

PVCC Panther has Arrived

PVCC has some new clubs; read more on pages 12 and 13.

John Matthews, staff writer

On Wednesday, Feb. 21, PVCC held an event to reveal the college’s first-ever mascot since the school’s formation in 1972. After PVCC students voted on what the mascot should be, the Panther was finally revealed for all students and faculty to see.

The bright green-eyed, black-coated Panther wore a maroon PVCC polo shirt. The mascot posed for pictures with students and faculty and trotted around interacting with people in the food line and those receiving the first PVCC Panther t-shirts. The mascot also handed out award bags to the panther-based trivia game winners and tossed balls and flying discs to people in the Bolick Student Center.

On Feb. 28, the Student Government

Association (SGA) will select the top five name choices to be voted on by the student body. Students can vote on the name between Monday, March 5 and Friday, March 9. The official name for the Panther is scheduled to be revealed the following Monday, March 12.

Shawn Anderson, coordinator of student engagement and student life, described the push for a mascot. He said the “SGA made it an initiative to school spirit.” The goal was to “get students more involved.”

The event was a success. SGA President Michael Apgar said they gave away 100 PVCC Panther t-shirts in 10 minutes. “Students were getting involved with pictures,” Apgar said.

The Panther mascot was joyfully received by both students and faculty, who showed their excitement by participating in the panther trivia

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Photography courtesy of PVCC Marketing and Media Relations

DATES TO REMEMBER

— **Student Success Day *** —
Feb. 28, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Main Building

— **Screening: *I'm Not Racist...Am I?* *** —
Feb. 28, 6-9 p.m., Auditorium, M229

— **Wellness Fair *** —
March 7, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Bolick Student Center

— **Virginia Blood Services Blood Drive *** —
March 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., North Mall Meeting Room

— **Richmond Ballet ^** —
March 7, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building

— **Third Fridays Improv *** —
March 16, 6-7 p.m., Dickinson Building

— **Free Movie Friday: *Lady Bird* *** —
March 16, 7:30 p.m., Dickinson Building

— **Spring Break: No classes** —
March 19 to March 24

— **Virginia Festival of the Book** —
March 21 to March 24, around Charlottesville

— **PVCC 34th Annual Job Fair *** —
March 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bolick Student Center

— ***West Side Story* ^** —
April 5 - April 7, 7:30 p.m.; April 8, 2:30 p.m.,
Dickinson Building

— **Civic Leadership Conference *** —
April 6 and April 7, Main Building

— **Academic Leadership Awards Convocation *** —
April 10, 4-7 p.m., Dickinson Building

*Free Event ^Student Vouchers Available

Student Success Day Feb. 28

Skye Scott, assistant editor

The fourth annual Student Success day will be on Wednesday, Feb. 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will take place in the Bolick Student Center and surrounding classrooms.

There will be nine 30-minute interactive workshops. The goal of these workshops is to help students learn how to succeed here at PVCC.

A few of the workshop topics include “Success? There’s an App for That!,” “Transfer Tricks” “Beyond Nursing” and “Taming the MTT Monster.” There are also plenty others!

From 12-1 p.m., there will be free pizza and desserts for everyone who participates in the resource fair. Fliers and table toppers around campus promise music and prizes as well! Students should check with their professors to see if they are offering extra credit for participation.

“The second annual Student Success Day was a great event, drawing more than 350 students to participate in a dozen interactive workshops and a resource fair, all designed to increase the awareness and knowledge of the student body, and hopefully helping many more students achieve their goals that have brought them to PVCC,” said David Lerman, coordinator of student success, about a previous Student Success day.





Student Government Association News

This week the long-awaited mascot was finally revealed. The mascot started as just an idea within the SGA last year as a way to boost school spirit and unit the student body. A vote was cast to the entire student body and faculty, and it was determined that we would be known as the Piedmont Panthers. This week, months of planning came together for one big day in the Bolick student center. The SGA gave away 100 free T-shirts to students with our new Panther logo and there was free food, drinks, trivia, and an opportunity to get a picture taken with the mascot.

The day of the reveal also marked the beginning of a weeklong opportunity to vote for the name of the mascot! So from February 21-28, stop by the Bolick center to cast your vote for the name of the new Piedmont Panther!

On April 4 the SGA will be hosting Spring Fling on the student terrace! There will be free food, drinks, music, and entertainment combined for one amazing day!

The annual SGA talent show has been scheduled for Friday, April 13 in the Dickinson building. Flyers will soon begin to circulate the school with additional details about how to sign up and compete for a \$150 grand prize!



Mascot, continued from page 1

game and getting pictures with the mascot either through the school's photographer or taking their own selfies.

There was a general consensus among students that they liked the choice of Panther as the school mascot. Madison Weikle said she liked its "similarity to the marvel character." Another fellow student, Navashree Singh, said it was "pretty cool but a little creepy."

