

the Forum

Piedmont Virginia Community College

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Photo by Jon Hassenfus

PVCC's Student Government Association hosted a Casino Night on March 20. Attendees numbered in the hundreds.

FANTASTIC FANTASY CASINO COMES TO PVCC

JENN JONES
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Black drapes and multicolored lights hid the barrage of flyers and posters along the wall of the Bolick Student Center during the evening of March 20. The PVCC hallways were not filled with the usual sweatpants-wearing student body. Rather, they overflowed with gals in glamour and guys in suits. Casino Night was a hit.

Attendees numbered in the hundreds with students, faculty and staff having fun together. Pres. Friedman and his wife not only attended but were also volunteer black jack dealers.

Math Professor Jon Hexter also helped the event by welcoming attendees and giving them \$50,000 in fake money (\$60,000 if the attendees were formally dressed) to use in the games.

The purpose of the event was not to fundraise but rather to offer a free night of entertainment to the PVCC community.

Brad Foster, head of the Student Government committee in charge of organizing the event, stated, "We're doing this so students, staff and faculty can have fun."

There were thirteen tables in the Student Center: eight black jack, two roulette, two poker, and one craps. An oxygen bar was centered between two black jack tables and one of the two TjohnE employees manned it through the night.

PVCC student Beth Russell was a black jack dealer for the night. "I was always busy ... at least five of the six spots on the table [where betters placed their bets] were full at all times!" she commented.

While the Bolick Center was dressed up as a casino, the North Hall Meeting Room was designed to be a sports lounge.

Along the right wall, five tables were lined up to serve as a buffet and virgin drinks bar. An NCAA March Madness game was projected on the back wall. Casino attendees could eat, drink and watch the tournament.

For the first two and a half hours, attendees were free to watch the game or try their luck on the casino floor. The raffle was the last stage of the event. Attendees received raffle tickets for each \$10,000 earned. The more raffle tickets they had, the greater chance they had at winning a

prize.

Prizes included tumblers with the PVCC logo, a \$50 gift card to Starbucks and two high-definition, 19-inch TV's. There was, however, a catch in giving away the prizes.

In the process of cashing out poker chips and counting the number of tickets, there was a miscommunication and three people ended up winning the two TV's. Student Activities Director Steve McNerney stepped in and announced that in the spirit of President Obama's economic stimulus plan, all three winners would receive a TV.

Organizers of the event stressed how much effort was put into making Casino Night happen. Several clubs helped with event, which was mainly sponsored and organized by the Student Government Association and Student Activities. The Volunteer Club, Phi Theta Kappa and the Black Student Alliance all had members volunteer as dealers, bar servers, set-up crew and take-down crew.

While the event itself was only three hours, the time from set-up to clean-up was eleven hours, with the TjohnE truck arriving at 2:00 p.m. and the clean-up crew leaving school at 1:00 a.m.

EMERGENCY CALL BOXES PROVIDE FRESH SECURITY PRESENCE AT PVCC

DAVE CARON
FORUM STAFF WRITER

It's late at night, you just got out of class, and your car won't start. You want to use your cell phone, but the battery is dead. You think, "Walking out here was hard enough. What if the security office isn't open? What can I do now?"

Such was the case for PVCC student, Jessie, who described a similar situation that occurred in parking lot two. "My cell phone died after a night class, and I needed to get a hold of my parents because my car wouldn't start," she said. "It was a bad feeling to be out there without any available security, and it would be a great idea to have something in place to make me feel safer," she added.

Head of Security Tim Brown and Vice President William Jackameit have discovered a solution.

If one were to poll students at PVCC, most would say they own cell phones. "While cell phones are helpful, they aren't always readily available. Also, sometimes you don't know which number to call in a situation," said Jackameit.

The solution to the problem comes in the form of five public address units or emergency call boxes which were put up between the south entrance and the Dickinson Building parking lot. Work started during spring break and by Wednesday, March 25, all five units were in place. Electrical Controls and Maintenance out of Richmond han-

dled installation.

The call boxes are part of a \$33,000 grant that Brown helped secure for the school. "Brown was instrumental in securing this grant," Jackameit stated.

The project total is \$44,000, with the additional \$11,000 being funded by PVCC. Sponsored through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the grant is called the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant Grant, or the Byrne JAG Grant. Only one

should the office be unavailable.

The box near the South Entrance is the CB-8. It is a smaller unit but works well given its proximity to the building. The other units are the CB 1-s.

CB 1-s is a unique device, equipped with a 70w HPS area light with a Code Blue Beacon. According to the Code Blue website, the CB 1-s is easily recognized throughout a full 360-degree area.

Jackameit said another

"My cell phone died after a night class, and I needed to get a hold of my parents because my car wouldn't start."

—PVCC student

other school in the state received money from this program during the current fiscal year.

After hours spent combing through catalogs, Jackameit and Brown selected the Code Blue product. According to Jackameit, Code Blue is the leader in emergency call boxes.

The boxes come equipped with a button that one can push in case of emergency. The button activates a speakerphone that places a call to the programmed location.

According to Jackameit, "The boxes will definitely be wired to the security office first." He says there still hasn't been a decision on where to program the call after that,

reason for the implementation of these boxes is due to pay phones being phased out.

"We're down to just two pay phones now, and they are going to be removed soon," said Jackameit. It's getting to the point where the telephone company was telling us that we had to pay them to keep the phones installed."

While most students would agree that boxes in the parking lot are necessary, one student, Austin, said, "The one closest to the building seems very unnecessary. I've never needed to use one, but I could definitely see how the ones in the parking lot could be more useful and would make some people feel safer at night."



