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MEET THE FORUM STAFF

Hidden away in the basement of North Court, the Forum Magazine executive team, staff members and a few squatters allow their sanity to slowly wither away to bring you this publication. Proceed with caution.

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SABRINA ESCOBAR | Editor-in-Chief
As Forum’s resident Latina, Sabrina loves refried beans, pupusas and really good tacos. When she’s not scooping out the D-Hall dessert bar and avoiding the gym, she’s in her apartment doing homework (binge watching Grey’s Anatomy).

KAY DERVISHI | Managing Editor
Kay is well-known on campus for her RBF and her obsession with quoting “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia.” When she’s not Lead Writer for Forum, she’s writing articles for RVAGOV and The Collegian because she has mostly limited interests.

EMILIE ERBLAND | Asst. Managing Editor
When she’s not writing and editing for Forum or The Messenger, Emilie can usually be found in B2 procrastinating on her homework or in the theatre department sewing retro costumes for UR’s next production.

BRIANNA WEITZ | Creative Director/Publisher
Brianna, your friendly neighborhood southerner, is often found lifting heavy things, driving her sports car or blasting country music. She has been compared to the likes of Leslie Knope, but really what she wants is all the bacon and eggs you have. ALL the bacon and eggs.

SABRINA ESCOBAR | Editor-in-Chief

BRIANNA WEITZ | Creative Director/Publisher

KAY DERVISHI | Managing Editor

EMILIE ERBLAND | Asst. Managing Editor

JULIA VITALE | Lead Writer
Vitale has a passion for writing to bring the latest information to readers. She is double majoring in English and PPEL and has interned in marketing and publications at the International Myeloma Foundation. She also has a profound love for Weiner dogs!
Our mission at Forum Magazine is to create a revealing and balanced magazine, designed and reported with University of Richmond students in mind. Forum Magazine will be a place for conversation of all topics that leaves students with a deeper understanding of both the college world and beyond.

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**Editor in Chief**
SABRINA ESCOBAR

**Publisher**
BRIANNA WEITZ

**Managing Editor**
KAY DERVISHI

**Creative Director**
BRIANNA WEITZ

**Lead Writer**
JULIA VITALE

**Assistant Managing Editor**
EMILIE ERBLAND

**Social Media Director**
BRIANNA WEITZ

**Reporters**
ALEX MALONEY, ALICE MILLERCHIP, KAY DERVISHI, MOLLY BRIND’AMOUR, ERIKA ECHTERNACH, KELLY OCASIO

**Copy Editors**
ALEXIS ANGELUS, ERIKA ECHTERNACH, COLBY ALVINO

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**CONTENTS**

04 **TRANQUIL TUESDAYS**
By Alex Maloney

07 **HIV IN RICHMOND**
By Alice Millerchip

09 **DATING, A SERIES**
By Brianna Weitz

10 **LAW AND ORDER**
By Kay Dervishi

14 **GWEN’S ROSE**
By Molly Brind’Amour

16 **DIVERGING PATHS**
By Erika Echternach

18 **TURTLES & STRAWS**
By Kelly A. Ocasio

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**ON THE COVER**
PHOTO BY JASON WILBORN
Picturesque in the center of campus, the lake at the University of Richmond stands out among the beauty of campus.
Comfortably nestled in a plaid corner chair of the Whitehurst Living Room at the University of Richmond, students are instructed to close their eyes and breathe slow, deep breaths. Out with the exhales, students are told to rid themselves of thoughts and clear their minds. This scene takes place every Tranquil Tuesday at the Whitehurst Living Room, giving students a chance to take 20 minutes out of their busy days to practice mindfulness.

Stress levels among college students nationally are high, as more and more students are reporting feeling stressed in their everyday lives. According to a 2015 study from the New York University College of Nursing, 49 percent of all students randomly surveyed reported feeling a great deal of stress on a daily basis, and 31 percent reported feeling somewhat stressed. However, at the University of Richmond, administrators are working toward alleviating this problem through an unusual technique: mindfulness.

Kristen Day, a psychologist at the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office sees stressed out students in her office frequently. Day practices meditation and mindfulness in her own life, and saw an opportunity to bring the ideology to campus, in hopes of helping students cope with stress. She, along with Heather Sadowski of campus recreation, Roger Mancastroppa in the Academic Skills Center and Dean of Richmond College, Joe Boehman, all share a passion for helping students and for meditation. It was through their collaboration that mindfulness at UR was born.

The programs offered at UR attempt to capture both students and faculty on many different platforms. The program is only four years old, but is growing fast. This year on campus, there are events offered every single day. Weekly, there are Mindful Mondays for faculty, Tranquil Tuesdays, Midday Prayer Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursdays, Tai Chi Fridays and Zen Meditation Sundays. On any of these given days, a student, professor or staff member at UR can attend and take a step back from anything going on in their lives.

