wanted to play overseas. He also had hopes of going the distance with VSU basketball and finishing strong. The effort he had in his final season not only allowed him to accomplish his goals, but he surpassed them.

Hill joins Kenny Moore and Austin Hamilton in making the transition from VSU to the pros. Moore is a former member of VSU Football who plays for the Indianapolis Colts. Hamilton is a former member of VSU Baseball who signed a deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers this summer.



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Hill was a starter last season with The Blazers. This year, he is playing in the National Basketball Association G-League, which is the minor league for the NBA. In 2016, Hill helped the Blazers to a 27-6 record and Gulf South Conference title.



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

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