Photo by Jon Hasentus

PVCC recently installed emergency call boxes in the student parking lots

FABULOUS FLAVIO MUSICAL BY LOCAL WRITER TO DEBUT AT PVCC



Photo courtesy of John Carden

AFTON MASSIE
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

What do a community college, salon stylist and 18th century libretto have in common? The world premiere of *Fabulous Flavio*. The musical is set to open April 2 at PVCC and celebrates the 10th birthday of the Dickinson building.

The plot grabs its viewers and places them into the life of King Flavio and his court. Swords will clash in this action-packed musical that involves two sets of lovers, one whose relationship is tragic, and the other, comic.

With one couple leading a secret relationship and the other just beginning one, they are put through trials to prove their love. One character is forced to choose between his lover and his father. A Hollywood director, many devoted actors and others come together to bring this musical to life. The process started with the multi-talented writer, John Carden.

Carden was born in Northern Virginia and graduated from the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston Salem. Upon graduating, Carden joined the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, where he specialized in 18th century music. He debuted at Carnegie Hall at age 24.

Carden toured Europe for

two and a half years before returning to the United States. He held an opera career for 20 years and currently finds a balance between his jobs: stylist, singer, performer, composer and writer. He started performing at age 4, collaborated as a composer in high school, and has always been interested in creative writing.

Carden stumbled across *Flavio* while in Holland in the 1990s. *Flavio* is an opera by George Frederick Handel that was originally a book written by Matteo Noris in 1682 and adapted into a libretto, *Flavio Re de' Longobardi*.

The opera stood out to Carden. He enjoyed the combination of the relationships in the story. He bought Handel's CD, which further sparked his interest. Carden had never seriously composed before, so he enlisted Mary Elizabeth Forbes to help him with the process.

He practiced daily and began to compose his version of *Flavio* in the summer of 2006. This piece was "in the public domain [and he] translated it from Italian to English – changing characters and adding characters."

Carden succeeded in making the musical completely his own. He wrote the story first and the music later. This was a huge process, but Carden loved it. He had written songs and music before but never a musi-

cal. He says the process was "a huge musical quilt," very similar to writing a book.

Carden wants his audience to experience sheer entertainment during *Fabulous Flavio*. He wants people to "have fun with family" and says there are many important small messages and morals throughout the play. He solely wishes "to share" his passion with others.

Carden chose Piedmont Virginia Community College to present *Flavio* because he wants the play to be community oriented.

PVCC Drama Professor Kay Bethea loves to "promote new work" and gave Carden permission to use the V. Earl Dickinson Theatre. He enjoys the fact that PVCC is an educational environment and feels it is a logical place to present his musical, so that young minds will be inspired.

The musical's director, Raymond Austin, has worked on other Hollywood productions, including *Spartacus*, *Cleopatra*, and *The Avengers*. Austin's wife is a client of Carden's and she introduced him to her husband. Working with Austin, Carden found a great mentor and believes that Austin's experience as director helped him get to the "core essence" of matters throughout the process of preparing *Flavio*.

Carden has been influenced not only by Handel but also by

Vivaldi, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. One of the most influential contemporary composers for Carden is Leonard Bernstein. He believes that everything can be seen as an influence and that "all the colors in the rainbow are there; the only difference is how you arrange them."

He sees a "little bit of [himself] in every one of [the characters]" in his play. He relates to King Flavio by owning a business and to the lovers in the story as being young and in love at points in his life. Carden believes that "everyone has something they're passionate about," and daily tending to that passion should be a necessity.

Carden loves composing, performing and singing equally and compares choosing one to selecting a favorite child. His artistic side is purely self expression; he rarely bases his work on the opinions of others. He believes that if other people enjoy his work, "that's a bonus."

When learning new things and developing new skills, Carden comments that if the desire is present, the next and only step required is to "flip the switch on." The 18th century story of *Flavio* flipped a switch for Carden, and through his passion and love of music and writing, *Fabulous Flavio* was born.

REAFFIRMATION PROCESS SPURS CHANGE AT PVCC

NICOLE CARNEMELLA
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Every 10 years, every accredited college or university in the country must have its accreditation reaffirmed by its regional accrediting association. Dr. Sheryl Cardell works with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the accrediting authority for all Southeastern colleges. Cardell recently visited PVCC to prompt a two-part reaffirmation process that will occur over the next five years.

The first step is to put together a compliance piece, showing that PVCC is complying with the recommendations SACS made, which included financial reports, policies and procedures and an evaluation of the staff. This compliance piece has already been completed and PVCC is waiting to hear the outcome from Cardell.

The second step is PVCC's new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is basic steps faculty will take to enhance the learning process for PVCC students.

Earlier in the year, a collection of teachers and faculty from around campus known as the QEP task force met and asked these crucial questions: Where is PVCC lacking? And what can be done to help? The task force received a variety of feedback with an overwhelming response to writing skills. Students stated they were having a hard time incorporating the writing skills learned in English 111 and 112 into their upper level classes. Professors confirmed the papers they received needed improvement.

The QEP task force consists of seven teachers from each department and two fac-



ulty advisors and meets weekly. Because of these meetings, they have set into motion PVCC's QEP. Its title is "Write here, write now: creating a culture of writing."

