

SGA appoints two new senators- pg. 3

March 30, 2017

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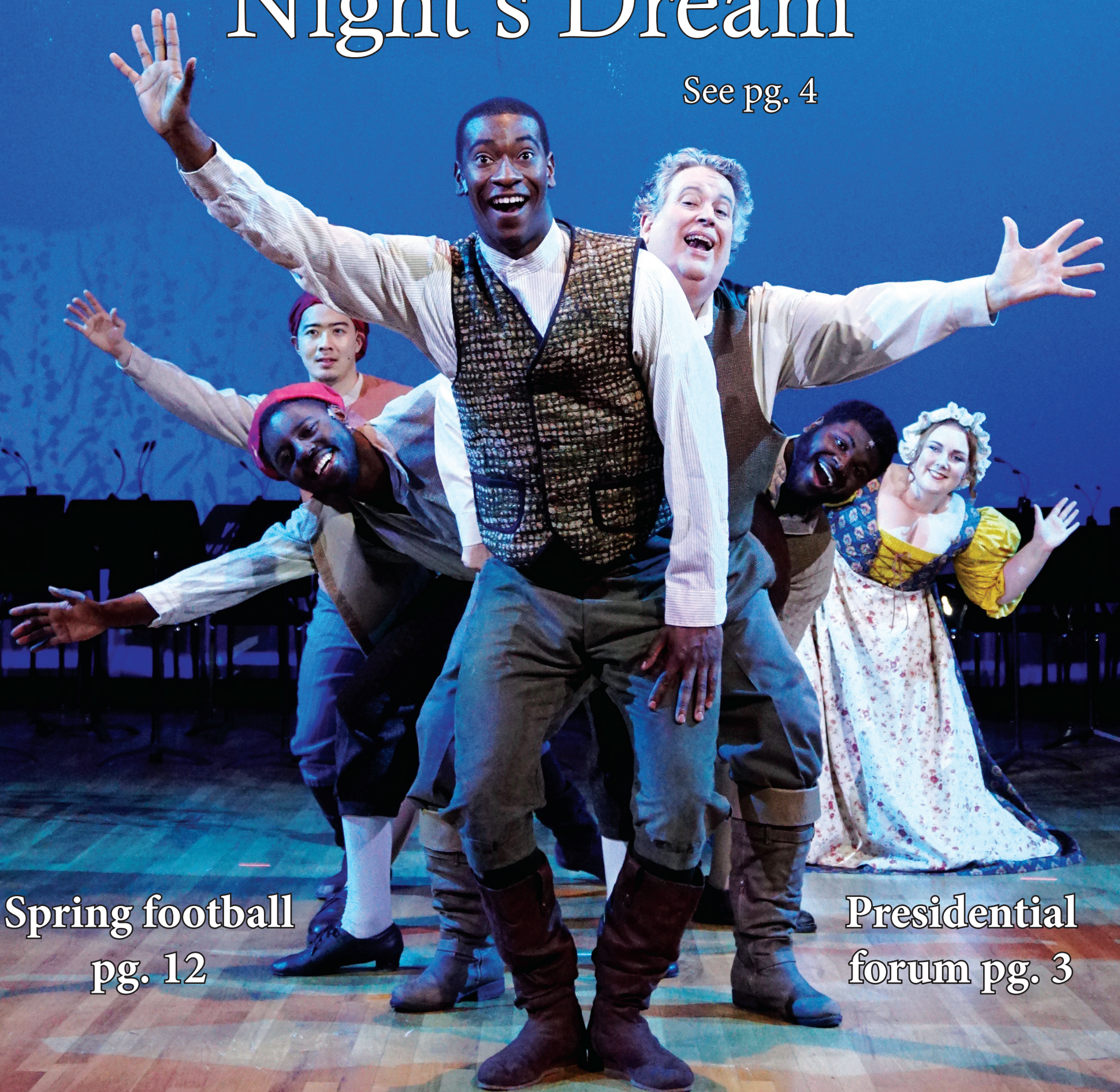
Volume 92, Issue 11

THE SPECTATOR

THE UNFILTERED, UNCENSORED VOICE OF THE STUDENTS.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

See pg. 4



Spring football
pg. 12

Presidential
forum pg. 3

Photo by Seth Willard

NEWS

VSU silent on graduation speaker

Shanice Barnes

STAFF WRITER

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Spring Commencement, the graduation ceremony, will take place on May 6 at 7 p.m. on the front lawn.

Universities seek commencement speakers who will give the graduating class hope and a last word of advice before branching out into the real world.

Schools such as Arizona State, Clark University and the University of Richmond have already announced their spring commencement speakers.

Arizona State's spring commencement speaker will be Howard Schultz, CEO and chairman of Starbucks. Clark University's commencement speaker will be Earl Lewis, president of the An-

drew W. Mellon Foundation. The University of Richmond's three commencement speakers will be Sheila Johnson, founding partner of Black Entertainment Television; Robert Reynolds, principal at Reynolds Development; and Donald Lemons, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

The schools listed above have chosen prominent people in the business world as commencement speakers.

Though VSU is not as large as the universities listed above, it's had successful commencement speakers, most of which attended the university.

VSU's 221st commencement speaker was Stuart Parker, who graduated from VSU with a bachelor's degree in business administration and is the chief executive officer of United Services Auto-

mobile Association, a Fortune 500 company that provides insurance, banking and more to millions of Americans.

The 222nd commencement speaker was Amanda Miller, a former VSU student who graduated in 2006 with a bachelors degree in education who went on to compete in the Miss America pageant where she was runner-up. Later on that year, she became Miss Georgia USA.

The recent commencement speakers were successful graduates of VSU.

VSU pays homage to alumni and recognizes their accomplishments. Having a former student speak at graduation resonates more with students.

The spring 2017 commencement speaker has not yet been announced.



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**The deadline to apply is
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Questions? - tasullivan@valdosta.edu



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NEWS

SGA hosts presidential forum

Bryce Ethridge

STAFF WRITER

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SGA held up its promise by holding a forum with President Richard Carvajal where students could ask any question without having to go through an appointment.

Dr. Carvajal brought along Vice President Vincent Miller for subjects Carvajal wasn't sure of.

Although the event did not have a big turnout (only 21 students attended with the exception of SGA members), certain students brought up their issues about how VSU's Police Department has handled their calls.

"It's almost like if your issue isn't something that piques their interest, it's kind of like they're not real issues," Kaylyn Turner, sophomore, said.

