

THE SPECTATOR

THE UNFILTERED, UNCENSORED VOICE OF THE STUDENTS.



<p>Students seek unity and solidarity pg. 4</p>	<p>Downtown seeks more student involvement pg. 5</p>	<p>Spectator takes home nine awards from GCPA pg. 8</p>	<p>Film and Video Society perfects their craft pg. 9</p>	<p>VSU and UAH face off for GSC lead pg. 11</p>
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NEWS

Valdosta Uber excited for new form of transportation

**Darla Dunning,
Dina Shishkova**

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As of last week, the popular car service Uber was available to serve customers in the City of Valdosta.

The City of Valdosta announced on Feb. 2 that 40 people needed to sign-up as drivers in order to validate a need in the area. It is unclear at this time if the city has met its goal.

According to Uber.com, Uber is used through the Uber App, where passengers send a request for a ride, and that request is accepted by a nearby driver who will use his or her personal car to pick up these passengers.

So far, few people know Uber is already available in Valdosta. There is a shortage of drivers as well.

"I don't know why people don't jump at the opportunity

to earn some money," Melanie Batts, who started driving for Uber last week, said. Batts said one day last week she drove for seven hours and served seven customers.

Batts said she will be a student next fall, so Uber will provide her with supplementary income. She also said she enjoyed driving.

"I love it," Batts said. "I get to meet a lot of new people."

Another student said he is also considering becoming a driver.

"I'm really glad Uber is coming to Valdosta," Jeremiah Dyson, a junior psychology major, said.

"It's a good transportation system. I'm definitely thinking about signing up to be a driver."

Some international students and teachers at VSU are especially excited about having Uber.

"I am going to use it every time I need to go somewhere, and I cannot use my bike," Natalia Kuzmina, a Fulbright student from Russia, said. "I don't have a car, so for me it is always a big deal if I need to go somewhere."

Other international students

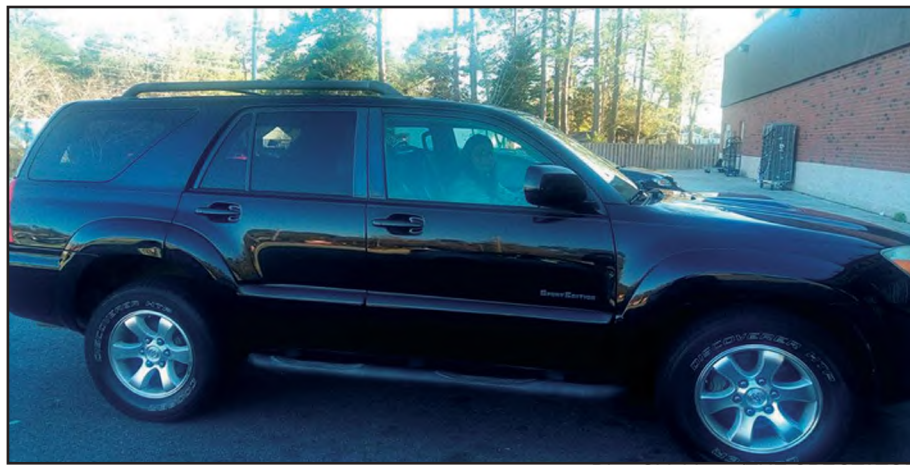
said they will evaluate prices when making their travel choices.

"I'll try it," Vivien Kamal, a teaching assistant from Egypt, said. "But I used a taxi service here as well, and it was good. So, I guess I'll choose the cheapest option."

Some students are eager to have another form of transportation.

"I've used the Tippy Transit as my transportation on weekends, but I will definitely use Uber as my transportation once it comes to town," Alejandra Serrano, a sophomore childhood education major, said.

According to a Valdosta City press release, Betty Morgan, Chamber vice president, said Uber will be a game-changer



Dina Shishkova/THE SPECTATOR

Melanie Batts waits in her car, which she uses to work for Uber.

for the community, and it is a welcomed addition to Valdosta's business community.

The Valdosta City press release also stated that the services are expected to impact Valdosta residents in all walks of life and connect people across the community.

In addition, Uber emphasizes safety to its passengers. When passengers request a ride, they

will have a message sent to their phones in advance that will have their driver's name, license plate number and photo.

Also, Uber has 24/7 availability and, once a passenger has requested an Uber driver, is capable of picking up passengers within minutes.

Those who are interested in applying to become a driver can go to <https://www.uber.com/>

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Announcements

A healthy tip from VSU Student Health Center

February is American Heart Month! "Heart disease is largely preventable" according to the CDC. A few simple steps include: eating healthy and exercising.

Rec Center Announcements

Flag Football four-on-four tournament. Registration ends Feb.23, and the tournament starts Feb. 26.

VSU Rec Life Percentage night at Chick-Fil-A Valdosta Mall Feb. 24 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

CORE Clinic how to belay Feb. 22, 6 p.m. SRC Rockwall, free for students.

Want to have your event featured in our Announcements section? Email your information to Editor-in-Chief Gabe Burns at gcburns@valdosta.edu.

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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.

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NEWS

Students unite in hopes of change after racial postings

Juston Lewis
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What began as outrage from hateful speech written on a bathroom stall turned into a plea for equality.

On Friday afternoon, racial hate speech was found inside of Lowndes Residence Hall. Campus Police were alerted of the incident and began an investigation into the matter. The writings were not removed until Saturday, after several students took to social media.