The plan is still being tweaked, but, according to PVCC Vice President Kathy Hudson, significant changes will be made to certain classes in each curriculum of study. Changes will be implemented this fall. Adjustments to English 111 and 112 will provide a common rubric that all teachers will use to grade and evaluate papers. Instructors will attend workshops before the fall, which will show how to inte-

grate more writing in their classes. Also it will focus on the mechanics of writing: spelling, grammar, punctuation and revision. There will also be additional papers and more writing, formal and informal, in classes of every degree. This will provide students the opportunities to enhance their writing skills.

Amy Gillespie, faculty member in the nursing department and member of the QEP task force, reiterated the importance of reinforcement saying, "The more a student writes, the better and more comfortable they will become with writing. It's an important tool to have especially for students who plan on

transferring. The QEP will better prepare them when they enter a four-year university."

Certain "pilot" classes this fall will test the QEP and hopefully work out any kinks with the new plan. By the fall of 2010, all English 111 and 112 classes will be revised and each degree program will be phased into the new rubric within five years.

Jenny Koster, English professor and QEP task force member, said, "We're not trying to hammer into students just to spell better or use proper grammar. We're doing those things but also helping them understand the writing process, organize their thoughts better and appreciate the value in being a good writer."

The QEP will be submitted to SACS by August of this year, and in October an evaluation team from SACS will visit campus to assess PVCC and its QEP. By June of 2011, SACS commissioners will review all evaluations, reports and reviews.

Despite recent budget cuts, a five-year budget is in place to launch the QEP. The QEP is estimated to cost PVCC \$50,000 per year for the next several years. The major costs are going towards the retraining of instructors on how to integrate and focus on writing in their classes. Class sections will also be made smaller, with no more than 25 students per class. This is to help teachers concentrate on smaller and more manageable classes.

Hudson said, "This will be a campus-wide project. Faculty, advisors and students will all be involved. In order to make all the changes we need to make, we need everyone to be on board."

SCIENCE BUILDING PROGRESSES SLOWER THAN EXPECTED

CHRIS BOWER
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Everyone has seen the construction beside PVCC, but what exactly is that building being developed? It's the two-story, 34,000 square foot, \$11.4 million Kluge-Moses Science building.

The building is named after Patricia Kluge and William Moses for their donation of \$1.2 million. This is the largest private donation PVCC has ever received. Patricia Kluge is the owner, founder, and chairwoman of the Kluge Winery and Vineyard in Albemarle and Moses is the CEO.

The building is being constructed in response to the growing need for trained healthcare professionals in the Charlottesville region.

Through partnerships with the Univer-

sity of Virginia and Old Dominion University, new labs and classrooms will be constructed to bring students the technology and resources to get an education in medical technology and other sciences.

The building, which will be home to the Sciences and Human Services Division, will feature labs for chemistry, biology, microbiology, anatomy, physiology, nursing, radiology and surgical technology.

It will also contain three state-of-the-art classrooms, two new study areas/lounges, a conference room, and 24 offices for faculty – including an office for the dean of mathematics. In addition, it will have an exterior walkway leading into the second floor, and a traffic circle.

Students participating in PVCC's transfer program will be required to take

at least one course in the new building upon its completion.

Although the project was expected to be completed around January 2010, progress has been a bit slower than predicted.

"[The] project is about two weeks behind, but that is not a problem since [the] building will not have classes spring 2010," said Dr. William Jackameit, vice president of finance and administrative services. He said the "building completion is on or about March 1 next year – first classes [in the new building] will be summer 2010."

Many students have wondered if the Kluge-Moses building will feature new parking lots. According to Dr. Jackameit, "The only parking that is part of the project is to add handicapped parking in Lot 3 across from the building and a couple of handicapped spaces at the building."



Photo by Jon Haseniús

Construction on the Kluge-Moses Science Building is about two weeks behind schedule.

PVCC COPY CENTER MANAGER PHILLIP KELLEY RETIRES

EMILY TRAYLOR
FORUM STAFF WRITER

"Phillip, can I get 100 copies of this handout by tomorrow morning?" asks a professor, trying to be heard above the hum of copy machines.

"Not a problem," Phillip answers with a smile.

Several minutes later, a copier makes a funny hiccup and quits printing.

"Phillip, this copier is jammed!" another professor says. Phillip walks over and corrects the problem. He then checks another printer for the status of a color-copy job.

These sights and sounds were common for Phillip Kelley, former Copy Center manager at PVCC. Several weeks ago, Kelley announced his retirement. His final day was March 31.

Kelley started in the copy business soon after he was married. He lived in Oklahoma at the time and needed work. He had a friend who knew a copy center supervisor. Kelley had no experience with that occupation, but the supervisor hired him anyway.

"They gave me the dirty work — the stuff no one else wanted to do," Kelley said. He didn't intend to stay with the job; it was simply a means to support his family until he could find different employment.

As the years went by, Kelley still found himself at the copy center. "Then it dawned on me," he said. "This is what they call a 'career!'"