There is no experience, materials or registration required to attend any of these events. Instead, the program aims to be as open and inclusive as possible. While some of the programs are semi-religiously geared, midday prayer is a specifically Christian service and Zen Meditation is a Buddhist practice, students of all faiths are encouraged to attend. Day emphasizes this, as she said most of the mindfulness programs focus on, “anchoring your breathing, being in the moment and silence.” While some students may be turned off by the religious
undertones of Wednesdays and Sundays, the administrators involved encourage students to attend meditation the other days, as they are completely free of any religious association.

Day said her main goal with bringing mindfulness and meditation to campus was to reiterate to students that they are enough, no matter what they are going through. “As a student, your worth as a person does not change — not if you are writing a paper, not if you have failed a test, not if you are sitting still,” she said. “That’s what mindfulness is about. Slowing down. Being still. Being okay with yourself.”

In addition to Day’s efforts to bring physical meditation to campus, the mindfulness efforts at UR go beyond in-person sessions. Dean Boehman has taken the practice to social media in an attempt to reach more students with his program Dean’s Zen. Boehman has recently started taking time out of his own busy days to record one-minute video clips about mindfulness, breathing and getting into a positive mental state. He then posts these videos to the university Instagram, his personal Instagram account and each class Facebook page. He said his videos were a “non-threatening way to get involved with mindfulness; it’s for students who don’t want to sit crossed legged, breathing in a dark room.”

Boehman wanted to contribute to mindfulness because, similar to Day, he found that when he was meeting with students, there were patterns of academic and personal stress, a problem he wanted to fix. The dean said he thought there was a level of stress on every college campus, but at Richmond specifically there were a lot of high achievers who wanted to perform well, be involved in many extra curricular activities and were always focused on what’s next. Boehman finds a lot of Richmond students feel they have to appear to have everything together and have no problems on campus. However, he said that was a facade that students could only keep up for so long, and when that charade ends is where mindfulness comes in. Boehman hopes students can use his videos and the other mindfulness programs offered on campus to combat this mentality so students can be happier on the Richmond campus.

Mindfulness and meditation are more than just relaxation techniques. For a person to be mindful, they are calm and present in their own body, focusing on nothing in the outside world. This practice has been proven to minimize stress, depression and anxiety as well as provide those in a strong mental state with the ability to be more productive, happy and relaxed in general.

However, as UR attempts to promote this productive practice, student attendance is scattered. Some weeks, students come in fairly large numbers but others, only one or two students show up.

Are the students at the University of Richmond just too stressed to find time to de-stress?
HIV/AIDS IS NOT A phenomenon of the past. In fact, it is an epidemic that affects communities nationwide, including Richmond, Virginia, which has one of the highest rates of HIV in the U.S., according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

During the height of the epidemic in the 1980s, white gay men were the leading voices of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, according to Diversity Richmond’s website. But today, HIV disproportionately affects people of color. In 2016, the number of people living with HIV in Richmond was 4,970 and 69.7 percent of those people were black, according to AIDSVu, an interactive online tool that maps the prevalence of HIV in communities across the U.S.

To disrupt the narrative of HIV/AIDS as a disease of white gay men that lives in the past, two University of Richmond professors are conducting research on the epidemic and engaging students in their work.

Professor of American Studies Dr. Laura Browder began collecting oral histories of Richmonders who have lived with HIV/AIDS, or those who have been closely affected by the epidemic. Some of her work is featured in Richmond’s the Valentine museum in the Pandemic exhibit.

“It is a surprisingly understudied topic,” Browder said. “When I began doing research and preparing for the oral histories, I was shocked to discover that this is a public health crisis right under our noses.”

Associate Professor of Theatre Dr. Patricia Herrera has joined Browder in her research, and the two are now co-teaching a class during which students will write, rehearse and perform a documentary drama on HIV/AIDS in Richmond, pulling from research and stories gathered during the semester. The performance will be on December 1, World AIDS Day, at the Health Brigade.

“It’s one thing to read about a social issue and another thing to engage in it,” Browder said. “We are not going to solve all of the problems, but we can learn in depth about what the problem is and learn how to be better allies instead of passive observers.”

Human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is a virus that weakens the immune system, harming the body’s ability to fight off infections. It is most commonly transmitted through certain body fluids linked with sexual behavior or needle and syringe use, according to the CDC.

Abstinence, using condoms and not sharing needles can prevent infection. For people who are at high risk of contracting HIV, medicines such as pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, exist. Gay or bisexual black men are the largest group affected by the disease, according to hiv.gov.

No cure exists for HIV but it can be controlled through proper medication. If untreated, HIV develops into acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS.

Given all of the treatments we have today, as of Sept. 1 2017, no one ever has to test positive for HIV, author and HIV/AIDS activist Rodney Lofton said in his interview with Browder, which is part of the collection of oral histories.

But the epidemic still exists, partially due to factors such as a lack of access to medication, stigma around HIV/AIDS that prevents people from taking medication and a lack of outreach and knowledge in at-risk communities.