The VSU Student Government Association released a statement on Friday to address the incident. They offered love and support to all students on campus.

President Richard Carvajal was out of town Friday and released his statement on Monday. He said he has personally felt the harmful effects of discrimination and said he was troubled by the act.

Chad Capers, Black Student League president, and NAACP President Jasmin Martin organized a Monday night meeting. The meeting gauged the general feeling of students after this incident in addition to the response of administration.

Throughout the course of the meeting students talked about VSU's campus and why events like Friday's continue to occur. Capers and Martin shared the difficulties they face as leaders when trying to speak with administration about problems facing black students.

During the meeting, the VSYOU campaign was brought up. It is a campaign VSU employed to raise admission rates and bring in more students. Students in the meeting felt as though the future students did not get a chance to see what it is like being a minority student on campus.

Students agreed there was a blatant under representation of minority students. Not just as African-Americans, but Latino and foreign exchange students



Juston Lewis/THE SPECTATOR

Vice President of Student Affairs Vince Miller speaks to student protesters in West Hall Tuesday.

were underrepresented as well.

A protest was proposed to demonstrate minority students are included in VSYOU as well. Then the students decided to go from the Student Union to the president's office in West Hall.

The protest took place on Tuesday at noon. Students gathered at the Union and were joined by more students and professors alike.

Once inside of West Hall, Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Vince Miller spoke with students and commended them for their actions. He also took to social media taking a picture of the protest and captioning: "Proud of our student's for their impactful and peaceful demonstration. Everyone's voice is important."

Martin and Capers said it started with the Lowndes hall incident but agreed it went past one act.

"It's been several [incidents] within a year or two," Capers said. "It's becoming the norm and students are getting used to it. That's not appropriate or ok, that's not an ok learning environment."

They said this is a response to

the culture here that accepts slander and hate as the normality, but also it's about getting administrators and other students to see what it's like being a minority at VSU.

"We make the VSYOU experience," Martin said. "We put in numerous hours of work. Some of us don't leave campus until 10 or 11 at night because we're handling business for our organization and campus. Why are we getting overlooked as the students who make your university?"

Capers said he feels that the lack representation was a major point of the demonstration.

"Go to valdosta.edu right now and you won't see us," Capers said. "We just want to be recognized as a part of this university and a part of this Blazer nation

that we work so hard to put on events for."

It's not the first time VSU has seen protest on campus. At the beginning of February, students marched to protest the immigration ban enacted by President Donald Trump.

Martin and Capers said they've participated in other protests. But they said this one had a different feel to it.

"This allowed students to voice how they feel," Martin said. [Students] went to administration and we're forcing them now to give us a response. What are you going to do to fix this issue because now we're going to tell everybody what's going on here."

For Capers, it was about the targeting of the VSYOU Experi-

ence that made it different.

"This [protest] was specific to the VSYOU Experience and us as students," Capers said. "Before it was more of things that were happening like the Trump situation or stepping on the flag." This [protest] was specific to our experiences as paying students here and how we don't think it's fair. This experience is based off of us, the students, not them [administration]."

The two leaders met with Dr. Carvajal on Wednesday morning to discuss the goals for VSU's minority students on campus. They said they were looking for change in Dr. Carvajal that other presidents have not shown recently.

"[Dr. Carvajal] waited too long, he needs to be aggressive and let students know I stand by you all and I do not support hate speech," Martin said. "That's what students want to know, their president is on their side regardless of the situation."

"This is an opportunity," Capers added. "This meeting is not to hard ball him, it's to make him aware and let him know that we're no longer going to accept this as our experience."

Martin and Capers agreed that demonstrations and protest come off as aggressive but it was necessary.

"We do not want to be out here protesting about our experience, so let's work on that," Capers said. "We don't want it to get this far. Let's work on that, let's have that conversation, let's work together. Hopefully he'll see it that way."

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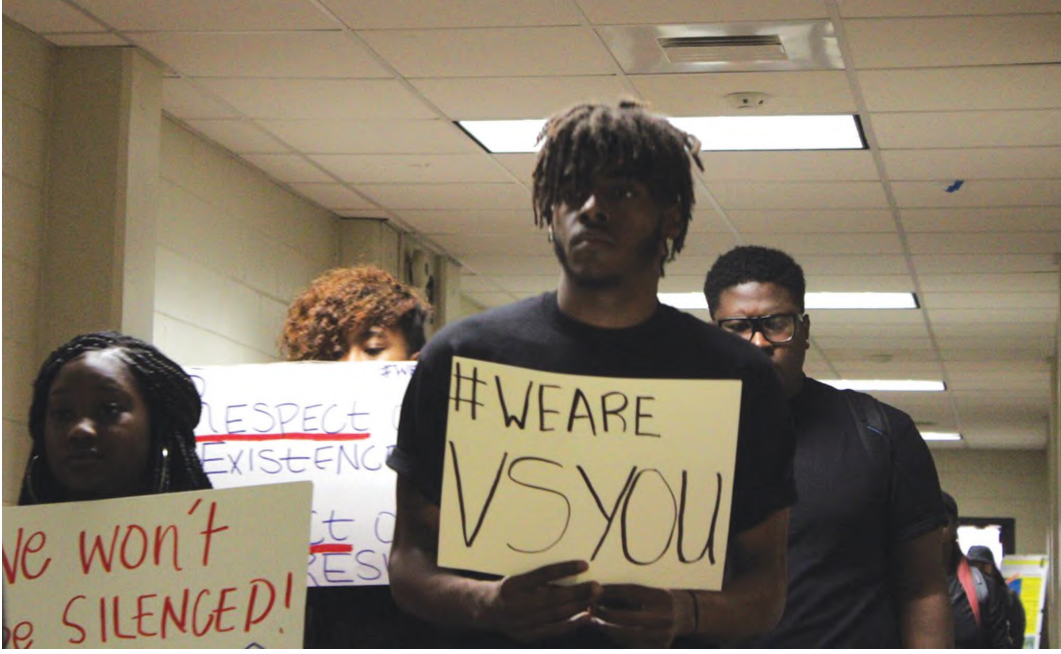
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Justin Lewis/ THE SPECTATOR

VS YOU or VS SOME?