In 1996, Kelley and his family moved to Virginia. He found work at G.E. Fanuc on Route 29 North. After work-

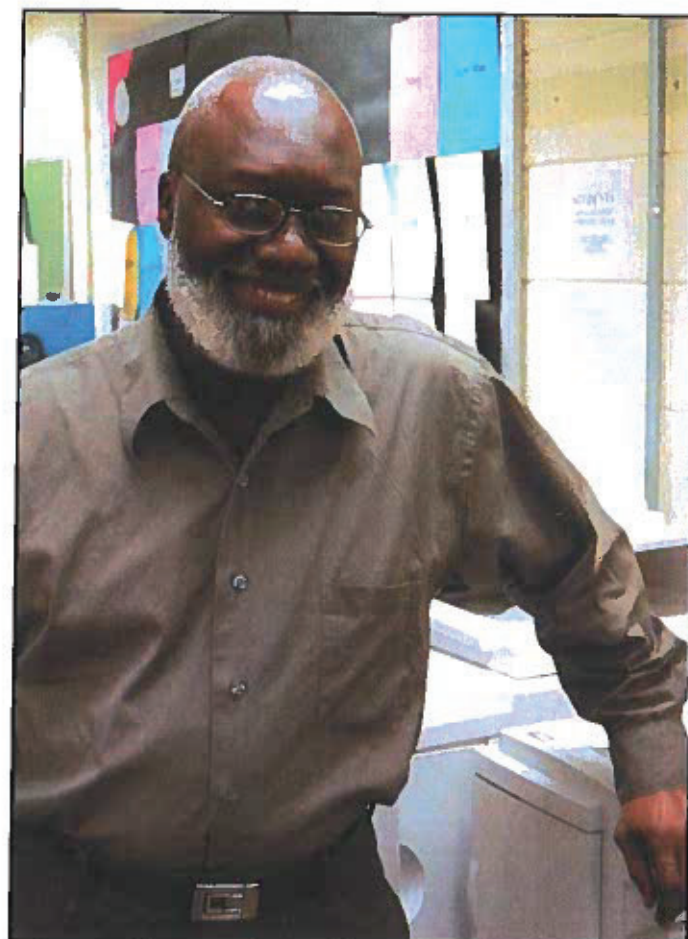


Photo by Jon Hasenfus

Phillip Kelley managed the PVCC Copy Center for eight years.

ing there five years, he heard of an opening in the Copy Center at PVCC. He interviewed and was hired for a three-month trial period.

According to Kelley, the Copy Center had "dinosaur machines" at the time and desperately needed new equipment. He did the best with what he had, and when the three-month trial concluded, he was hired permanently. That day, Kelley walked in to see a huge banner on his office wall: "Welcome Home, Phillip!"

Kelley worked hard to improve the quality of service and equipment at the Copy Center. Eventually, his effort paid off. He recalls people telling him they had no idea the Center could run at such a level.

Kelley was shocked at the amount of gratitude he received for his work at PVCC. "It took me awhile to recognize the level of appreciation from people," he noted. He felt he was just doing his job. Frequently he found balloons, candy or notes of appreciation on his desk.

"It is my job to make you look good," Kelley said. That was one of his mottos in the Copy Center. He recalls coming to work once on a Sunday to complete a last-minute copy job that was due Monday morning.

Kelley worked for eight years in the Copy Center before deciding to retire. "It's not because I was tired of y'all," he grinned, speaking of the reason for his choice.

The downturn of the economy motivated Xerox to offer an early retirement plan, for which Kelley qualified. After discussing it with his wife, he took advantage of the opportunity.

"This has been the best copy center experience of my entire 25-year experience," Kelley said.

This year, he intends to publish his first book, which is about relationships. Its title is *RAW: Real Answers for Wives*.

Kelley has a ministry for couples, and he looks forward to devoting more time to it during retirement. He also is a legal broker for Prepaid Legal Services Inc.

In addition to those activities, Kelley plans to exercise more and work on projects around the house.

"I've got a 'honey-do' list to do first when I get home," he chuckled.

Kelley is excited about retirement, but he does have fond memories of his job at PVCC.

"I'm really going to miss you guys," he said. "PVCC has been the most appreciative group of people I've ever worked with in the business. I wish them all the success in the world!"



Photo courtesy of www.googleimages.com

PVCC students can travel to the Bahamas by signing up for the summer courses Biology 195 and Biology 196.

POTENTIAL TRIP TO BAHAMAS OFFERS EXCITING ALTERNATIVE TO CLASSROOM

CHANI VALE
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Summer is coming fast. Is there anything like a trip to the Bahamas on your itinerary? This summer, a group of PVCC students may be taking a week-long field trip to the Gerace Research Centre on San Salvador Island, Bahamas.

The trip can only become successful if Professor John Walsh and Professor Norma Diehl can attain the 16 participants needed. Currently, there are 12 interested students. Only four more are needed for the trip to proceed.

Prospective students need to enroll in the summer classes of Biology 195 and Biology 196. Summer registration will begin April 13. Bio 195 is a one-credit class that will meet for seven Wednesdays from 6-8pm.

The first class begins May 20. This course will cover some of the following topics: introduction to the oceans, geology of the Bahamas, island ecology, sea grasses, sand flats and mangroves and many more.

There is no assigned textbook for the class, but assigned readings may be distributed. Along with these will also be weekly quizzes.

Those who successfully pass the class with a C or higher can continue with Biology 196. Biology 196 gives students two credits and the chance to participate in the Tropical Marine Ecology Field Trip, which is scheduled from July 7 through 15. Below is a list of the criteria that must be met to attend the trip.

1. Be in reasonably good health. Some of the snorkeling involves moderate effort.
2. Be comfortable in the water. There will be a snorkeling practice session before you leave.
3. Attendees must have passed BIO 195, Tropical Marine Ecology with a grade of C or better
4. Have registered for BIO 196 and paid the trip fees.
5. Possess a current U.S. passport (or other, as applicable). If you do not have a current passport, you must apply for one right away.

The trip allows students easy access to the habitats discussed in the class. The Gerace Research Centre, which is where the students and professors will reside, is close to the water. The estimated cost is close to \$1,200, which includes all of the following:



Photo courtesy of <http://thundafunda.com/33/World-tour/>

A view from San Salvador Island, Bahamas, which is where the group from PVCC will travel.