Turner said UPD has belittled or laughed at issues they deemed unimportant in the past. She also said while she may not be concerned for her own safety, parents may not feel the same way about the subject.

Tia Lewis, a senior, said UPD can be intimidating.

"I've honestly seen some crazy things on campus, but I'm not comfortable speaking to UPD about it," Lewis said.

At the forum, freshman Kayla Larry gave her account of when she called UPD.

"I felt that a lot of times I was kind of down-talked [sic] to because of my race," Larry said.

She also said the officers that responded to her call took her issues as a joke and used an unpleasant tone when speaking to her.

Dr. Carvajal responded by saying that if UPD acts this way toward students, they need to speak up about it.

"When going through these situations, tell somebody," Dr. Carvajal said. "We can't hold folks accountable unless we know about them."

He also said he wants to encourage students to go to the Department of Diversity and Inclusion and be specific about what happened in their situation.

"No matter what's going on, I want you to step up, and I want you to tell somebody what occurred," Dr. Carvajal said. "If you didn't know, I'm Hispanic. I know what it's like to be different and to suffer."

Dr. Carvajal said while the statistics of the crime rate were low, that didn't mean there is no crime on campus. He also said he is putting his trust into the new police chief to weed out officers who have been handling situations poorly.

Various members of student organizations took the time to come out to the meeting in order to ask about where their organization's future is headed and to address their feelings of being left behind by the president.

"We can't be what you want us to be if you don't support us," Sen. D'layna Jonas said.

Jonas spoke on behalf of the band and said due to budget cuts and small practice areas, the band has not been able to attend many away games or play at events around campus.

"They (the band budget) have been reduced more than other organizations around campus," Jonas said.

Dr. Carvajal said he looked through all of the band's equipment and practice areas and said improved budget plans for the next five years are in the fine arts.

Dr. Miller said the offices for student organizations in the Student Union will be taken away and replaced with the Office of Student Life, which will handle budgets among other things involving student organizations.

"We have no interest in turning our backs on any organization," Dr. Miller said.

FAFSA benefits students with latest alterations

Tianna Foster

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In an attempt to improve the financial aid process, FAFSA no longer requires students to use their most recent tax information.

The new program will generate student aid by providing valid income tax information from two years ago and the form opens in October rather than February. It should relieve the financial aid office during its busiest months, which are critical for college students because of payment deadlines for the next school year.

"It's been a big stress to complete my application in time," Ashley Thompson, a junior communications major, said. "My classes were dropped the first week of school once before

because of this issue."

According to Chad Daughterty, associate director of Financial Aid, the office is creating new ways to inform students with emails, social media posts and signs posted around campus. Daughterty said there will be a few more methods tested, such as information tables, Banner ads and financial aid workshops. Daughterty also speaks to students directly in class with a 10 minute presentation, including handouts and allowing students to ask questions.

This trial has been successful, as they've already been to several classes throughout the month of March, according to Daughterty. The goal is to continue scheduling sessions throughout April and reach as many students as possible.

James Chandler, a sophomore marketing major, said the change

is positive.

"I did not know about any financial aid changes," Chandler said. "But it's relieving to know that I don't have to wait on my current tax returns to finish my application."

Erin Turner, a senior art major, said starting FAFSA early is a good idea.

"Hopefully this encourages students to start their FAFSA applications before there are only a few months left before deadline," Turner said. "I remember being one of those late students and having to call the financial aid office in the summer to be on hold for hours before speaking to someone."

The new process gives students the opportunity to submit their applications ahead of time and assists financial aid offices to start the process and provide students with aid months ahead of time.

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Fairies gather for a Midsummer Night's romp in the forest.



Titania and her Fairies assist Bottom so that he feels comfortable in his transformed state.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra and the Valdosta State University Theatre and Dance programs are collaborating on William Shakespeare's production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.'

Photos by Seth Willard

Free Student Preview Performance:
Thursday, March 30, 7:30 PM

Show Dates:
Friday, March 31, 2017 @ 7:30 PM
Saturday, April 1, 2017 @ 7:30 PM
(Tickets for this showing are being managed by the Valdosta Symphonic Orchestra Box Office)
229.333.5973

Sunday, April 2, 2017 @ 3:00 PM
Whitehead Auditorium
First Floor, VSU Fine Arts Building
VSU Theatre & Dance Box Office: Fine Arts Building Room 1071.
Mon-Sat, 2-5 PM; 229.333.5973



Hermia tells Helena she and Lysander are about to elope.

NEWS

Daylight saving time may be harmful to your health

Julie Jernigan

ASST. COPY EDITOR
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Due to the recent time shift, the topic of eliminating Daylight Saving Time has once again made an appearance, but now experts have said it is costing us more money and is harmful to our health.

Daylight Saving Time first began in Germany in 1916 to save money

during World War I, despite the belief it was from farmers, according to TIME. The U.S. officially adopted the ritual two years later for the same reason, but in actuality, the Chamber of Commerce endorsed it because when people got off of work, they had more light hours to do things, such as shopping.

It may have been created to save energy, but really, we're losing more energy now.

Researchers in Indiana found that people did use less lights, but they used more air conditioning because their houses didn't have a chance to cool off in the late afternoon, according to Business Insider. Also, there is an increase in gasoline usage, since people are staying out longer due to the extra hour of daylight.

Strokes and heart attacks have been linked to DST, but James Proud, inventor of Sense, a sleep tracker, is more concerned with

disrupting our sleep cycles.

Till Roenneberg, a chronobiologist at Ludwig-Maximilian's University in Munich, said our bodies never truly adjust to the time change.

"The majority of the population has drastically decreased productivity, decreased quality of life, increasing susceptibility to illness and is just plain tired," Roenneberg told National Geo-

graphic.

Many people agree on changing DST, but there's a disagreement on whether to stick to only DST or Standard Time.

"Ultimately, Daylight Saving is an economic tradition," David Gerald,

behavioral economist, told Huffington Post. "And all economic choices involve tradeoffs. Even if we decide to abolish Daylight Saving, there would be a large contingent of unhappy people."

Parents and kids in Helena, Montana, are concerned about the elimination of outdoor sports if their state decides to abolish DST, which is currently in a bill being reviewed by the state.

"Few schools have lights in order to carry on their after-school activities," Jim Opitz, with Helena Public School, told Helena Independent Record.

Will we ever eliminate DST? Not for a long time, but it's important to keep the conversation going, and then maybe we'll be

Strokes and heart attacks have been linked to DST, but James Proud, inventor of Sense, a sleep tracker, is more concerned with disrupting our sleep cycles.