As Lofton said, HIV/AIDS is also no longer an ongoing conversation. Part of the reason for this is the fact that it is a racialized issue, Herrera said. “And everything that has to do with racism and racial history is put under. It’s not something people want to engage with.”

Lofton tested positive for HIV in December of 1993 when he was 25 years old. “The day I got diagnosed with HIV was the day I thought I was going to die,” he said.

But after coming to the realization that living with HIV is...
not a death sentence, Lofton started to become an active member in HIV/AIDS prevention. He is an advocate and author of two books, The Day I Stopped Being Pretty, and No More Tomorrows.

As an expert on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Lofton has become a resource for Browder and Herrera to engage in and better understand the epidemic.

“We are not experts so we allow people in the community who are experts to drive the projects instead of us,” Herrera said.

Browder added, “We like to think of our classroom as being a space where together with the community, we can create and disseminate new knowledge.”

Collaborating with various advocates in the community and partnering with organizations like the Health Brigade helps Browder and Herrera remain in synergy with what the community is doing, Herrera said.

Lofton also served as a consultant to help develop the Pandemic exhibit at the Valentine, in which Browder’s work is featured.

“It’s crucial to talk with the stakeholders,” Curator of Archives at the Valentine Meg Hughes said, “We are not experts in the subject matter. We have to talk to people who have lived it and are involved in it to create a correct and authentic reflection of what it was really like and what it is currently like.”

To date, Browder has compiled 12* oral histories. She and Herrera plan to conduct further interviews for the HIV 17 exhibition in the Stettinius Gallery of the Valentine Museum. Browder’s work on HIV/AIDS will also be featured in a Spring 2019 exhibition at UR’s Harnett Museum of Art, with photographer Brian Palmer, called “Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers.”

Browder and Herrera hope that their oral histories will become a resource for scholars and community activists in the future.

“What makes Dr. Browder and Dr. Herrera so amazing is their unwavering commitment to their research,” said Joe Kelly, a student in Browder and Herrera’s class. “The fact that they allow their students to be apart of their journey to engage in this issue of HIV/AIDS in Richmond is incredible.”

*Before the date of publication
MY NAME IS BRIANNA and I’m a serial bad dater. If you too, have had some bad dating luck, or your love life is amazing and you want to laugh at mine, read on.

I know what you’re thinking: “But Brianna, if every date you go on is a mess of awkwardness and disappointment, couldn’t that mean you’re the common denominator? The problem, perhaps? Why are you still single?” It’s definitely not me. It’s them. The camel kidnappers. Let me tell you a story and you’ll see.

I grew up on the mean pastures of Matthews, North Carolina -- a town close enough to South Carolina to smell the belt-buckle polish and oozing disappointment of Gamecock fans. This is often a fact that need not be said, since as soon as I open my mouth and Larry the Cable Guy flies out, it becomes evident. You don’t get the joy of hearing my banjo-backtracked stories, so I thought I’d set the scene and make it impossible for y’all to continue reading this column in anything but a southern accent.

During my time in Richmond, I’ve tried to experience as much of this “northern” life as I could. This list includes -- but is not limited to -- getting my car stuck in snow, trying a pathetic concoction of iced tea and sugar these hellion retailers try and pass off as “sweet tea” and, of course, northern dating, thinking perhaps my luck would be better here.

Well, y’all, I was wrong.

I found myself in a local Starbucks face to face with a feller (we’ll call him Dale) I had met on Super Bowl Sunday. We had connected over all-you-can-eat chicken wings and the destruction of the Patriots and chose to continue that night a few days later. Our coffee connection was full of conversations about sports, family and the fact that I’d most likely have to teach him how to fish. Oh, and did I mention he was 31 years old? Imagine, a grown-a$$ man that can’t fish, bless his heart. Our time together that day went well and, while I was still skeptical, I decided to see him again, despite his inability to know more. I brought up the casual, every day topic of camels and, slicker than a pig in mud, I Youtubed a video of a camel and sent it. I tried to ask what his parents did. I asked if he had any pets. Did he like animals? Nothing. Unremarkable.

This prompted a full-on investigation. Not to give away my secrets, but let’s just say I gained access to his record, completely legally. ‘Twas not what I saw on his record that’d scare the skin off a deer, but rather a news article that said he was associated with -- one might even say an accomplice to -- a crime. I kept reading.

Apparently, Papa Dale had purchased a camel named Jacob from Craigslist, which is shockingly completely legal. What’s NOT legal is malnourishing your camel and then causing a high-speed police chase through Chesterfield with your camel strapped in a trailer on the back of your truck.

The police showed up at his home on a welfare check and noticed Jacob was too skinny and was missing his hump. While Papa Dale swore the camel lost his hump from natural causes, experts disagreed. I know this from watching the multiple news videos from stations across Virginia that covered the story, featuring none other than my date, Dale, standing next to the trailer with Jacob inside. I’m no zoologist, but in my years, every camel I’ve encountered, which has been a surprising amount, has had a hump. So does the camel emoji. That’s three for hump and one against.