1. A one-night stay at a Richmond hotel, near the airport
2. Round-trip air fare from Richmond
3. A one-night stay at a Nassau, Bahamas hotel
4. Taxi service from Nassau airport to hotel and back
5. Transportation on San Salvador (airport to Centre, Centre to activity sites, Centre to airport)
6. Room and board at the Centre, includes three meals per day
7. Tips to Gerace Centre staff

This cost does not include PVCC tuition for two credits

which is \$155.60. It also does not include the cost of a passport, which is \$60 or the purchase of snorkeling gear – approximately \$100-250 or about \$40 for rental.

"We have over 25 years of experience in conducting PVCC field trips to the tropics and sub-tropics, and we are thrilled at the prospect of snorkeling again in these beautiful waters and the opportunity to show you some spectacular environments," Walsh said.

If you are interested or would like more information please contact John Walsh at jwalsh@pvcc.edu.

INCREASING STUDENT CTS RIDERS FEEL BUDGET SQUEEZE, REQUEST ACTION

DANIELLE BENNETT
FORUM STAFF WRITER

For some PVCC students, the Charlottesville Transit Service (CTS) Bus is the only way to reach school. While it's sometimes a temporary problem that causes the need for buses, it's a way of life that unites bus riders in adding to the cost of going to school.

From my house by car, the trip to PVCC might take 15 minutes. By bus, getting there could take close to an hour. Bus riders have to manage their time so they don't miss their buses or class.

Full-time student Alan Smith knows how important it is to reach the stop about five minutes before its scheduled arrival because passengers "have to be at the bus stop or it won't stop for you," he said.

Bus costs add up over a semester. Full-time students come to school at least three days a week. Paul Thompson has classes five days a week. Bus fare is 75 cents, but if the rider doesn't have change, it's a dollar.

Every regular bus rider should know about discount ticket books. It costs \$6 for 10 tickets, or \$21 for 40. That comes out to either \$0.60 per ride, or \$0.52 per ride. Bus tickets can be bought downtown at City Hall, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or at PVCC's Cashier's Office in the main building.

The fact that bus tickets are sold at the Cashier's Office isn't advertised by CTS online or on their paperwork, so I discovered this when Thompson told me. There is a small sign on the window of the Cashier's Office and an occasional internal TV ad in the Student Center, but



Photo by Jon Hasenfus

PVCC bus riders have to reach the bus stop early to not miss the bus, because it won't wait!

students might not think to look there or know about the availability of discount bus packs. It's mostly word-of-mouth and observation that helps bus riders learn about the discount ticket packs and the convenience of being able to buy them at PVCC.

Going to school three times a week for one 15-week semester adds to \$67.50 when paying regular fare, but buying the big pack of tickets saves students just over \$20. Thompson comes to school every day, so bus fare for him is \$112.50 at full price. Since he always buys the large discount ticket books, he pays \$84 for four packs and has extra bus tickets for going elsewhere. Buying discount ticket books saves him at least \$30.

There are many other bus trips needed for work, doctors, visiting family and friends or

attending social events, and all of this adds up over a semester.

With PVCC's enrollment rising, it seems more students are using buses for transportation. Thompson has been coming to PVCC since fall of 2007 and has seen a gradual increase in students on the bus. He says, "Initially it'd be like a handful [of students] but lately there've been literal bus loads going."

The last time CTS did a survey was 2004, but it isn't an accurate portrayal of the current ridership. The survey had a lot of focus on UVA and how many people affiliated with UVA were riding, with PVCC being a small subset.

According to the survey, CTS was serving only 10 Piedmont students on a daily basis. It's hard to guess what the number is now, but counting students in just a few of the hourly buses proves that 10 is

much lower than today's number. The buses at noon, 4:00, 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. are popular and usually have three to seven students on them.

On March 5, there were seven riders on the 10:00 p.m. bus. I've seen the bus on Tuesday afternoons almost full with about thirteen riders.

From March 14-21, CTS did a new transit study. Unfortunately it will be a month or more before the results are available, but hopefully it will show how many PVCC riders exist currently.

I spoke with Kristen Gleason, marketing representative for CTS, to learn more about the survey. They are currently looking for information from all users to serve them better. CTS is working on a "strategic marketing plan" which this survey will shape. It sounds like they're moving forward in a way that if PVCC communicates its needs, they will work with it.

Unfortunately, one thing that is well-known is that if riders have UVA identification, they don't have to pay.

"I feel it's unfair that the University students get preferential treatment," Thompson commented. PVCC and UVA students are both college students in this town. This partiality displayed by CTS makes PVCC students feel left out by having to pay our own way. CTS does not address this issue on its website or booklet, so their reasoning is publicly unclear.

PVCC student Smith agrees that UVA students riding for free isn't fair but adds that it is because UVA pays a fee to CTS. When asked for more details, Gleason said she has

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MERMAID EXPRESS HOUSES

NEW BOOK SWAP

DANIELLE BENNETT
FORUM STAFF WRITER

In the west entrance of PVCC after spring break, two new bookcases were facing the main hallway. The Mermaid Express has changed its set-up to include two book shelves behind the table of creamer, sugars, lids and straws.

Jessie Cole, worker at Mermaid Express, explained one cause for the change: The bookshelves provide shelter from the cold breezes blowing through the doors.

Another creative use for the bookshelves is a book swap.