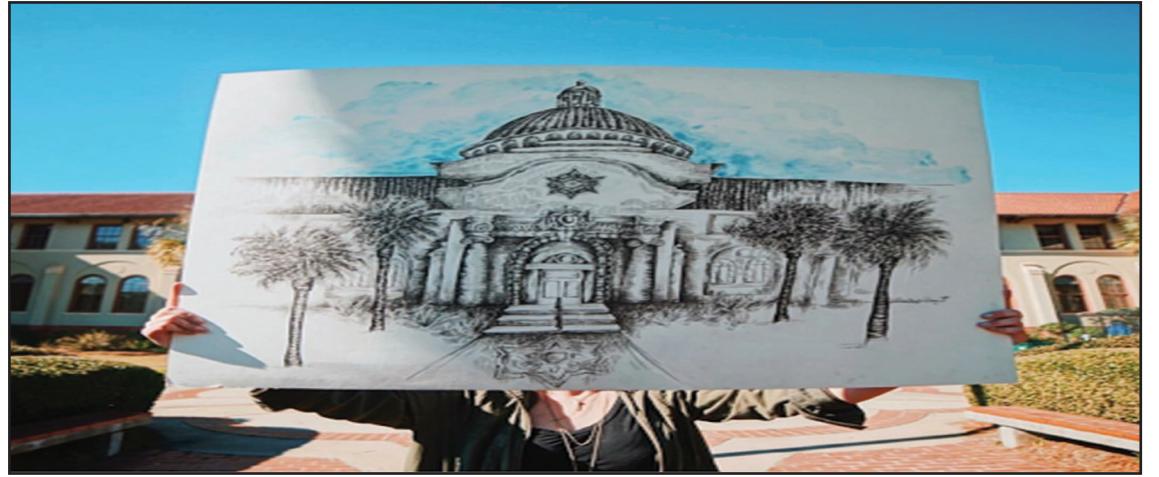


Photo featured on VSU's Instagram.

Courtesy of Alison Stephen

VSU Open House expects big turnout

Darla Dunning

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dldunning@valdosta.edu

VSU will open its doors to prospective students and their families on April 1 for Open House.

Open House will consist of touring the residence halls, classrooms, student recreation center and different dining facilities. Information sessions over scholarships, financial aid information and entrance requirements will also be held by Admissions Counselors.

According to Ryan Hogan, director of Admissions, VSU expects 1,500 people to attend Open House, similar to its February Open House. Hogan said he will highlight the many benefits a degree from VSU has to offer, including hands-on learning opportunities.

"The Open House is beneficial because our guests learn the many ways Valdosta State will help them become successful

upon graduation," Hogan said. "Many of our guests tell me their college search ended once they came to our Open House."

According to the VSU Open House itinerary, the day starts at 9 a.m. with prospective students

questions about getting involved with campus life.

Along with Hogan giving tours to prospective students and families, VSU ambassadors, who are students dedicated to assisting future students, current VSU students and VSU Alumni representatives, will also assist students during Open House.

Jordan Surat-Jones, a VSU ambassador who has given VSU

Open House tours since the fall of 2015, gave insight to what the event offers prospective students.

"The Open House provides perfect insight to what a day at VSU is like," Surat-Jones said. "The families get to talk to the various departments around campus and meet one-on-one with some professors."

Surat-Jones mentioned his favorite part about giving tours.

"I enjoy being able to meet all of the families and help their students decide on, hopefully, coming to VSU," Surat-Jones said.

According to Ryan Hogan, director of Admissions, VSU expects 1,500 people to attend Open House, similar to its February Open House.

and their families checking in at the P.E. Complex, followed by an academic presentation from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. where prospective students can explore more than 100 majors and programs.

From 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., prospective students and their families will be guided on a campus tour and eat lunch at Palms Dining Center. They are then encouraged to attend the Student Life Carousel where they will meet faculty, staff and students who will be available to answer

OPINIONS

California waiter or U.S. border security?

Geneva Crooks

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When visiting a restaurant there are a few automatic expectations we have as consumers: good food, good service and a good time. That's why servers are trained to be polite, friendly and accommodating to the best of their ability.

Restaurants want you to walk away excited about the day you return to.

According to CNN a waiter in Huntington Beach, California was fired after asking guests for proof of residency when they ordered a drink.

"I need to make sure you're from here before I serve you," is what Diana Carrillo recalls him saying at the Saint Marc Pub-Café on March 11.

After complaining to a manager, her and a group of friends were offered seating in another section, but that simply was not enough.

Carrillo's sister who was also asked for proof of residency, quickly took to social media to write a hefty review of her experience, as many of us would.

Soon, her review reached over 1,000 likes, 1,000 comments and almost 2,000 shares on Facebook. This event was not going to be ignored.

The restaurant and pub, Saint Marc, stated that the "employee at fault" has been fired and that the event was "very unfortunate."

"We work in an environment that ultimately does not allow for us to discriminate against paying customers, and yet here is someone totally disregarding that fact. It's disgusting to know that

those women probably just wanted to have a nice lunch and were slapped in the face with his discrimination instead of the experience they had anticipated," said Tayla Means, 21-year-old public relations major.

One thing is fairly obvious, that



MCT CAMPUS

Photograph of Saint Marc Café, where the Carrillo sisters were discriminated against based off their ethnicity.

server was deranged and should not have been employed in the first place.

It doesn't take a genius to know that the only thing necessary when someone is ordering a drink is proof of identification.

This server deserved to lose their job. Not only did he discriminate against people because of their race and origins, but he also is a huge liability to accom-

pany that wants customers to keep coming back.

"One server can really change your experience and I think in the restaurant world people need to work harder on leaving their biases at the door and doing the job to the best of their ability so that we can ensure people continue to have great memories," said Means.

Saint Marc did their best to

make things right, and in doing so they donated ten percent of aweekends revenues to the Orange County Immigrant Youth organization, Carrillo's charity of choice.

Although the server was fired and the pub made amends, this is surely an experience Carrillo and her friends won't forget.

OPINIONS

Our point of view...

VSU looking for commencement speaker

Graduation at VSU is 37 days away.

Graduating seniors have a little over a month left of undergraduate assignments, tests, quizzes and class. Seniors also only have 37 days to get caps, gowns, friends and family members ready for the big day.

If anyone has ever been to a graduation ceremony, particularly at a university, he or she knows it's one of the best events in a person's life. He or she also knows graduation ceremonies are one of the longest and often most boring events in a person's life for everyone involved.