While the police were on their way back to repossess the camel, Papa Dale kidnapped Jacob, shoved him in the back of a horse trailer, which, for those unaware, is not camel sized, and took off down the highway. The police quickly caught the truck, camel in tow, going, um, 15 miles under the speed limit.

The fact that the truck struggled to tow the camel is almost as upsetting as the camel kidnapping.

I was on a mission to get Dale to admit to and elaborate on the camel-napping. I needed to know more. I brought up the casual, every day topic of camels and, slicker than a pig in mud, I Youtubed a video of a camel and sent it. I tried to ask what his parents did. I asked if he had any pets. Did he like animals? Nothing. Until finally I received a picture. A picture of Dale and Jacob standing in his backyard, just smirking away. Naturally, I asked why he would have a selfie with a camel. To this day he sticks by his story that he just “happened upon a camel at a zoo and took a selfie.”

Absolutely not.

The story of Jacob has never been discussed between us, but, needless to say, we have since not seen each other again. Jacob spent some time at an animal conservation center to regain his health, and hump, and has since been adopted by a new family. As for me, I’m still single but happily not connected to any camel-nappings, or nappings of any kind. So the next time you complain about a bad dating experience, think of Jacob, the humpless camel, and pray for me.
CRIME
AT UR

BY: KAY DERVISHI
ON APRIL 12, 1981, AT 1:30 A.M, THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND POLICE RECEIVED A CALL.

“I think you’d better come,” a student said. “There’s somebody screaming.”

The caller had heard the screams coming from Modular 10, a cluster of mobile homes on Boatwright Drive that served as temporary campus housing at the time. A crowd of at least 10 students hoarded outside the window of the building and the student later told the Richmond Times-Dispatch it seemed that the crowd was enjoying what was going on.

The campus police arrived, slowly driving by but never leaving their vehicle. It wasn’t until they received a second call directing them back to the scene that they stopped and a male student asked them to talk to the 14-year-old girl standing on the grass outside.

Joe Williams, then a freshman football player who had left the party earlier, wrote in a Collegian op-ed a decade later that she was found half-clothed and sobbing.

She told them she was a Westhampton College student who lived in Gray Court, then-UR Police Chief Robert C. Dillard told The Collegian, but had no student identification and said she did not need help. She did not tell officers she was raped until later that morning when Dillard and another officer interviewed her.

Two days after the party, three freshmen UR football players, Mark James Panciera, Gary Joseph Ribar and Christopher Charles Byrne were charged with rape of a minor and Byrne was also charged with sodomy.

The accused students ended up not being prosecuted, according to a later Collegian article, because the 14-year-old runaway had not shown up to court a month after the alleged rape. But the three accused students left the school and with it, a story many students have since forgotten about.

UR’s campus has little crime, aside from underage drinking and exit signs being knocked down by rowdy students. Violent non-sexual crimes are mostly nonexistent on campus — from 2015 to 2017 only two cases of aggravated assault, three cases of arson and two weapons law violations were reported, according to the University’s 2018 Annual Security Report. The violent crime that occurs most often on campus is rape, which has been reported 42 times from 2015 to 2017, and dating violence, which has been reported 19 times over the same time frame.

The perception of living on a safe campus can be rattled by moments such as the armed robbery at UFA 470 that happened the weekend of move-in day this semester. A man from off-campus flashed what seemed to be a handgun in his waistband to a student he arranged a drug deal with, stole her drugs and left, according to a Collegian article from August. The current University of Richmond Police Chief Dave McCoy said he had never seen such a case in his seven years on campus. And just two years ago, many students were also rattled by the accounts of sexual assault by two UR students who also criticized the university for mishandling their cases.

Forum Magazine decided to dive into the history of crime at UR and highlighting some of the most interesting, bizarre and frightening cases that have been reported on campus.

The year was 1969 and students and faculty at UR joined the rest of the nation in calling for a moratorium on the Vietnam war. They stopped in-between classes for a vigil, where they read off the names of Virginians who had died in the war, switching off as students left and came, and tied strips of black cloth to their arms.

Though this protest had a peaceful ending, colleges had increasingly become politically tense and occasionally violent. At Kent State University a year later, members of the Ohio National Guard shot at protesting college students, killing four and wounding nine others.

Colleges throughout the United States had decided to start their own police departments in response to these protests, according to the Guardian. UR was no exception; in 1970, it hired Dillard to direct the school’s security forces and a year later, the school completed paperwork to have police officers recognized on campus.

“The commitment needed to convert from a security agency to a police department is pretty significant,” McCoy said. “Your standards change dramatically, your costs change dramatically, from training, maintaining, outfitting. You know, police carry guns and badges and they have to be properly trained annually for that.”