Kristin Cole, owner of Mermaid Express at PVCC, and her family started the book swap. They provided the first two shelves of books. After only the first day, student use was evident.

The point of a book swap is to keep books in circulation so they can be loved by new owners. The key word – “swap” – does mean that in order to take a book, it would be ideal if each person left one as well.

Jessie Cole described the book swap. It works on a “loose honor system.” It is fine to take a book as long as a new book can be brought soon, or the old one returned.

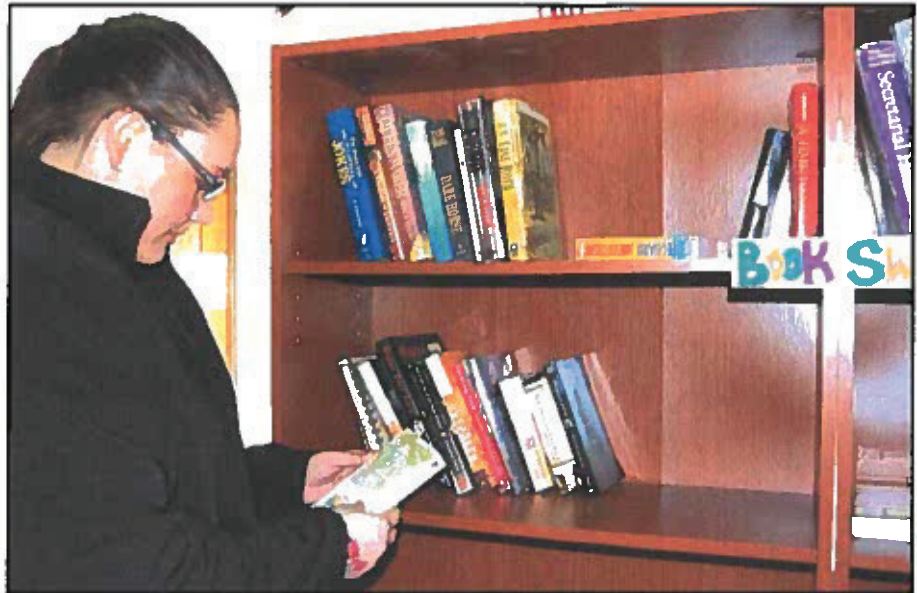


Photo by Jon Hasenfus

Rosa Harrison peruses the book swap in search of an interesting read.

Many book lovers run out of space if they continue to acquire each book they want to read. Book swaps help readers get new books, some they might not have considered before.

The books being swapped are a collection of many genres. The swap also allows

readers to share books they enjoyed but no longer want.

On March 24, the selection was mostly fiction, with a few audio and reference books mixed in. However, the shelves could house a completely new selection within a week. The Mermaid Express would like to

PVCC STUDENT DESIGNS VIDEO GAMES

ROBERT MANGIONE
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Have you ever been playing a video game and come across some small facet that perpetually bugged you? PVCC student Kurt Nelson is the kind of person who would rewrite the rules or even the entire game if necessary so others won't have to deal with these irritations.

Nelson is a full-time student with a passion for writing fantastical works of fiction. “I decided it would be very cool if I could create a game that all of my friends could partake in,” he said.

With that in mind, he created his own

pen and paper role-playing-game after deciding that games like Dungeons and Dragons had a poorly designed system of play. He felt that he could improve it.

Designing one's own game is hardly a cakewalk though. Several issues must be taken into mind, such as “character classes, or ideas for skills or traits, how to deal with people who are becoming out of control in the game or slowing it down” said Nelson. His newest work, which has been in mind for four years, is in the process of being modified for a final product.

Nelson has seven years of designing experience. He even designed three

games whose rights were purchased by a gaming company for their use. Each of these games took about a year of testing and designing.

Nelson now works on his own and has plans to distribute his game's rules over the internet, where it will be free for people to play and free from restrictions such as copyrights.

He had a falling out with the game company because he “got tired of them not guaranteeing me a job when I got out of college.”

Nelson sees designing as “a pet hobby,” though he thinks it would make a good side job in the future.

GOT QUESTIONS?

Counseling Center has answers

REBECCA CRITZER
FORUM STAFF WRITER

The Counseling Center at PVCC offers a variety of services. It has five counselors: Annette Williams, David Lerman, Susan Hannifan, John Albright and Jan Reed. Each counselor has a specialty and is a personal and academic counselor.

Annette Williams oversees career services. David Lerman is the student success advisor. He works with students at risk, on academic probation or serving suspension.

Susan Hannifan assists students with disabilities. She works with all ages and all types of special needs.

John Albright specializes in transferring. He works with students looking to transfer from PVCC to four-year institutions.

Jan Reed works with homeschooled students and their families. She also helps coordinate the Student Development programs. There are 30 sections in the fall and only 7 in the spring because of fewer new students.

Working with homeschoolers, Reed has seen students of all ages succeed in great ways. Most homeschooled students who



Photo by Jon Hasenfus

College Transfer Guide Andrew Erwin works with prospective transfer students at PVCC.

come to PVCC start young and early – between ages 15-17. The students' overall success is amazing, just as some students from a non-homeschooled background.

The office's only concern is about the homeschoolers' social adjustment. Being around older students and learning in a

classroom environment could be challenging. However, there "has not been one severe case of that hindering any student success," Reed said.

To schedule an appointment with a counselor, talk with the receptionist at the front desk in room 132.

PUBLICATION OF 10 YEARS FACES POSSIBLE DEMISE

REBECCA CRITZER
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Where has the *Piedmont Weekly* gone? PVCC Counselor Jan Reed was editor of this weekly newsletter, which is taking a break from publication this semester.