Outside of hearing your own name called or a friend or family member's name called, the ceremony is usually a snooze-fest.

One portion of graduation that usually determines whether it is an enjoyable experience for participants and spectators is the commencement speech. If the commencement speaker is boring and can't relate to the graduates, the ceremony will be painfully long. However, if the speaker is relevant, energetic and not redundant, the ceremony will be an enjoyable and memorable time for all involved. At least before the names begin to get called.

In the last few years, the commencement ceremony has gone through many changes, many of which make it more memorable and less boring. Prior to 2016, the ceremony was held in the Complex over two days, with certain colleges graduating on Friday and others on Saturday.

When Cecil Staton became interim president at VSU, he oversaw changes to the ceremony including putting every ceremony on one day. The changes included individual ceremonies for every college at different times around campus as well as one large, more traditional ceremony at night on the football field with fireworks and a keynote speaker.

VSU alumnus and CEO of the United Services Automobile Association became VSU's first commencement speaker in quite some time.

When Kelli Brown took over the presidency last fall, she nixed the individual ceremonies and held the fall commencement ceremony on the front lawn. The ceremony included a laser show and VSU alumnus and former Miss Georgia Amanda Miliner as the speaker.

The fireworks and the lasers were cool, but graduates don't need gimmicks to have an unforgettable commencement ceremony. They need an entertaining, intellectual individual with ties to Valdosta State University who will be thought-provoking and provide encouragement to those entering the workforce, higher levels of education, the military or other new challenges facing them.

As students, especially seniors, we shouldn't wait for the university to come up with someone to meet the needs of graduates and their families and friends. Students should do some research, come together and find a person with ties to VSU who embodies success and will appropriately send the 2017 graduates into the next chapter of their lives.

VSU has a rich history with a lot of successful alumni. Our next great commencement speaker is out there. Start a social media campaign. Storm this person's inbox. Make he or she want to come speak at graduation. Present to him or her our university and its hardworking and diverse student body. Make them want to come home to VSU and share some knowledge they have gathered in their time away from Valdosta.

Only students know what students truly want and need. Rather than wait for the university to find a speaker and complain about their choice, go get someone who will make graduation a memorable experience for graduates and other attendees.

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

La Jalisco Supermercado serves up authentic taste of Mexico

Kelsey Dickerson

FEATURES EDITOR

kedickerson@valdosta.edu

Move over Taco Tuesday; 98 cent tacos and beer Thursdays are here.

Situated just behind the stadium at 1300 N Ashley St., La Jalisco is unassuming. It's not surprising if most people have no idea it houses a restaurant at all, as the front sign only reads, "Supermercado."

Despite the outside, don't be afraid to go in. If you do, you'll be rewarded with the best and most budget-friendly Mexican food in town.

The restaurant is seat yourself, and most of the tables are outside, so you can bypass the supermarket entirely. If you do want to sit inside, you might have to show up early to eat, as there are only four tables. Outside, though, is a covered porch that's comfortable rain or shine, even in winter, with 10 tables and a bar.

Not only is the food cheaper and fresher than most of the fast-food fare on campus, it's also

pretty close. Students living on campus could easily walk or bike over from their dorms for dinner after classes or for lunch on the weekends. Moe's is good, but it isn't authentic, and when you're craving real, fresh Mexican food, this is the most convenient place to go. You'll even end up saving yourself a few dollars in the process.

While a burrito meal at Moe's might run you as much as \$10 or more, La Jalisco has \$5 burritos (that are just as big) every Monday, and every other day they'll only run you \$6 and some change. Though you won't get your chips and salsa for free like in other restaurants, you'll still spend less than anywhere else, even with that on your ticket. On top of that, the restaurant has 98 cent tacos and domestic beer every Thursday, making its prices competitive with places such as McDonalds and popular with VSU students.

On top of its economic pricing, it offers a variety of fresh foods. Since the restaurant is inside of a grocery store, the food is coming

straight from the butcher and grocer to your plate. You can judge the quality of the meat going in your taco or torta before it's even on your plate just by walking over to the butcher's display case.

The tacos and tamales are the best in town. Order a tamale before your main meal, and you'll get to enjoy it as an appetizer before you eat. The tamales are pre-made before the store opens, but they're fresh. The tacos are also fresh and light in their corn shells and only come with onions and cilantro, though you can request whatever salsa you prefer on the side. You can choose whatever meat you want, but I would recommend the carnitas. I'm usually not a fan of pork, but La Jalisco's is soft and juicy, with a few of the pieces having a crunchy, braised texture that makes the taco the best around.

If you haven't been to La Jalisco, go now. You won't regret it. On your way out, you can go in the grocery store for a Mexican pastry from the bakery case or a slice of tres leches cake for dessert.



Eboni' Register/THE SPECTATOR

(Left) Close-up image of Osaka's hand rolled California Roll. (Right) Osaka Hibachi & Sushi's sign lit up.

Osaka Hibachi & Sushi on a high roll

Eboni' Register

STAFF WRITER

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Osaka Hibachi & Sushi is a small Japanese eats and sushi rolls located beside Publix shopping center at Inner Perimeter Road.

Offering healthy and vegetarian options, Osaka is a dine-in or take-out friendly spot for locals and college students to try.

The atmosphere is casual, resembling other small business restaurants but holding a high cleanliness and well designed outer appearance.

Open from 11 a.m. to 8:45 p.m., Osaka has a various amount of cuisines including appetizers, soup, salad, rice bowls, sushi entrees and deep fried rolls.

Personally, I took to the California roll and crunch roll, which were \$4.25 each and are usually my favorite pick on any sushi menu.

Osaka's crunch roll wasn't prepared like the typical deep fried sushi, it was wrapped with crab instead of being stuffed and then fried on the outside.

Both sushi rolls were prepared very well and cut evenly to expose the inner layer of all the

food components.

The pricing of this particular Japanese spot was very reasonable considering the prices vary from \$3.95 to \$10.95 depending your choice.

Osaka was friendly and clean which are the two major keys to a foodies' hearts.

The location may be a bit of a leap from campus but the delivery option on Tapingo makes it easy to have your order placed to enjoy a delicious oriental meal.

Osaka deserves an eight out of 10.

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FEATURES



Meme creepy 'butt' sweet

VSU's Career Opportunities is a must



Courtesy of Kirsten Lepore

Kelsey Dickerson

FEATURES EDITOR
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If you're not into unnerving claymation and bubble butts, this new meme might not be the one for you.