The police department replaced a group of seven security guards that used one shared patrol car. According to the Winter 1971 Alumni Bulletin, Dillard said the security guards were “elderly men hired to walk around the buildings and give parking tickets.” The university allowed the ten newly hired officers to carry weapons: a .38 caliber pistol and a 12-inch nightstick that could spray tear gas, which Dillard said could possibly be more dangerous than a gun.

Students were not entirely sympathetic to the changes. The Richmond College Student President at the time, Woody Traylor, said in a Collegian article, “We’re afraid human error might cause something to occur that shouldn’t. We haven’t done anything in the past that would necessitate anyone being killed on this campus.”

Dillard justified arming police in 1971 during a talk with students, citing cases that year such as a cleaning woman being forcibly taken off-campus by gunpoint, an armed robbery at Westhampton and several break-ins by outsiders. These cases were not found in the Collegian archives. Campus police are still armed, though no longer with nightsticks.

The academic year 1970 to 1971 did not start quietly for Dillard. Three hoax bomb threats over the course of ten days disrupted studies at the business school, then known as the School of Business Administration. And then five days later, an arsonist attempted to light the ROTC building on fire with two plastic bottles full of gasoline but failed to do so.

But a successful building attack finally happened in January 1971, when a homemade bomb exploded in a trashcan in Jeter Hall. The explosion broke 56 windows and caused $283,10 in damages, which amounts to $1,839.76 in 2018 when adjusted for inflation. The police ended up arresting three college students who didn’t attend UR and a high schooler for the bombing. And to top everything off, Lakeside Dorm, which is now called Marsh Hall, got its own bomb threat as well in March 1971 that Dillard suspected to be a prank.

The second half of the 1970s also saw one UR student who kept shooting BB gun pellets at students walking between Thomas Hall and the library in 1977 until caught by police. And then about a week later, police confiscated a second pellet gun he had not turned over during the initial confrontation and not long after he was put on probation. To make matters even more absurd, a second Thomas Hall BB gun carrier was discovered in 1991 after shooting a hole through the window near the main entrance.
coming in from off-campus to steal everything from TVs to bicycles. In 1976, 70 percent of those arrested on campus during the first part of the fiscal year were not students, The Collegian reported. Outsiders were also suspected to cause an increase in theft in 1988, because the thieves stole several items using bolt cutters.

Nowadays, most crimes on campus are self-generated, McCoy said.

“Well your low-level stuff, your crimes of disorder, your vandalism, stuff like that, that’s clearly all campus-related activities,” McCoy said. “Some burglaries, a lot of larcenies, could be on-campus, could be off-campus. You know, we have a tendency to be lax, we’ll leave things of value laying around in open areas that are accessible to the public.”

Security in residence halls looked different decades ago because, before card swipes were installed, they were open to the public. The idea of having students swipe into residence halls was not considered until the late 1980s and all residence halls were not equipped with card swipe entry until 1996. Before then, students were responsible for locking the doors to their rooms with a key, but otherwise it was easier for non-students to wander the halls of dormitories.

A 30-year-old man walked into Marsh Hall in 1984, for example, put his clothes in the dorm’s washing machine and wandered the halls brandishing a 4.5-inch-long knife. In 1989, a 35-year-old man was charged with trespassing and being a peeping tom after Keller Hall residents reported a man peeking at them through the sides of the shower and walking into a student’s open room.

In one especially graphic case, a former UR custodian was sentenced to 15 years in prison, with eight years suspended, in April 1988 for breaking into the dorm rooms of three female students in September and December the year before. One of the victims, who was visiting a friend at her dorm in Keller Hall, also accused him of intent to rape and told a judge that she woke up in the middle of the night to find him on top of her. He was arrested in the third students room, when she and her boyfriend, who was also in the room, alerted police who were in the hallway. However, his charges were reduced from rape to breaking and entering with intent to commit assault, according to the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Female students seemed to bear the brunt of some of the more violent crimes on campus. One woman convinced a man who dragged her into the woods by Westhampton lake at knifepoint to free her in 1986 while another woman was attacked near the lake in 1991. Women were also subject to a series of harassing phone calls, especially in Lora Robins Court in 1990, with varying degrees of vulgarity.

“The guy told me I should see his 12-inch-long d--,” one freshman told The Collegian. “I told him I was a lesbian and not interested.” Another student observed that her caller must have been a “sexually repressed person” because she said, “he called me at 7:45 a.m. and asked me my bra size.”

Westhampton students also occasionally dealt with theft and vandalism from male students during panty raids, a tradition chronicled this semester on the university’s Race and Racism Project’s blog. Richmond College students would normally run across the lake to the other side of campus where women would drop their underwear to students below.

But in 1977 and 1982, men ended up running into dormitories en masse, causing water damage. In the 1977 case, male students barged into open or unlocked rooms and stole underwear.