"The life and demise of the *Piedmont Weekly*" was a phrase used by Reed to describe the course of this PVCC news outlet. The *Piedmont Weekly* was started 10 years ago because there was a need for better communication on campus between students, clubs and organizations.

Students needed a way of knowing what events and activities were occurring, not just monthly, but weekly – hence the name of the newsletter.

Five hundred copies of the *Weekly* were sent out every Friday to locations throughout campus.

In the past year and a half, the newsletter's readership began to diminish. This was because PVCC updated its website more often, sent out student-wide emails and installed announcement TVs in the student lounge, Little John's and in Dick-inson.

Along with PVCC's technology being updated, *The Forum* came along. *The Forum* was brightly colored and well done, and the Counseling Center thought perhaps it was duplicating efforts.

Counseling tried to boost readership by printing color copies of the *Weekly*, but instead of spending extra money on paper and finding students to put it together, the office decided to take a break from publication this semester. They're going to wait and see if there really is a need for the *Piedmont Weekly* this fall.

"Maybe it just ran its cycle," said Reed.

WATCHMAN MOVIE DOESN'T DO COMICS JUSTICE

JASON FLINN
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Watchmen is a genre-defining novel that has delighted fans for years with its multilayered plot and beautifully realized set pieces since its original inception in 1986 in a twelve-issue series from DC Comics. The long, winding tale is an excellent murder mystery with plenty of action and romance set to a backdrop of an alternate reality of 1985 where costumed heroes was the norm until a government sanction banned masked vigilantism and the threat of a nuclear exchange with Russia seemed unavoidable.

The main plot yarn concerns the murder of a formerly great costumed hero, the Comedian, who is thrown from his high-story apartment after a violent struggle with an unknown assailant. Readers follow the investigation by masked vigilante Rorschach into the scheme to discredit and exterminate retired heroes to its well-executed finale.

But can this complex plot be condensed into a movie totaling less than three hours?

Before picking out specific instances of discrepancies or pros and cons to the movie *Watchmen*, there is a major point to keep in mind when viewing the film. Alan Moore very much disliked the thought of his and Dave Gibbons's masterwork being made into a movie. His view on film and its inability to let fans view the story at their own paces was his main point of opposition. This is readily obvious in the comic-to-movie transition, making the movie hard to understand in one sitting if one isn't already familiar with the story.

The most important part of *Watchmen* is its deep and richly layered character base, and the movie's adaptation of those

characters is hit or miss.

From worst to best of mainline characters, one might start with Malin Akerman as Laurie Juspeck/Silk Spectre II. Akerman may be a veteran fashion model, but she is a relatively new actress with light experience, and it is apparent in her wooden delivery. Though her dialogue mostly survives from the novel, she just can't believably play her role. She tends to come off as pathetic and nagging when her character demands soulful and moving.

Next, Matthew Goode was simply miscast as Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias. He is neither a natural blonde nor credible as the complex villain that the character of Ozy demands. If viewers haven't read the comics, they could feel cheated by the obviousness of Goode's evil intentions.

Dr. Manhattan is characterized decently by Billy Crudup. Many failings in his character can be attributed to awkward CGI animation of Dr. Manhattan in general, who seems oddly over-animated and expressive at best.

Patrick Wilson does a good job of the least outspoken role of Dan Dreiberg/Nite Owl II. He plays a nerdish, improbable hero well, certainly making the insecurities and emotional baggage of Nite Owl authentic.

Jeffrey Dean Morgan makes an excellent Eddie Blake/Comedian, capturing perfectly the creepy emotional darkness of the Comedian's internal turmoil and the joy he takes in horrific violence.

Finally, Jackie Earle Haley could have done nothing different to more perfectly depict Walter Kovacks/Rorschach. Whether it is his gravelly monosyllabic narration of the main story, the subtle nuances of his motions or the awe-inspiring delivery of his dialog and unbridled brutality, no

other comic to movie character, save possibly Heath Ledger's Joker, has come close to touching Haley's career-defining performance.

Regarding the plot, almost everyone has already heard of the controversial decision to drop the hilarious squid monster for an arguably more film-friendly ending. While not overtly outlandish in its execution, there are several large problems with this transition, mostly odd plot holes that are covered inadequately, as if the new plot direction wasn't quite finished.

Such points abound, such as the introduction of Bubastis, Adrian's antlered tiger. With Ozymandias scrapping the whole idea of genetic engineering in favor of making Dr. Manhattan the whipping boy of world aggression, her inclusion comes completely out of the blue.

It is also this new vision of Dr. Manhattan's artificial attack upon the world that doesn't seem to hold water. It makes no sense that the rest of the world would unite with a nation whose oft-proclaimed super weapon has just annihilated every major population center of the world.

Other than this, for better or for worse, Director Zack Snyder is lethally dedicated to recreating and maintaining specific panels and set pieces from the comics, which is admirable. Yet sometimes it comes off a little too faithful and stunts the progression of the plot. A key example is the myriad of flashbacks, most of which, while they worked well in the comics, come at ill-suited moments and very advance the story.

A movie cannot come together as a complete picture without a soundtrack to tie the scenes together, so it is a disappointment that so much of



Watchmen's music is inserted at awkward points. A few bad examples include "99 Luftballoons" during a dinner entrance and "Hallelujah" in the middle of a love scene between Nite Owl and Silk Spectre, followed by a horribly cliché "Flight of the Valkyries" to accompany Dr. Manhattan's towering foray through Vietnam.