Artist Kristen Lepore's newest creation "Hi, Stranger" is sweeping Tumblr and Twitter, as users on each platform manipulate screencaps and short pieces of video to create their own original content.

The two minute 42 second video packs a lot in. It opens to a modeled clay person laying naked across an all-white fabric backdrop, kicking its legs back and forth as it addresses the viewer. The little clay character shows the viewer the sunset, before it says it "wants to remember your shapes" and proceeds to draw a portrait that is never shown. Just before the video ends, the character gives a short, uplifting speech. "You're so hard on yourself," it says. "You're wonderful. You're worthy of being loved, you really are. You just have to let yourself believe it."

The fascination with the video seems to stem from the feelings it inspires. Popular British You-Tuber AmazingPhil, also known as Phil Lester, tweeted a link to the video with the caption, "This makes me feel very loved and also very afraid," echoing the sen-

timent of thousands of others.

One Twitter user posted stills from the video, saying "'Hi, Stranger' looks creepy at first, but if you watch the video, you'll feel appreciated more than anyone else."

The video, uploaded to YouTube on March 20, has over 1 million views and is still climbing. Some YouTubers have even taken the time to dub the short in their own language. A video uploaded on March 24 already has over 42,000 views. Over a million results for the "Hi Stranger" search now exist on the website, with users posting their own reaction videos, subtitled version or even their recreation. Lepore's work seems to have gone international, with users posting in Russian, Spanish, Korean and Japanese.

"Fanart" for the video appeared on other social media sites as well, showing up on Instagram especially, as more people become fascinated with this strange short.

Lepore's other creature creations have been commissioned for MTV, children's show "Yo Gabba Gabba," Planned Parenthood, Nestle, Whole Foods and Heinz. Lepore has also created several Google Doodles, and the first stop-motion episode of Cartoon Network's "Adventure Time," which premiered on Jan. 14, 2016.

Julie Jernigan

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Connecting students with employers is the main goal of Career Opportunities at VSU, according to Kevin Taylor, associate director of the career development team.

When students begin their journey at VSU, one of their first stops should be Career Opportunities where counselors set them up with a four-year plan that ultimately helps them leave with a job right after graduation.

"Going through college is a process, and they need to know there is help here," Taylor said.

Counselors help students identify their skills, which helps them decide on a major where they can shadow or intern in a field of their choosing. The office also

hosts career fairs and workshops to help students network throughout each semester.

One service that's overlooked is a test on Focus 2, which can be found on Blazer Briefcase. The test can determine what major is best for a student.

Blazer Briefcase, which can be found on VSU's website or on the Blazer Briefcase app, lists internships and full-time and part-time positions in a student's field of choice. The program draws from different companies' websites across the nation, using patent-pending technology called Career Shift.

The site also hosts helpful videos on how to master small talk and a poor GPA.

Recently, Career Opportunities hosted the Spring Career Expo and the Blazer Ready Workshop, which helped students apply for jobs and network with the com-

munity.

"We're the middle man," Taylor said when asked what the office hoped to accomplish with these events "When employers come with opportunities, we want to directly connect them with students."

Taylor stressed student participation at these events to help better their experience.

"The more students we have, the more employers will come," Taylor said.

The office also hosts résumé walk-ins to help refine résumés every Tuesday and Wednesday from 1-4 p.m. and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon.

Seniors, don't fret. Career Opportunities still has upcoming events, which can be found on their website, such as the Last Chance Job Fair on April 27 from 6-8 p.m.

HOW TO:

Apartment Hunting

Alex Dunn, Darla Dunning

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In order to choose the right apartment for the right price, students must take many factors into account.

Students should consider the most convenient way to get to classes when they live off campus. The apartment should be within walking distance or close enough to make a quick drive to save gas.

Various aspects affect the pricing of an apartment, such as location, safety provisions, furnishings and floor plans.

According to Apartment Guide, some apartments have a pet policy where they are not allowed to have a pet over 35 pounds and have to be a year old. Also, some apartments do

not allow aggressive breeds, such as German Shepherds, Pit Bulls and huskies.

In addition, one should see if the apartment has any additional pet fees. In some cases residents only have to pay a one time pet fee, while others require an extra payment with rent each month.

Pricing for apartments may differ, depending on what type of floorplan one chooses to rent. For example, if each roommate gets their own bathroom instead of sharing one, the price could become more expensive.

Other factors include having to pay separately for utilities, such as water and power. Some apartments may offer to include all utilities in the rent, so the resident will only have to pay one bill each month.

Amenities are another factor when choosing an apartment that could intrigue someone to live there. Students should see if the apartment offers a pool,

fitness center or study area.

Ana Machado, junior and healthcare administrator major, picked to live in her apartment because of the amenities they had to offer.

"Everyone is so kind and attentive, the property is really up to date and it's really nice being able to relax by the pool on a pretty day," said Machado.


These aspects may not be a factor in the final decision, but they can help.

Fully furnished apartments are also convenient when students are on a budget. It definitely makes moving into an apartment easier. Students just need to make sure that the furniture is clean and in good condition.

Overall, future resident should really do their research when it comes to finding the perfect apartment. There a lot of aspects to consider, ones that can make or break your decision.



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FEATURES

Ultimate Blazer Challenge promotes wellness, health

Bryce Ethridge

STAFF WRITER

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On Saturday, VSU held the Ultimate Blazer Challenge, an event replacing this year's 5k Blazer Dash.

The challenge was open to all students and faculty, but participants had to be in teams of two.

The challenge consisted of stations where participants would test their minds with puzzles, their bodies with balance beams and their spirits of adventure with a forest setting.

The challenge included a slip-and-slide dash, balancing challenges, tests of aim, running and more.

"We wanted to offer something different to students and the VSU community other than a 5k be-

cause we have so many of those," Sarah Thomas, coordinator of Campus Wellness and program director of the undergraduate exercise physiology program, said.

Thomas said one new idea was an obstacle course, and Campus Wellness, Campus Recreation and CORE came together to make that event happen.

Chelsea Holcombe, coordinator of Wellness and Promotions for Campus Recreation, said the Blazer Dash was replaced with the Ultimate Blazer Challenge due to low attendance at the 5k dash in the past few years.

"We (Campus Wellness) decided to kind of come up with a different idea, and this (the Ultimate Blazer Challenge) is what we came up with," Holcombe said.

Thomas said the challenge was not for anyone to win but to pro-

mote wellness and health.

At the end of the challenge, participants were greeted by members of Campus Recreation, CORE and Campus Wellness, while also getting their picture taken and receiving a medal.