“Their behavior sickens me,” a campus policeman said according to the 1982 yearbook. “Before they graduate I’ll see to it that their actions are permanently recorded on their records.”
URPD has changed significantly since 1971. The force now is made up of 14 patrol officers, three detectives, a six person administrative team and six communications staff. The technology URPD uses now has also improved, with a mechanism for monitoring and sending UR alerts to students across campus via text, phone and email.

“When I came to work here, we didn’t even have computers,” said Assistant Chief of Police Beth Simonds, who has been at URPD for 28 years. “You know, technology has been a huge change for the way policing is done all over the country.”

Liquor law violations have made up the most arrests in UR’s recent history, with 390 arrests made from 2001 to 2017, according to data obtained from the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. Burglaries are the most reported crime on campus, with 341 reports from 2001 to 2017, while every other criminal offense is significantly less common.

“A lot of our crimes are crimes of disorder, usually alcohol-fueled,” McCoy said. “ Seems to be a unique tradition at this university to break or damage exit signs — been here seven years and I still can’t figure that one out.”

Forcible sex offenses, which includes rape and fondling, are by far the most commonly reported violent crime on campus, with 113 reports from 2001 to 2017. For comparison, aggravated assault has been reported only 27 times over the same 16 year period.

For McCoy, the development of how the university handles sexual assault cases was one of the biggest changes he had seen while with URPD. Between 2001 and 2010, forcible sex offenses were reported an average of 2.3 times a year. Between 2011 and 2017, the average jumps to 12.8 times a year.

“I think the greatest, most significant change has been the level in the openness of sexual assault, sexual misconduct,” McCoy said. “That sometimes can be a painful thing to talk about but I think this university has grown in its ability to be open about this particular topic and how to address it best.”

Most of the day-to-day work the University Police does is mundane, though vital.

This was certainly the case on the second Saturday night of the semester. University of Richmond Patrol Officer Brian Monahan had run in to one of the apartments with a first aid kit to help a student who drank too much on her 21st birthday. It was the third stop of his patrol that night, following two cordial stops to address noise complaints and another to address two broken exit signs in Lora Robins Court.

By the time EMS arrived and loaded the student into a stretcher, Monahan said it looked like she would probably be all right.
Most students at University of Richmond can say they have pretty busy summers. But it’s safe to say no Spider has ever had a summer quite like Gwen Nguyen’s.

Nguyen, a senior from Vietnam set to graduate in December 2019, spent her summer as a contestant on the Vietnamese edition of the famous reality show The Bachelor, as well as competing in a national beauty pageant and working an internship in the finance industry.

“It was kind of lucky for me because everything fell into place really nicely,” Nguyen said.

“So right after the Bachelor, I had some time to do my internship, and when my internship ended, I joined the beauty pageant. It worked out really well.”

Nguyen was one of 25 women competing for the heart of Quoc Trung Nguyen, the eligible bachelor leading Vietnam’s first season of the dating reality show. Like in the American version, the show is based on dates and rose ceremonies, where the number of women on the show are whittled down each episode until the bachelor is left with one woman – his true love.

For Nguyen, the process managed to be both stressful and relaxing.

“Relaxing, in a way, because we went to all these beautiful places in Vietnam to film The Bachelor, staying in five-star resorts, and we have all the makeup artists and the stylists prepare the clothes for us, so it’s a really fancy lifestyle,” Nguyen said.

“Stressful, because some girls are kind of hard to get along with, but some are really friendly.

“And also, I think the filming was really intense. We spent one month filming the whole show,” she added.

Shot entirely in July, the program’s filming time runs shorter than the roughly nine-week track of its American counterpart, which meant long days for the contestants.

“We started filming really early in the morning, and filmed until late at night, 1 or 2 a.m., sometimes 4 a.m.,” Nguyen said. “We filmed every single day during that one month.”

For Nguyen, the worst part of the show was the emotional stress.

“Physical stress was kind of like figuring out whether you want to stay on, because in Vietnam, we get a chance to say no to the guy, when he gives out the rose,” Nguyen said. “So you don’t like him, you just say ‘I want to refuse the rose and I want to go home.’”

In Nguyen’s case, with such a busy summer, that meant a lot of pressure, knowing that each day she stayed on would be another day she couldn’t start her internship. There was also pressure to move fast, in order to have a relationship strong enough to last another round of eliminations.
But the pressures, for Nguyen, were balanced out in part by new friendships and opportunities. “The favorite part is probably getting to know everyone in the group, including some of the contestants,” Nguyen said. “They’re really nice, we’re still good friends.”

Nguyen’s season on The Bachelor became international news when one of the female contestants on the show professed her love for another female contestant, an act that had never happened in the American version’s 22-season history.

On a Facebook post sharing the moment, Nguyen wrote, “Love really has no limit…Yes, the story is real, unstaged and the most moving thing to me throughout my experience there!”

Nguyen made it “pretty far” in the show, making it to the top five contestants, before heading to her internship, at an investment banking firm in Vietnam.