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Students took to campus on Tuesday to protest the VSYOU Experience. They were addressed by Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Vince Miller. Students met with President Dr. Richard Carvajal on Wednesday to discuss student affairs.



Justin Lewis/ THE SPECTATOR



Seth Willard/ THE SPECTATOR

OPINIONS

Our point of view...

VSU students need to represent unity

The VSU community was disturbed by the choice of an individual to scribble a hateful statement across the stall in a Lowndes Hall bathroom last Friday. Student reactions were mixed, though all seemed to disagree with the statement, some students were less shocked by the discovery than others.

The office of the president and SGA both immediately condemned the graffiti, and on Monday, President Carvajal penned his own letter to the "VSU family" about the incident. In his letter, he stressed his commitment to inclusion and applauded VSU students for their willingness to embrace diversity overall.

Still, a group of students marched through campus to the president's office on Tuesday to protest the hateful act and the perceived lack of inclusion on campus. The group's anger sprouted from a feeling among students that VSYOU only cares for VS'SOME'

Our editorial staff would like to ask VSU students this: What more can be done to increase inclusion on campus and discourage hateful actions?

Students may see administrators asking them to refrain from posting pictures of the graffiti online as sweeping the issue under the rug, and it does probably help VSU keep the picture's reach to a minimum. But keeping the image from being widely circulated also keeps the perpetrator(s) from getting the attention they most likely wanted, and the image is truly offensive to anyone who may see it while scrolling through social media, so it should have been taken down.

Furthermore, President Carvajal said that he himself would be available to discuss the issue with any students who wanted to voice their concerns—though his message to the students could have come too late after the incident.

Since 2006, VSU's student body has continually become more diverse, with the amount of white students attending the university falling by 20 percent and the amount of minorities rising. Most notably, according to the VSU factbook, the number of black students attending VSU increased by about 54 percent between 2006 and 2015.

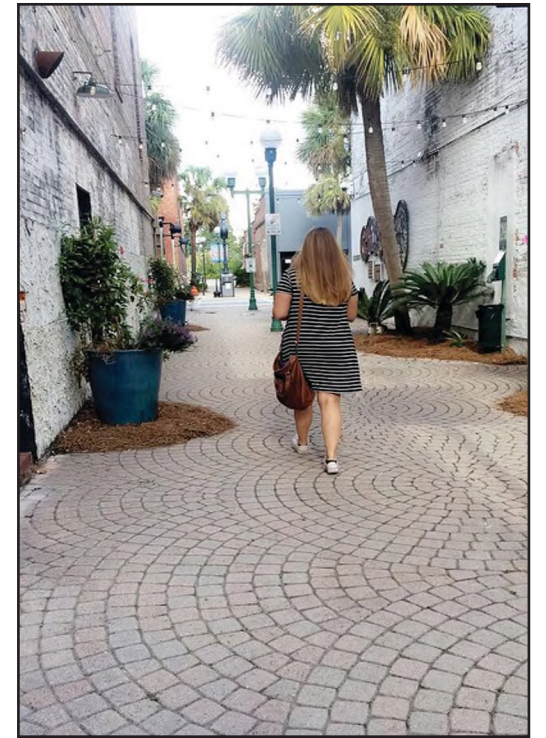
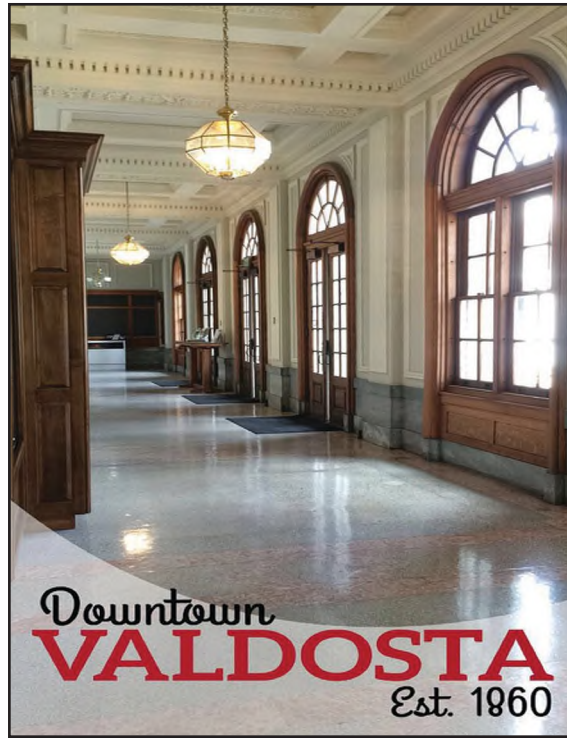
Even though protesters may feel underrepresented in the VSYOU campaign, three out of four members of the SGA executive board are people of color, and, up until a week ago, all of the exec board members were. The SGA board is supposed to be the ultimate voice of the students. It is in essence the student's representation to the administration.