Kyle Hopkins, a junior, said the Ultimate Blazer Challenge required participants to not be impulsive.

"To me, the balancing challenges were the hardest, but then again, there's a strategy behind it all, so you just have to find it as fast as possible," Hopkins said. "You're already tired when you get there, so you just want to get through it, but you have to slow yourself down and think it through."



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Colleen Kavanaugh and Jessica Hubler jump for joy as they cross the finish line when competing in the Ultimate Blazer Challenge.



Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Participants aim to balance themselves while trying to conquer the challenge.



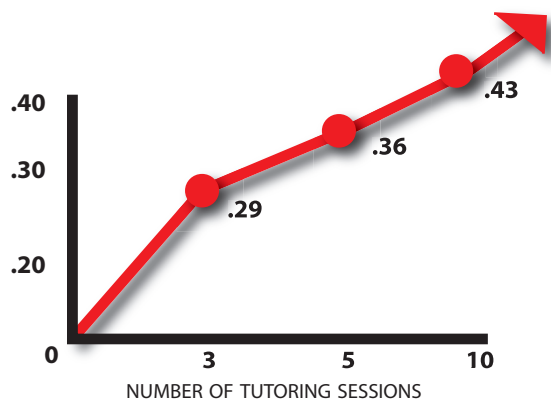
Bryce Ethridge/THE SPECTATOR

Two teammates run into a slip-and-slide at the beginning of the event before crawling through sand.

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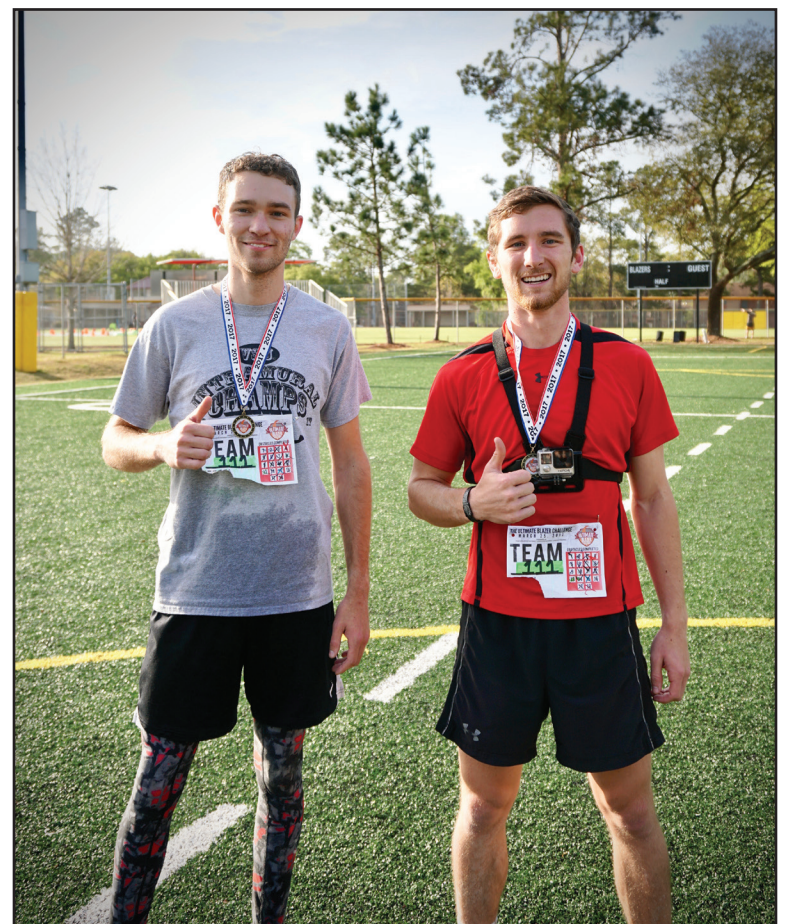
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Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Teammates celebrate after completing the Ultimate Blazer Challenge obstacle course. Competitors were awarded with a medal after crossing the finish line.

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ENTERTAINMENT

New neighbor teaches kids acceptance

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Julia, a 4-year-old with autism, joins the cast of the children's show "Sesame Street."

"Sesame Street" hopes to promote the understanding of autism to a new generation, according to the show's website. Since "Sesame Street" is all about acceptance and friendship, the show wanted to add more diversity.

Julia is a Muppet who is "smiley, curious and loves to play," according to the show. The only difference is she does things a little differently than her "Sesame Street" friends.

However, Julia is, technically, not a new character, according to the Washington Post, since she first appeared in a 2015 "Sesame Street" online storybook. Julia was introduced as one of Elmo's friends, and the story follows them sharing their favorite activities and games.

The online storybook with Julia's character had such positive reviews that the writers wanted to bring Julia to life in the three-dimensional "Sesame Street" world, The Washington Post reported.

One in 68 children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with autism, according to the Centers for



Courtesy of Us Weekly

Disease Control and Prevention. The developmental disability can cause social, communication and behavioral challenges.

Since autism can come in many forms, and can be depicted in many different ways, the show's writer, Christine Ferraro, had to figure out which way to go with Julia's character.

"Because with autism, there's such a range, and there's so many different ways that autism affects people, and there's no way we could possibly show everything, so we had to pick one lane and go in it," Ferraro told the Associated Press.