A mathematics major, with minors in economics and visual and media arts practice, Nguyen’s passion for finance meant she really enjoyed her internship. It’s an experience she’s hoping to replicate this summer, as she works on applications for one last summer internship.

Nguyen hopes to get a job in finance soon after her graduation in December 2019, potentially through a future internship. “I also want to get my MBA and see how things go from there,” she said.

Juggling diverse interests is nothing new to Nguyen. While hailing from Ho Chi Minh City, Nguyen moved to Singapore for a competitive high school program. From there, she found out about University of Richmond from a friend, and was accepted into UR as an Artist Scholar, a designation of the Richmond Scholars program that requires submitting an arts portfolio.

Since arriving at UR, Nguyen has found many passions and opportunities, from STEM to painting, as her former roommate, senior Free Henderson, can attest.

“I’ve seen her grow as a person,” Henderson said, “from freshman year to now. She used to be very quiet…once you got to know her, she blossomed.”

Henderson and Nguyen met as roommates in their first year at UR, both part of the Women in Science living learning community. Henderson has many positive memories of their time as roommates, and how Nguyen, a foodie, introduced her to all kinds of new foods, from sunflower tea to a Vietnamese salt seasoning.

Nguyen, who was involved with Residence Life, even wrote Henderson a letter of recommendation for her Resident Assistant position.

Nguyen also got involved with campus by helping found Richmond’s chapter of Alpha Sigma Kappa, a sorority for women in STEM fields.

“She goes for what she wants,” Henderson remarked of her former roommate. “When she wants to do something, she does it.”

That’s certainly true for Nguyen’s experience with modeling, too. Motivated by pure curiosity, Nguyen went to Elite Model Management Vietnam after high school and soon signed with them. She was able to take a gap year after two years at Richmond, using the time to model for fashion brands and shoot TV commercials.

“I love it, I love being in front of the camera,” Nguyen said, laughing. But as for her future in the fashion industry, Nguyen isn’t so sure that path will fit well with her current aspirations. “Not after graduation. Cause it’s like, if I wanted to go into that, I wouldn’t be able to do finance,” she explained. “You cannot choose everything.”

Free Henderson appreciates this ability of Nguyen’s to follow what her heart wants. Henderson said, “I’ve always admired her for her ability to live in the now,” Henderson added. As for her future, Nguyen has set high goals, but she’s focusing on the present.

Right now, Nguyen said, her biggest challenge was getting back to the college rhythm after her year off testing the waters of the finance and fashion worlds. But even as the routine of university life sets back in, Nguyen’s experience on The Bachelor will stick with her.

“That was something to remember for life.”
By Erika Echternach

When prospective University of Richmond students embark on the ever-important campus tour, they are hoping to catch a glimpse into the everyday life of a Spider; so it may come as somewhat of a shock that the UR admissions office opted to remove the Boatwright Memorial Library from its route.

The decision to cut out the library stop was part of a series of changes made to revamp the campus tours, including no longer discussing the coordinate college system.

Austen Kelso, the assistant director of admissions, said the admissions team spent six months considering feedback from both visitors and external consultants, then formulating an updated route for the ultimate UR campus tour.

The greatest success was shortening the tour from 90 minutes to about 60 minutes, because the length of the tour was the most frequent complaint from visitors, Kelso said.

Two of the more controversial changes included skipping the library as a stop and no longer explicitly discussing the coordinate college system.

Members of the Jepson faculty are displeased with the decision to forego the library during the tour, including Peter Kaufman, a Jepson professor, who stressed that colleges are still first and foremost academic institutions.

“Libraries should represent the spirit of disinterested inquiry, critical thinking, and conversations with the imaginations that have gone before us – as well as collaborative spaces for conversations with peers – as we prepare for the issues that will come after,” Kaufman said.

Along with other members of the Jepson faculty, Kaufman has declined to allow prospective students to sit in on his classes and instead, recommends that admissions send them somewhere else that features places for study and collaboration.

Junior Henna Ragoowansi, a tour guide, agreed that excluding the library did not portray an accurate representation of student life on UR’s campus.

“I do not like that they removed the library from the campus tour because I think it is a really important part of college life,” Ragoowansi said. “Academics should be more important than social aspects of college life, and yet it is being cut out to accommodate things that should be less of a priority to students.”

There is good news for those who bemoan the exclusion of the library: Admissions is planning the release of a “Deeper Dive” self-guided tour of the library to enable guests to explore the library further on their own.

Other self-guided tours to be released soon include “Libraries and Labs,” “Activities and Athletics” and “Arts and Museums,” Kelso said. He said that the admissions team is in the early stages of planning a behind-the-scenes tour concentrated on the visual and performing arts to highlight UR’s theaters, studios and rehearsal spaces in the Modlin Center and Booker Hall.