VSU is a college of diversity. Though in the past the president's office has made a few decisions that seemed to go against some groups on campus: the Donald Trump rally and the Spring 2015 flag incident to name two instances. Dr. Carvajal has a chance to speak out for students, and he seems ready to do so.

Students, the SGA is a sorely under-utilized resource on campus. They are our representatives, and we should use them in times like these. Protesting is a useful tool guaranteed us through the first amendment, so protest if you wish, but look at yourself first. The conversation this vandalism and subsequent protest has sparked should make each VSU student look at themselves and the organizations they are personally a part of. If activities on campus seem segregated, ask yourself why, and work to make things more inclusive.

Though the administration is charged with creating a safe space for students to learn and share ideas, it is truly up to the student body to make sure the VS'SOME' experience becomes VS'US'.

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



Hunter Terrell/THE SPECTATOR
Downtown features one Snapchat geo-filter (top left), palm trees and stringed lights on Bennie's Alley (top right and bottom).

Downtown Valdosta urges VSU students to join the experience

Hunter Terrell
OPINIONS EDITOR
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Valdosta's Mainstreet Program directors Misty Smith and Ellen Hill are looking for ways to increase VSU student's involvement with downtown Valdosta.

"Ultimately we want to bridge the gap between Mainstreet and the VSU student body," Smith said.

"What most students don't see is all the things downtown has to offer," said Sharlie Keaton, senior, art major. "Most people compare our downtown to Athens or Tallahassee, and that's just not here. This is Valdosta, we should embrace it."

There are 11 restaurants, 11 various shops, several rental

spaces open to the public, The Brass Quill Gallery tattoo parlor, the historical Dosta Theatre and the more modernized Red Door Cinema alongside monthly events hosted on the courthouse greenspace and supremely maintained sidewalks and public outdoor space.

The initial focus for Valdosta Mainstreet is to provide students with a sense of place and support small businesses at the same time.

In 2013, Valdosta placed in the top five of all Georgia Mainstreet programs.

The Mainstreet Program also has available gift certificates called Downtown Dollars.

Downtown Dollars is designed to support all small businesses in downtown Valdosta. They are

available in \$10 increments and cannot expire.

The money spent that stays local is one of the greatest gift you can give to Downtown Valdosta.

Downtown may not be as cheap as Remerton or as crowded as the regular movie theatre, but it does offer an individual experience you can build on your own.

Valdosta Mainstreet is on all social media platforms and provides their audience with updates as they come.

Find a full list of all vendors, restaurants and events at valdostamainstreet.com and follow them on Instagram @ downtownvaldosta.

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FEATURES



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

With 'Sylvia' life is 'ruff'

VSU's Theatre and Dance Department is premiering "Sylvia," a play about a love triangle between husband, wife, and their dog, Sylvia. As they fight and put their marriage in jeopardy from the impact Sylvia has had on their lives, she proves herself to be a valuable member of the family too.

"Sylvia" offers theatrical innovation, with comedic relief and scenes that will warm the heart. The play has adult themes and rowdy language, so it is not recommended for children.

The play will premiere on Feb. 16-18; 20-22 at 7:30 p.m. It will also play on Feb. 19 at 3 p.m. "Sylvia" will play in the Lab Theatre on the second floor of the Fine Arts Building located on the intersection of Brookwood Drive and Oak Street.

Ticket reservations can be made either in person or on the phone: 229-333-5973.



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR



Kelsey Dickerson/THE SPECTATOR



Kelsey Dickerson/THE SPECTATOR

VSU hosts unique music experience

James (Jim) Bonney, visited VSU on Feb. 14 to perform with two of his original pieces with the concert band and wind ensemble. Bonney performed his 2002 concerto "Chaos Theory" with the concert band and 2015 concerto "DARKlightNESS" with the wind ensemble. Bonney has composed music for popular Adult Swim cartoon King of the Hill, video games such as Bioshock Infinite and Mafia II, and NASA.

From top left: Bonney performing "DARKlightNESS" with the wind ensemble; Bonney explaining his setup to students after the concert; The concert band performing "Kirkpatrick Fanfare" before Bonney made his appearance.



Julia Rodriguez/THE SPECTATOR

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FEATURES

CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT

Astronomy shoots for the stars

Bryce Ethridge

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College: the final frontier.

These are the voyages of the starship Blazer. It's a four-year mission for astronomy majors: explore Odum library, seek out new ways to stay up all night, and boldly go where plenty of students have gone before.

Astronomy isn't just a field in the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences students can major in.

Not only does the department provide courses for students who decide to major in these sciences, it also holds events that allow students and the community to learn about the stars, like planetarium shows.

Last Friday the department held three showings in the planetarium, giving families and students a view of the penumbral eclipse and black holes. Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Dr. Martha Leake, held the reins of the show as she took the audience on a journey through the stars.

In addition to the penumbral eclipse, Mars and Venus were also visible, as well as quite a few constellations such as Cassiopeia, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Dr. Leake also gave the audience a tip about the North Star.

"The easiest way to find the North Star is to find the Big Dipper (Ursa Major)," Dr. Leake said. "If you look for the brightest star, you might end up following Rigel or Venus."

As the presentation continued, Dr. Leake told the audience what the title of the show, "Whispers

from the Cosmos," came from.