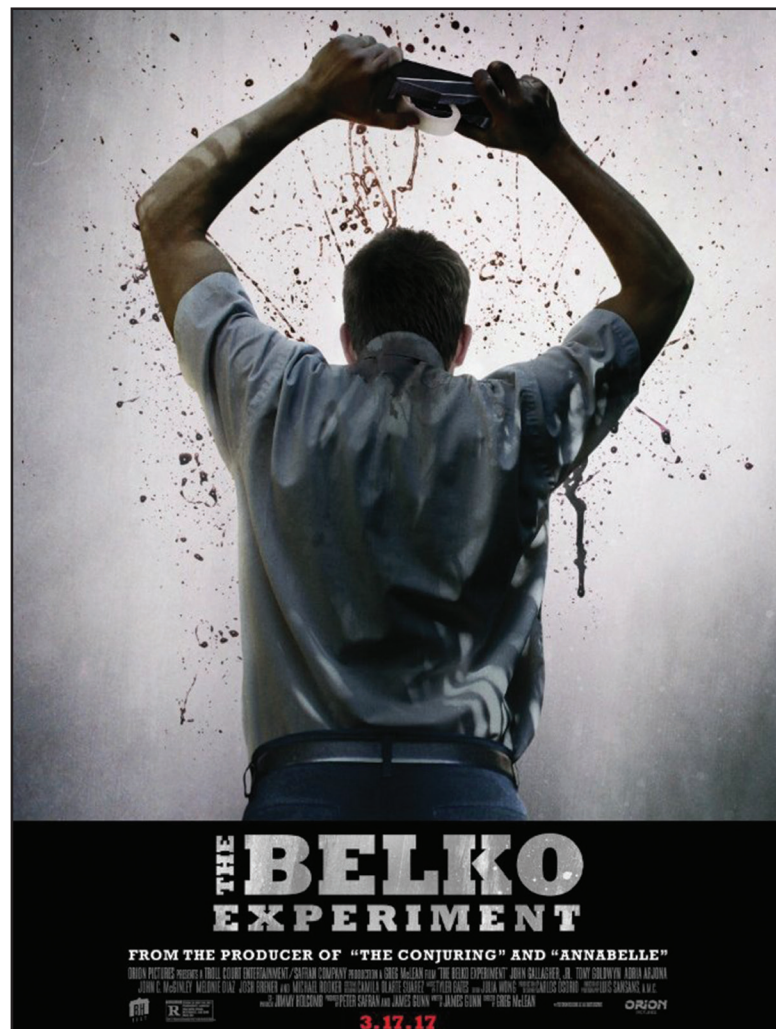
The puppeteer behind Julia also happens to have experience with the condition. According to the Washington Post, Stacey Gordon, a Phoenix-based puppeteer who

used to work as a therapist for children with autism, has a son with autism.

Megan Deal, a communication sciences and disorders major, said she thought this new addition will be good for the show and everyone who watches it, and it is incredibly empowering for children and families affected by autism.

"I think it removes the stigma around this particular disorder and opens the grounds for further discussion and acceptance of children and adults who struggle with autism," Deal said.

The episode will be titled "Meet Julia" and will air in April. According to the show's Twitter, through Julia, the goal is to show that all kids are amazing, and they can all be friends.



Courtesy of imdb.com

'The Belko Experiment' leaves audiences in suspense

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The movie "The Belko Experiment" is a sadistic social study that reveals the dark side of a regular office job. It's kill or be killed.

Eighty American Belko Enterprise employees are trapped inside of their corporate office in Bogota, Colombia. An unknown voice echoes from the intercom system, ordering employees to engage in a murderous game. The employees' instincts are to assume the intercom voice is joking, as they continue on with their duties.

But the mood instantly switches when all windows and doors in the high-rise office are blocked by metal shutters. That's when every employee realizes they're really trapped and in danger.

Mike Milch, the humanity hero, and Tony Goldwyn, the self-centered CEO, battle over what they believe is the right choice. Milch

wants everyone to think rationally and outsmart the intercom voice, but little does he know, it will be impossible to save everyone.

The plot thickens after the employees fail to complete the first round of executions. The intercom voice returns and then detonates microchip bombs implanted in the employees' necks.

The game quickly turns into survival of the fittest.

After realizing this is no game, Goldwyn doesn't think twice about sacrificing the lives of some of his bottom-level employees as he recruits the company's dominant males and begins to prey on employees.

Milch and a few others disagree with their boss' ethics and decision-making.

This dark, twisted movie plays on self-interest, showing a bloody, displeasing experiment of innocent people begging for their lives right before being killed or having their brains splattered everywhere.

Cross-Genres in hip-hop

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Redefining a genre means redefining the listener.

With sustainable artists, such as Nujabes and Little Dragon, to eccentric artists, such as Childish Gambino and Kanye West, the standard sound for hip-hop is slowly adapting. Popular genres such as jazz, rock and reggae have begun to seep into hip-hop, creating sounds that extend the bounds of previous generations, blooming new waves of music.

One prominent new-age artist, Lil Uzi Vert, gained fame from his innovative debut, "Luv Is Rage," including elements from Scottish bagpipes in his hit single "P's and Q's," detailing how he is influ-

enced by rock music.

On Nardwuar, Lil Uzi Vert said his rock influences range from the head-turning style of Marilyn Manson to the stage antics of GG Alin, all giving him the influence of sound that he puts in his music today.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Drake recently released "More Life," a tape that juxtaposes the sounds of U.K. grime with artists such as Griggs and Skepta to harmonize with the waves of reggae and R&B.

This created a theme on "More Life" that sounds pleasant to the ear due to the R&B elements of both the piano and live drums, while being accented by bass shattering drum patterns.

One final example of crossing

genres becoming a significant element among hip-hop fans is with the popularity of Kendrick Lamar in the industry. Artists ranging from The Roots, Twin Sister and Boom Clap Bachelors have been sampled by Lamar and his production team, leaving no boundary for the TDE artist's musical reach.

As Lamar continued to release projects since 2004, he turned heads with music sampling different corners of the music industry.

Crossing genres within any industry creates risks that may tamper with an artist's longevity. Even with the high risks associated with exploring new bounds, the discovery of a new world within music brings the listener to uncharted locations.

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SPORTS

Jessica Mohl leads on and off the field

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VSU shortstop Jessica Mohl is a five-tool softball player.

Since transferring to VSU from Indian River State College, Mohl has already been named Gulf South Conference Player of the Week, and she leads the Gulf South Conference in hits and runs.

At Indian River, Mohl earned First Team All-American honors as a freshman and sophomore.

Like her mother and four sisters, Mohl was continuously around the field and knew softball

was going to be a part of her life.

Mohl played for American Heritage High School in Delray Beach, Florida. In high school, Mohl posted 62 career RBIs with a 0.425 career batting average and 71 stolen bases over two seasons. She continued to earn First Team All-State recognition and she finished by hitting 0.541 during her senior year.

Mohl said she enjoys being able to play her favorite sport, but she also enjoys the people and atmosphere of VSU.

“My favorite thing about playing in Valdosta is the fans, boosters and the family atmosphere.”

Mohl said. “Even when my family isn’t here, there are still people cheering me on.”

Mohl said she also enjoys the friendships she’s developed with her teammates.

“I count all of my teammates as friends,” Mohl said. “No matter what, I know I can have a bad day and turn to them, and they’ll be there for me.”

Mohl said her close relationship with her teammates made it easy to step into a leadership role. VSU junior outfielder Brandy Morgan said Mohl is a great friend and leader.

“She’s a very vocal leader on

the field,” Morgan said. “When she steps out there, you know that she’s in charge and that she’s going to give 100 percent effort all the time.”

Morgan said Mohl doesn’t let stats go to her head during games.