To soothe the disgruntled, however, there are a few moments of musical magic. Unfortunately, they are limited mainly to the opening credit montage set to Bob Dylan's "The Times They are A-Changin'" and the Comedian's rampage through an anti-hero riot, which is given an unsettling edge by "I'm Your Boogie Man."

Watchmen was never meant to be a movie. Huge portions of accompanying story – the inventive Black Freighter micro-comic and a cheesy giant squid – have been dropped completely.

It is impressive that *Watchmen* performed as well as it did. While it may not be the masterpiece to rival the comic many fans were wanting, it is a functional and enjoyable service rendered for those who care to appreciate it.

Wanted

Do you like to write?
Are you Creative?
Do you remember those random English prompts from High School where you had to finish the story? A fellow PVCC student is looking for your ideas to publish in her book of 100 (or more) short stories! Send her story starters/ scenarios, and you could get your name and idea published in her next book! Please send any ideas you may have to Kathleen at: frubafreak17@gmail.com. To see one of her stories, visit <http://frubafreak17.deviantart.com/art/The-Man-with-100-Tales-99381424>*

Be a Tutor at Cale Elementary School

Volunteer 1 hour / week, starting this semester. Make a difference in a child's life! For more information contact Erin at 961.6530.

For Sale

White Macbook \$700 good condition for me information contact matte@virginia.edu or call 434 295 5615.

Panasonic digital camera-good condition includes memory card. Contact Matt at mwood8344@email.vccs.edu

Services

Looking for a handy man? Contact Ann Marsh at amarsh8211@email.vccs.edu or call 434-227-7827 for small repairs and/or remodeling in Japanese style.

Upcoming Events

April 2-4, 9-11, 7:30 p.m.
April 4, 11, 2:30 p.m.
PVCC Theatre Presents the World Premier of *Fabulous Flavio*
\$10 Adults; \$8 Students/Seniors
General Seating
Written by singer/songwriter John Carden and directed by Hollywood producer, screenwriter, director, novelist and local resident Raymond Austin, this musical comedy will thrill the entire family.

Saturday April 4th, 2pm-4pm
Japan Week Opening Event
Charlottesville Fashion Square Mall (JC Penny side)
A Japanese Chorus Group will perform several Japanese songs and a some PVCC students will be dancing the Japanese Dance, Hanagasa Odori. There will also be martial arts demonstration, origami, tea ceremony, and fashion show.

Thursday, April 16, 4:00 p.m.
PVCC Academic and Leadership Awards Convocation
Dickinson Building Main Stage

Friday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.
Free Movie Friday: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*
Dickinson Building Main Stage
PVCC's student art club presents a free screening of the 2008 adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's original short story For more information, log on to www.pvcc.edu/performingarts or contact Beryl Solla, professor of art, at 434.961.5362 or bsolla@pvcc.edu.

Tuesday, April 21, 8:00 p.m.
The Municipal Band of C'ville
Dickinson Building Main Stage
Classics and Broadway show tunes concluding with a John Philip Sousa march. For more information contact 434.961.5376.

Announcements

Wednesday, April 8th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
PASS Easter Bake Sale and Basket Raffle
Proceeds will benefit: UVA Pediatric Hematology -Oncology Clinic. Raffle tickets can be purchased from The Cashier's Office, Receptionist Desk, or a PASS Representative.

Attention Students
Your student activities fee provides you with vouchers for free admission to many events in the Dickinson Building. Pick up a voucher form at the Reception Desk in the Main Building. Tickets obtained with vouchers are only available for pick up at the PVCC Box Office in the Dickinson Building, which is open two hours before the start of each show. Contact the Dickinson Theater Box Office for more information at boxoffice@pvcc.edu or 961-5376.

April 18, 10:00 a.m.—4:00 a.m.
Field Day at PVCC
Come prepared to spend a day of fun at PVCC! Activities will include a dunk tank, Frisbee, kickball, basketball, free food, and much more.

Classified

For Sale 2008 Mosby's Comprehensive Review of Practical Nursing for the NCLEX-PN with CD. \$25.00 OBO. Contact Dana Hollifield—(434)978-4728

CTS from page 8
worked at CTS for only six months, so she couldn't provide much information on the program.

Gleason called it a Prepaid Program that started around summer of 2007. She explained that UVA pays for the number of riders, though she was unsure how that number is determined.

She said CTS would like to make the information on the program public knowledge, since the public misconception is that they are "giving service free to an entire area of the population."

Smith wondered if PVCC should do something similar, suggesting it could come out of the activity fee. Right now he's looking for part-time work and feeling the financial squeeze of paying for classes and living expenses.

Gleason thinks it is possible

and "would be a great thing to be put in place." It would need support at PVCC to go through the process of finding and obtaining funding.

The length of time it would take to set up a pre-paid bus plan would probably not benefit us, but it would assist future community college bus riders.

Recent budget cuts have required PVCC to decrease funding and cut programs. It's doubtful the administration will want to start a new program.

With a recession and rising enrollment, starting a rider program makes sense. It would be a big help to students who need buses the most and also provide another option for other students to get around town.

The future of a bus program is unclear now, but I'd like to help try to make it happen. If you have any feedback or support, please email me at dab205@email.vccs.edu.

The Forum offers ad space to the PVCC community free of charge. Please send all ads, announcements, and upcoming events along with your full name, mailing address, email, and telephone number to the Editor-in-Chief, at theforum@pvcc.edu.