"The chirp that black holes make when merging is the whisper from the cosmos," Dr. Leake said.

Dr. Leake ended the show by telling the audience her plan to consume them with a black hole: a simulated one which she then showed on the projector.

The astronomy department also has an astronomy club called the Valdosta State Astronomical Society, and the department gives back to the community.

"We give planetarium shows free of charge to school groups and civic organizations during the daytime," Dr. Kenneth Rumstay, professor of physics and astronomy, said. "We also give free tutoring services for students in introductory courses (for astronomy)."

As another service to the community, all science departments including astronomy have "Science Saturday," where professors from VSU set up experiments and activities for children around the community.

Part of what makes VSU's astronomy department so strong is their part in the creation of the Southeastern Association for Research of Astronomy. The organization currently has three telescopes around the world. One is in Arizona, one is in Chile and one is on the island of La Palma.

"To be honest, the southern skies in Georgia are not very good for astronomy, but these three telescopes are under superior skies," Dr. Rumstay said. "We don't have to go there to use them; we operate them from our offices or homes over the



Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Dr. Leake began the show by telling the audience about the planetarium itself, and projecting a real-time animation of the night sky onto the dome above the audience's heads.

internet."

Dr. Rumstay said even though the sky isn't clear in Valdosta, VSU still has the ability to send astronomy students around the world to do research.

Planetarium shows premiere once a month, and the next show, "The Soot Between the Stars," is set for March 10.

Shows are free to VSU students, and go on sale at 6 p.m. on Friday, though lines form much earlier.

Tickets are distributed as placeholders on a first come, first serve basis.

Parties no bigger than seven may reserve their tickets together at one time.



Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Audiences members at "Whispers of the Cosmos" listened as Dr. Martha Leake explained how black holes are formed and interact with each other.



Tiana Foster

STAFF WRITER
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"Milk's favorite cookie" is the main ingredient in a new malt beverage.

The Veil Brewing Company, located in Richmond, Virginia, released its own flavor of Oreo flavored brew, called Hornswoggler Chocolate Milk Stout with Oreos.

According to the company's Instagram page, it used seven percent of robust chocolate milk stout and conditioned it with hundreds of pounds of Oreo cookies.

"If you like Oreo cookies, this is a must try," the company said on Instagram.

Several reviews said the beer has a strong caffeine smell and a bitter coffee flavor.

On Jan. 24, Hornswoggler released its Oreo brew in limited quantities of 16-ounce cans. The brewery only released 55 to 80 cases, which quickly sold out the same day.

Although the Oreo brew sold out, The Veil Brewing announced it will have the beer on tap at its brewery for a limited time.

Adding a little fun to the first

'Cookies and cream' gets a boozy new spin

release, the company decided to reward five lucky customers with a limited edition Hornswoggler glass. The glass will not be available for purchase and can only be won by finding a golden token underneath a four pack of Hornswoggler's brew.

The Veil Brewing recommends consumers keep the cans refrigerated and drink the Oreo brew fresh because there is a large amount of fermentable sugars left in the beer. Refrigerating it also prevents the drink from exploding in warmer conditions.

Baylee Wilcox, a senior public relations major, agreed she would like to try the Oreo brew.

"I've never heard about this beer, but I would definitely try it out," Wilcox said.

Christina Clay, a junior public relations major, said this was her first time hearing about the Oreo brew and thought it was an interesting concept.

"I would try it because it sounds so sweet," Clay said. "I've never tried anything that extreme."

The Veil Brewing has not mentioned a future date to brew more beer, and it only has the original flavor Oreo as of now.

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FEATURES



Ted Geltner

Part of the Spectator Editorial staff attended the Georgia College Press Association Better Newspaper Contest this past weekend.

Spectator wins awards

Staff Reports

For the second straight year, The Spectator won nine awards at the Georgia College Press Association Better Newspaper Contest.

It ties the second most awards the paper has ever received, and was the third highest total in the state.

"They're well-earned," Gabe Burns, editor-in-chief, said. "I couldn't be more proud of what this staff has accomplished, and each one of them makes me a better editor-in-chief. The respect our in-state peers showed us speaks volumes about our program and the advisers' reputations. This is the strongest group we've had at VSU, and all of our journalists are prepared to change others' lives for the better."

The staff collectively won a first-place for Best Campus Community Service – Editorial and third-place for General Advertising Excellence, Best Newspaper Website and Best Editorial/Editorial Series.

Individually, Mayah Cantave, graduated managing editor, won first in Best News Article (Objective Reporting). Reporter Ryan Sulski finished second in the same category.

Burns earned third-place for Best Feature Story. Justin Lewis, assistant sports editor, and Darien Harris, multimedia editor, won third-place in Best Sports Story and Best Photograph – News, respectively.

"That we won awards in a plethora of categories attests to the strength of this staff," Dr. Pat Miller, Spectator adviser and

VSU journalism professor, said. "We often play David to Goliaths. But this staff is concerned about much more than awards. These journalists are determined to make sure the Spectator does what it is supposed to do—to act as the uncensored voice for VSU students."

Adviser Dr. Ted Geltner agreed.

"The accolades earned by the Spectator staff in Macon were well-deserved," Geltner said. "The students who run this news organization put in long, late hours covering the news here at VSU, and I'm always amazed by the quality of work they are able to produce. They do this university a tremendous service."