Kelso said the library was still highlighted on tours via the tour guides’ personal stories, which they are prompted to share with visitors when they walk along the lake and by Maryland
Tour guides are also no longer prompted to talk about the coordinate college system on tours, and the system is instead explained during the 30-minute information session directly before the tours.

Nevertheless, some of the tour guides have decided to address the coordinate college system in their tours anyway to avoid potential confusion.

Sophomore tour guide Elizabeth Lopez-Lopez said she introduced the concept as a two-dean system on her tours because she would receive numerous questions about the system whenever she did not mention it.

“I usually express that the two-dean system is there as an opportunity for students to get more involved in student government because it opens up more positions, and that, at the end of the day, both deans are there for each and every student,” Lopez-Lopez said.

Ragoowansi said she also discussed the coordinate college system in different terms during her tours so as not to overwhelm families.

“I like to explain to students what it is and show them how it doesn’t really affect daily life, past the few events like Proclamation and Ring Dance,” Ragoowansi said. “I think it’s better to be upfront about it so people don’t make assumptions about it and think of it as a negative when it’s really not.”

Overall, the changes made to the tour route have received good responses. Since the changes were implemented in September 2017, visitors’ feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, Kelso said, with 90 percent of visitors giving the campus tour the highest marks of “excellent” and “very good.”

“I think the current route covers some of our most unique aspects,” Lopez-Lopez said. “It is a nice route because parents love being able to see how beautiful this campus is.”

And Kelso said the admissions office keeps striving to improve the route.

“We are in a continuous evaluation mode and expect to make changes to tours each year,” Kelso said.

Of the current route, Ragoowansi said there were no stops that she would like to see removed, demonstrating the difficulties of capturing every facet of campus life within a single route.

“I think the current route is worse in the sense that it is less representative of college life as a whole, such as the library being cut out, but better in the fact that it is shorter and more ‘attention grabbing,’ as it focuses on the cool parts of college,” Ragoowansi said.
BUT THINK ABOUT THE TURTLES...
IN 2015, A VIRAL PICTURE STARTED THE ANTI-STRAW MOVEMENT. A student from Texas A&M was diving off the coast of Costa Rica when her team found a long plastic straw lodged in a turtle’s nostril. The turtle became the symbol of the negative consequences of using single-use straws and the overall plastic problem the world faces. This past summer, the anti-straw movement really took off, with cities and companies vowing to limit their use or ban them completely.

A report by Plastics Europe, one of the world’s largest plastic producers, found that in 2015, the world produced 322 millions tons of plastic. Out of those millions of tons, only 9 percent is recycled. Although straws are not the main contributors to the plastic waste problem, 500 millions straws are used daily in the United States alone. Plastic straws pose a significant threat to marine wildlife, as seen in the turtle video, as well as the pollution of beaches and coastal areas. Activists and environmentalists hope that boycotting single-use straws will produce two results: eliminating single-use plastics and raising awareness about the importance of reducing overall plastic use.

Multiple companies, including Starbucks, are now going strawless by introducing a newly redesigned cup lid. Many customers applauded the idea but raised the concern that the lids themselves were still made of plastic. Chris Milne, director of packaging sourcing for Starbucks, said the lid was made of polypropylene content that was widely recycled.

On campus, Passport Cafe adopted the use of these newly redesigned lids for its iced drinks this past academic year. “On campus, the leaders in disposable straw reduction are the managers in retail dining,” Rob Andrejewski, director of sustainability, said in an email.

The Cellar is another campus dining spot where straws have been used frequently. In the past, Cellar servers would give customers straws with every drink they served. The official Cellar policy now is that servers should not give out straws unless asked by the customer, Melissa Comstock, Cellar manager, said.

“We are planning to switching to paper straws,” she said. “The university dining services as a whole is working toward using only paper straws.”

8:15 cafe is still using the old Starbucks lids with plastic straws. Despite this, they encourage students to BYOT, or “bring your own tumbler,” as a way to reduce waste, a policy also used at nationwide Starbucks stores.

In July 2018, Seattle became the first major U.S. city to ban single-use plastic straws. San Francisco plans to implement a straw ban in July 2019 and city-council members in New York and Washington, D.C. have proposed bans.

Although many people view straws as objects of convenience, people with disabilities often need them the most. Other alternatives, such as a paper straw, are not a viable solution for people with certain disabilities. For some people with limited mobility, not using straws can lead to choking hazards. In Seattle, disabilities advocates spoke out about their grievances and now the city requires vendors to keep a certain amount of plastic straws for those who need them the most. Instead of complete bans, companies are instead opting to gradually phase out their plastic straw use.

“By nature, the straw isn’t recyclable and the lid is, so we feel this decision is more sustainable and more socially responsible,” Milne said in a press release.
“Jepson prepared me for all of life’s challenges on and off the football field. I learned when it’s appropriate to lead and when it’s better to contribute by following. I also learned how to understand and complement different personalities in order to bring the best out in each other.”

— Kyle Lauletta, ’17
The New York Giants