“A lot of times you see people that play for themselves, and she’s just not one of those players,” Morgan said. “She’ll take the shirt off her back and give it to you if she needs to. She’s a very good player and a good leader.”

At shortstop, Mohl is involved in almost every play. Morgan said she feels comfortable with Mohl being a focal point of the team.

“She’s very important because playing shortstop and being a lead-off batter, you have a lot of unknown pressure,” Morgan said. “They are such important positions on the field. Shortstop, you get a lot of balls, action and you’re constantly moving in the field, and the lead-off batter sets the tone for the day.”

Morgan said Mohl is also an accessible leader off the field.

“Off the field, she’s there to help everybody,” Morgan said.

“She’s a good friend to call on or just to have a casual conversation with.”

Head Coach Thomas Macera said Mohl is one of the best players in the country for a multitude of reasons.

“She’s just an all-around player,” Macera said. “She’s a good hitter, good on defense and very consistent. Her level of play makes her a great leader. She’s one of the top players in the country, and when you play that well, it makes a difference.”

After VSU, Mohl plans to get her master’s, attend fire school and get her certificate in EMT to become a paramedic. She eventually wants to take the state test in Florida to become a firefighter. Mohl said she enjoys playing with her roommate’s dogs when she’s not playing softball.

As for the 2017 season, Mohl has one thing on her mind.

“My short term goal for the season is to get on base at least once a game and not make any errors, while my long term goal this season is to win The National Championship.”

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Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Jessica Mohl can play anywhere on the field, but she mostly plays shortstop.

Jessica Mohl Stats

Stat	GSC Rank
Hits 58	1st
Avg. .468	2nd
Runs 50	1st
RBIs 23	19th
SLG % .597	16th
OB % .515	5th
SB 20	4th
2B 7	19th
3B 3	4th

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SPORTS

Baseball edges GSW



Photos by Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

VSU beat Georgia Southwestern Wednesday 12-11 to improve to 21-10 on the season. Luke Suchon (top) went 2-4 in the game with 2 RBIs and a walk. Pitcher Daniel Williams (above and top right) only pitched 2.1 innings giving up five hits and three runs. Beau Blair finished the game and got the win to improve to (4-1) on the year.



BASEBALL

Update

In the last week, VSU Softball won a three game series with Lee University 2-1. They then beat Georgia Southwestern 12-11 for a 3-1 record for the week.

Player of the Week



Against GSW, left fielder Max Abramson went 2-3 with a walk at the plate for VSU with six RBIs. Abramson hit a three-run home-run in the sixth inning to tie the game at 10.

Stats

Stat	GSC Rank
Hits 266	9th
Avg. .270	10th
Runs 196	6th
RBIs 167	7th
FLD % .961	2nd
OB % .373	8th
ERA 3.88	3rd
Opp. H 265	3rd
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Next Week

VSU plays Mississippi College this weekend in a three game series. VSU plays Flagler College next Wednesday at 5 p.m.

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SPORTS



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR

Head Coach Kerwin Bell is not looking for complacency this spring as the Blazers get closer to the spring game.

VSU not content with 8-3

Juston Lewis
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Championship style. That's how Head Coach Kerwin Bell described his defense all last season. The defense performed up to Bell's praise throughout the season, even in the first round exit against UNC-Pembroke where they had five interceptions. The Blazers defense lost key members of the team such as Kenny Moore, Egim Etta-Towa and Donatello Brown to graduation, but personnel changes weren't the only ones made to the defense. Linebackers coach Danny Verpaele was promoted to defensive coordinator earlier in the semester and it was announced at the same time that there would be two new coaches joining his staff. Willie Tillman was announced as the new defensive line coach and David Rowe, brother of former defensive back coach James, was announced to fill his brother's vacancy. With the loss of players and change of coaching staff, it will remain to be seen if the defense will live up to the high expectations left by the 2016 Black Swarm. There will be no accurate measuring stick for the defense until

the 2017 season opens in August, but through spring practice there is a taste of the energy and aggression that will be featured this fall. Despite not toting the big names that the Black Swarm did last season, Bell has faith in his players and his staff. "It's tradition," Bell said. "Our coaches are doing an outstanding job. Verpaele is a guy that brings a lot of juice, and as a defensive coordinator, he's bringing his personality to his players." Bell noted that while the Black Swarm had much success last season the area that they were strongest in was their secondary. "We were very skeptical about what we had on the front two levels of our defense last year," Bell said. "Now we're starting to get a total defense. We're very balanced all three levels of our defense." Last season, the Blazers led Division II in interceptions with 27. With the many changes on the defensive side of the ball, the number will probably drop. One thing that won't change is the system the defensive backs are in under David Rowe. "There was constant conversation [with James] last year," Rowe said. "I knew the players before coming in. I'm very familiar with who we have and who has the potential to start. I'm just get-

ting to know the guys outside of football and trying to put faces with names." The transition to being on staff with VSU was fairly quick, but it was not rough because of his relationship with his brother. "It was quicker than I expected ... we were doing football stuff pretty early," Rowe said. "My brother and I share a lot of ideas, so I knew the defense coming in. Working with the guys was new, but I think that's coming along great." For all the changes on defense there is still a constant on offense, Roland Rivers was in a sling for the second consecutive week at practices. As the days inch closer to the spring game there's no guarantee that Rivers will be participating. Rivers' absence is not preventing Bell or any other Blazer from having the conscious effort to not have next season end as the last did. "I love their desire not to be 8-3 again," Bell said. "You want a team that has the ability to say we're going to be better than that. There's an expectation level not only from the coaches but I think the players know it too." VSU's spring will culminate on April 8 after the annual spring game.



Seth Willard/THE SPECTATOR


VSU is working a lot of young players this spring as they get ready for fall.

SOFTBALL

Update

In the last week, VSU Softball lost a three game series with Lee University 2-1, but they swept Eckerd in a double-header for a 3-2 record for the week.

Player of the Week



Haley Cruthers is VSU's POTW. Cruthers went 2-3 with 5 RBIs and a walk in game 2 against Eckerd. Cruthers hit a walk-off grand slam to win the game.

Stats

Stat	GSC Rank
Hits 329	1st
Avg. .348	1st
Runs 255	1st
RBIs 228	1st
FLD % .964	6th
OB % .418	1st
ERA 3.45	7th
Opp. H 262	5th
Opp. BA 290	4th

Next Week

VSU plays Mississippi College this weekend in a three game series. MC is tied for third in the GSC with a 12-6 conference record.

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THE VSU EXPERIENCE

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