Dr. Geltner and fellow adviser Cindy Montgomery joined 10 students at the GCPA conference in Mercer Feb. 10-11. Over 20 Georgia universities were represented. Each student attended multiple seminars and networked with highly regarded journalists and editors in the state, including Atlanta-Journal Constitution political insider Greg Bluestein and Valdosta Daily Times editor Jim Zachary.

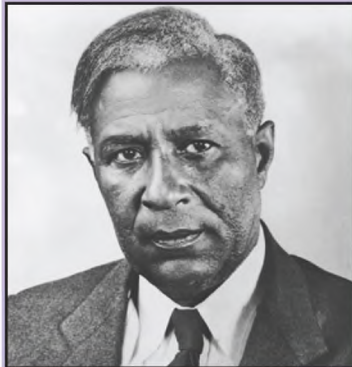
Burns, Sports Editor Kyle Dawson and Circulation Manager Veronica You presented on digital reporting Feb. 10. Managing Editor Julia Rodriguez was elected Georgia Student Press Association president. Lewis and Features Editor Kelsey Dickerson will serve on the board of directors.

Kahlil Slader, graphic artist; Seth Willard, photo editor; Tyra Mills, social media editor; and Michaela Leung, entertainment editor also attended.

Black History Month

Five every-day things we wouldn't have without black inventors

by staff writer Julie Jernigan



Garrett Morgan

Invention: three-position traffic signal

According to History, around 1907 in Cleveland, Ohio, Morgan opened up his own sewing machine repair shop after years of experience, and he later added a widely successful garment shop. Due to his success, he was able to start a newspaper in 1920, called the Cleveland Call, which became the most influential black newspaper in America. With his newfound wealth, he purchased a car and noticed how crowded the streets were. At the time, traffic signals only switched from Stop to Go with no pause in-between. There was no reaction time, which led to many collisions. Morgan then wondered if he could design an automated warning signal. He patented a T-shaped pole with three settings, much like the one used today, and he sold it to General Electric for \$40,000.



George Crum

Invention: potato chips

Crum developed a passion for cooking at an early age and soon started work as a chef for Moon's Lake House restaurant at the Saratoga Lakes Resort in New York, according to Famous Inventors. In 1860, he quit to open his own lakeside restaurant: Crum's House. While there is speculation regarding how the potato chip was made, many believe that while Crum was working, a customer complained his potatoes were too thick, so Crum rectified the situation by cutting potatoes really thin and frying them. They were called "Saratoga chips," and though he never patented his invention, many attribute the crispy snack to Crum.



Frederick Jones

Invention: refrigeration

After years of self-educating himself on the extensive subject of mechanics, Jones acquired his engineering license at the age of 20, according to Biography. He served in World War I, where he often repaired machines and other equipment. After the war, he absorbed any knowledge he could about electronics. In the 1930s during World War II, he created a portable air-cooling machine for trucks that helped preserve blood and medicine. Jones patented more than 60 inventions during his lifetime, and even though he was not alive to accept it, he was awarded the National Medal of Technology by George H.W. Bush in 1991. He was the first African-American to receive the award.



Marie Van Brittan Brown

Invention: home security system

Brown and her husband's work schedules were not what one would call standard. Brown worked as a nurse, and her husband worked as an electronic technician, according to Black Past. They both worked well into the night, and so they had security concerns for their home while they were gone. They lived in Queens, New York; a place where the crime rate was high, and the response time was slow. In 1966, Brown filed a patent for a system of peepholes, a camera, monitors, an alarm button and a two-way microphone. The camera would reflect images on the monitor, and the microphone allowed Brown to speak to anyone on the other side of the door. With a push of the alarm button, the police were immediately notified. Her invention is still widely used today.



Madame C. J. Walker

Invention: specialized hair products for African-Americans

According to Biography, Walker invented her own hair care products, such as pomade, after suffering from a scalp ailment that caused hair loss. She was employed by Annie Turnbo Malone, another prosperous black woman who was also a hair care entrepreneur. While working for Turnbo, Walker perfected her hair methods, and her husband helped promote her products throughout the Southeast. In 1908, she opened her own factory and beauty school, and her profits continued to grow. Walker was the first woman in America to become a self-made millionaire.

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ENTERTAINMENT

An inside look at the Media Arts Geniuses



@MAGvsu/TWITTER

M.A.G. is short for Media Arts Geniuses. They often hold showcases for the student body.

Briana Salem

STAFF WRITER

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Media Arts Geniuses, known as M.A.G., is an organization on VSU's Campus for students to showcase their talent.

Created in the fall of 2012 by Juwan Andres and Edward Lawson, M.A.G. currently has about 80 members. The organization was made for those with performing arts backgrounds to come together and showcase their talent to the campus.

"They [Andres and Lawson] started the organization, basically, because they realized that there were a lot of students on campus, including themselves, who had talent but didn't have that organization outlet to showcase their talent on campus," Lauren Thomas, M.A.G. performer and a senior communication major, said.

Roderick Stillwell, M.A.G.'s president and a mass media major, oversees all operations of the organization and ensures the mission of the organization is fulfilled.

"My experience as president has been what I think will be the most memorable aspect of my college career," Stillwell said. "I have both struggled and triumphed in my position. My love for the organization and the people in it has grown tremendously. The organization has become something sacred to me and something I feel I must protect.

Once a student joins M.A.G, he or she has the opportunity to join any of the four committees, which include performance, media, public relations and event coordinat-

ing. Within that committee, each student has responsibilities that contribute to the success of the organization.

"The executive board leaves committee joining open so you can join multiple committees," Thomas said. "They just want to make sure that when you join a committee you can fully commit to it and not be one of those people who joins everything but isn't active."

M.A.G. has a couple of upcoming events planned for the spring semester.

Evening of Geniuses, which is a campus award show, and the Fame Fashion show are a couple of events the organization has in store.

"We [M.A.G.] come together and start brainstorming ideas for events," Thomas said. "There is no set leader when coming up with choreography or song ideas. It is truly a collaborative effort."

Open to any student on campus, the next opening for new members to join M.A.G will be in the fall of 2017. To join, a student needs to attend the interest meeting, sign-up for an interview with the executive board and audition his or her talent.

"Individuals with passion should join M.A.G.," Stillwell said. "Those who have talent at a great level or the work ethic to be a vital part of any of the committees found in M.A.G. should join. As to why they should join, because this is an organization that changes people. Through my years of being in M.A.G., I have not only just watched myself grow in my own craft but many other people."

Mass media students dive into film and video

In 2005 the mass media department started the Film and Video Society

Edward Rella

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The Film and Video Society at VSU is an organization modeled around the expansion of knowledge for film enthusiasts and filmmakers alike.

While the organization is based around mass media majors, Nathan Ragland, president of The Film and Video Society, said the organization welcomes other students.

"[We] try to include every and anyone who likes film," Ragland said.

The Film and Video Society focuses on enthusiasts of film, aiming to bring together the ones who make the films and who admire them.

Though the organization does not make its own films, Ragland said the organization helps with school projects or film festivals.

"We try and connect the filmmakers with anyone looking to get involved in the process," Ragland said.

The Film and Video Society is involved with local and regional festivals, which are open to anyone willing to attend. At the end of each semester at VSU, the organization hosts a film showcase for all students and occasionally for regional high schools.

Ragland helped create one of the most popular film festivals: the 48 Hour Film Festival, in which filmmakers are tasked with creating an entire film from scratch, in just 48 hours, then displaying it with the organization.

This organization was created by John Bring, the first president, in 2005. With a focus on creating and maintaining great connections in the film world, Bring was able to leave a legacy behind for VSU when he became an as-

sistant writer for "Supernatural," a popular American horror and fantasy television show. Ragland said he hopes to continue this legacy by emphasizing the importance of connections, especially in the film industry.

The Film and Video Society meets every first and third Wednesday of the month, with a basis on appreciating a certain film at every meeting. On certain meeting days, Ragland hosts another one of his creations: Reel Wars. For Reel Wars, two teams debate on popular film topics, such as horror movies, superhero movies, comedy movies and so on, with a live crowd.

"[The meetings are there to] talk movies, appreciate them, build connections and just have a good time with fellow film enthusiasts," Ragland said.

VSU's favorite Super Bowl commercials

Shanice Barnes

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Football is one of America's favorite pastimes, and the Super Bowl is one of the biggest events of the year. You get to

watch the two top teams of the season face off to prove who's the best. However, there's more to see each year at the Super Bowl besides the game, such as the half time show and those hilarious Super Bowl commercials. The Super Bowl commercials are perhaps the most

thought-out advertisements, because many Americans watch the Super Bowl; It's advertisers time to shine and promote their products to the country. Some VSU students described what their favorite Super Bowl commercial was.



"I really loved the Buick commercial with Cam Newton playing football with kids."

-Zuriel Heron, Junior, Criminal Justice major

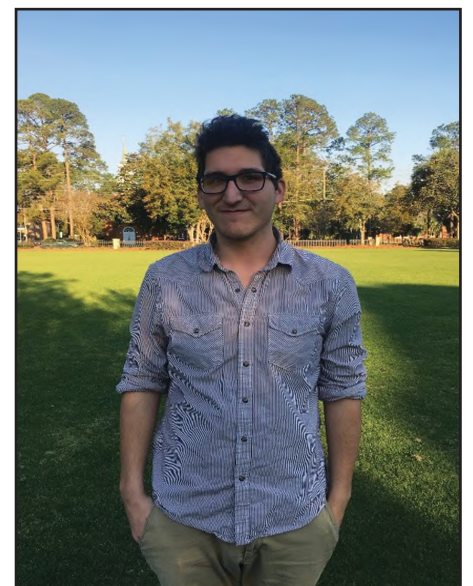
"My favorite commercial was the car commercial with Melissa McCarthy."

-Spencer Shivers, Freshman, Business major



"I liked the T-Mobile commercial with Justin Bieber."

-Katelyn Foreman, Sophomore, Healthcare administration major



SPORTS

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VSU Women streaking through the GSC



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

VSU Women's Basketball is second in the GSC with a 13-5 conference record. Alabama Huntsville is 11th at 4-14.

Juston Lewis

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VSU Women's Basketball has first place in their sights after reeling off six straight wins.

The first season of Head Coach Carley Kuhns' career has not always been fun. Kuhns became coach in June and did not recruit any of her players. She had to learn about the different personalities of her players and figure out how to reach out to each of them.

Nearly eight months later, she has led the team to their first winning season in three years.

One of those personalities, Sonya Franklin, said she is starting to enjoy playing with her teammates more. Franklin leads the Blazers in assists this season with 76, and she is tied for first in steals with 30.

"It's getting a lot easier," Franklin said. "At the beginning of the year, we knew nothing about each other, but we've grown a lot since then."

Her teammate, Kenya Samone' Dixon, is leading the Gulf South Conference in three-point field goal percentage. Samone' Dixon attributes the team's recent success to them having fun on the court.

"It's a lot easier [now], and it's fun," Samone' Dixon said. "It's easy to go out there and play with people that you really love and know they're going to give it their all every time. You know they have your back regardless."

Kuhns had the chance to witness this team's progress from the start, and she said she can see that her players are now having fun.

"We wanted to be playing our best basketball in February, and we're getting closer and closer to putting together a full game," Kuhns said. "It's been fun to watch, the team is having fun, we're having fun and we're trying to put our best product on the floor."

Kuhns said she thinks the team mirrors her personality in a way, which explains why the team is relaxed and able to have fun together.

"If I'm serious all the time, they'll be serious all the time," Kuhns said. "It comes with consistency. No matter if I'm having a good or a bad day, I'm always going to treat them the same way. If they do something to make me mad, I won't let it carry over."

Through the consistency and proper preparation, Kuhns said her players can enjoy the game even during crucial situations.

"Being prepared allows you to have fun because there is nothing better than knowing what a team is going to run and being able to stop it," Kuhns said.

The Blazers have started to click on all cylinders, and they are storming towards not only the GSC tournament but also the Division II National Championship Tournament. Kuhns said thoughts of postseason play are creeping into her mind.

"I don't think any of us expected to be in this position right now, but we are," Kuhns said. "We aren't only playing for a GSC berth, but we're playing for a NCAA berth. Every game from here on matters."

The Blazers are currently in second place in the GSC. The top seeded West Florida Argos own the tie-breaker with them, but Kuhns said she would love to play them again and have the opportunity to beat them.

The Argos have won eight of their last 10 games. If both teams win out, they will be the one and two seeds in the GSC tournament.

The Blazers will take on Alabama-Huntsville tonight in Huntsville, Alabama. The Chargers have been eliminated from postseason contention with a 4-14 conference record. The game will start at 6 p.m.



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FG Percentage-- Madi Mitchell (.511)

Rebounds-- Kenya Samone' Dixon (206)

Assists-- Sonya Franklin (76)

Steals-- Sonya Franklin & Aaliyah Cheatham (30)

SPORTS



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Senior Damian Hill will lead VSU against UAH for the lead in the Gulf South.

Jeremiah Hill comes off a screen against Union last Thursday. Hill leads the Blazers in points scored with 461.

Tiebreaker: VSU plays UAH for top seed

Juston Lewis
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First place is up for grabs in the Gulf South Conference, and on Thursday, either VSU Basketball or Alabama-Huntsville will emerge with sole possession. It is the second matchup between the two teams this season, as the Blazers lost 82-72 to the Chargers on Jan. 2.

VSU, which was recently ranked second in the NCAA Division II South Region, gave up 50 second-half points to UAH, which is ranked first in the region, in the loss, dropping VSU to 3-2 in the conference. The Blazers went on to win 12 of their next 13 games, including a 10 game winning streak after the loss.

VSU surged to the top of the conference after the win streak,

but the Blazers weren't the only team streaking in the GSC.

Alabama-Huntsville has won 11 of 13 games since the matchup against the Blazers. The Chargers, like VSU, used their offense to storm through the conference and are atop the major offensive categories.

UAH is third in the GSC in scoring with an 84.9 points per game average. The Blazers lead the category with 87.5 points per game. The Chargers lead the GSC in field goal percentage with .489, while the Blazers are third with .480. Alabama-Huntsville leads the conference in three-point percentage with .422, and VSU is fifth with a .373 average per game.

Head Coach Mike Helfer stressed the importance of the game for seeding purposes in the GSC tournament.

"It's an important game,"

Helfer said. "With only four games to go, playing for first, this is where you want to be."

The Blazers are currently tied with Alabama-Huntsville for the top seed in the conference, but the Chargers hold the tie-breaker because they beat VSU earlier.

Beau Justice and Marquis Simuels are both going into the game with the same mission: beat the Chargers.

"It's still on my mind," Justice said on playing Alabama-Huntsville. "We've only lost four games in conference play, and anytime you lose, it hurts. You definitely mark it on your schedule when you play them again."

Simuels said he isn't worried about facing the Chargers, and he thinks his teammates will be more focused this time around.

"In basketball, if you take a loss to anybody it's going to be in the back of your mind," Simuels

said. "Not saying we are worried about it, but we're going to be focused on what we need to do ourselves and not so much what they're going to be doing."

The Blazers lost the last away game they played when Delta State beat them on Feb. 4. The loss didn't rattle the Blazers, as they came home to win two consecutive matchups against potential playoff teams.

"Sometimes you get knocked down and come back twice as strong," Justice said.

Senior guard Josh Lemons is looking forward to the ending of the regular season and doesn't think the team's losses will affect the team's play.

"Losses happen in basketball," Lemons said. "We went on a 10 game win streak, and it ended. That's basketball. We came home, we got our confidence back, we are playing our style of

play and we're just going to take it to Huntsville."

The Blazers have eight seniors on the team. Down the stretch, Helfer leaned on their leadership and experience. With experience comes larger goals.

"I want us to play well and go as far as we can go," Lemons said. "I want a ring this year, and I think that goes for everyone else here. Hopefully we can get there."

The matchup with Alabama-Huntsville will serve as a warm-up for the postseason for VSU as well as the two following games against North Alabama and Shorter, who are both vying for a postseason bid.

The game against UAH is on Thursday at 8:30 p.m. in Huntsville, Alabama. Coverage of the game can be found on UAH's athletics website.

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