The mascot event was joined by the Hope at Piedmont Club, described by Brianna Wayne, Hope at Piedmont's liaison, "Hope gets it popping." They gave out prizes and free popcorn to those in attendance at the event. Hope at Piedmont Club is a club against sexual assault and an advocate for students fearing pregnancy or emotional crisis. They meet every other Wednesday in room M159 from 1-2 p.m. For more information email them at hopeatpiedmont@gmail.com.

University of Virginia Community Credit Union also joined the event. Kelsey Waters, their representative, was there giving out free flying discs and discussing programs available at UVA's Community Credit Union and the differences between them and other banks.

The Panther Mascot Event was filled with excitement and laughs throughout, with endless interactions between the mascot and students and faculty. From pictures to high fives, the Panther gives PVCC spirit a thumbs up.

If you have any questions about the Panther mascot at PVCC, email Shawn Anderson at sanderson@pvcc.edu.



Photography courtesy of PVCC Marketing and Media Relations



Study Abroad with PVCC

Amber Monroe, staff writer

PVCC presents the opportunity to attend, engage, and expand cultural awareness through study abroad. Becoming culturally diverse not only allows for experience and adventure, but also personal growth.

PVCC is offering study abroad trips, giving students the opportunity to earn credits while traveling to places like Spain, France, Argentina, and Germany. Information on dates, prices, associated courses, and contacts, are all available via www.pvcc.edu/academics/international-education.

The PVCC Educational Foundation have made it affordable to all students and are currently

accepting applications for a scholarship to students that are participating in the Cultural Exploration Trip to Spain. The 11-day trip is scheduled for May 2018. Destinations include Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, Costa del Sol, Seville, Madrid and Toledo.

The program price includes round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations, several meals, guided sightseeing tours, and more.

Information for the scholarship is available through Silvia Dowell. The group leader for this trip will be Associate Professor of Spanish, Jorge Grajales-Diaz.

Students of PVCC must be enrolled in 6 credit hours in order to apply. To apply, contact sdowell@pvcc.edu for an application.



Review: A View from a Train

Frances Humes, staff writer

My evening started at PVCC's art building. I was unsure of what the night on the Underground Railroad had in store for me. Based on the turnout, I thought this show is going to be amazing. The lines wrapped around the hallway. When the time came to take my seat, there were few left. Horace Scruggs and his band presented *A View from the Train: Decoding the Stories of the Underground Railroad*.

When I turned around I was shocked. The majority of the audience was white. The show was an informational praise service, so I expected more African American families to be piling in to view their cultural history.

The lack of diversity, however, was the only dissatisfying part about the entire event. The first song presented to us was "O Happy Day," magnificently sung by Nadia Anderson, the lead singer.

The rhythm of the music itself made me feel as if I was fighting a hard battle and celebrating my African heritage around a bonfire with family.

I felt at home and one with the singers. The music made the audience rock back and forth, tapping their feet as they closed their eyes and ran through the woods with Moses, the codename given to Harriett Tubman. Listening to the music, I felt as if I was hiding from oppressors and traveling with the family gained along the way. I felt as if I was journeying with other runaways as the music filled the room with comfort and overflowed into my body.

I noticed there was a lady sitting just to the



Horace Scruggs

Photograph courtesy of PVCC Marketing and Media Relations

left of me taking notes during the seminar. The information given was definitely worth noting. I learned about Harriett Tubman's codename, Moses, and discovered there was not just one way African Americans fled captivity by traveling to a surrounding island like Cuba.

Even as the event came to an end, the show kept going. The crowd still sung along to the same song over and over. It was amazing. I learned a lot.

The Heroes of Harlem

Tyler Gaines, staff writer

Feb. 17, PVCC hosted a weekend of theater. *Of Ebony Embers: Vignettes of the Harlem Renaissance* was among the line-up. In honor of Black History Month, the show payed homage to the African-American struggles and artistic vision of the time.

The cast and crew were impressive, as The Core Ensemble provided samples from Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Billy Strayhorn, and other jazz pioneers. Excellent acting performances were given from Dracyn Blount, who portrayed many personas of prominent figures during the Harlem Renaissance like Aaron Douglas, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes. The musicians created a jazzy atmosphere akin to what life was like during those times in Harlem.

Whether there was change in character or scene transition, the musicians were always on que, fitting classical jazz and harmonizing the

mood throughout the entire production. The most impressive portrayal was of Aaron Douglass in scene one. Following the production, 12 dozen roses were given, in representation of friends and colleagues who had come and gone during the momentous time for African Americans. Dracyn Blount performed the touching moment, giving it emotional and historical significance.

The production had an endless flow of musical set pieces, props, and instantaneous character changes. The choreography and music tempo evoked mixed emotions from the audience and the many figures Dracyn Blount portrayed. The production gave us a front row seat to each historical figure's story. Seeing them at their lowest and highest moments made the play real.

The cast and crew earned a well-deserved round of applause from the audience for their fantastic performance. The show was an inspiring story about the people who paved the way for the artistic visions of Harlem's African American community.



The Core Ensemble, Dracyn Blount as Aaron Douglas. Photography by Tyler Gaines

Top Girls: Women From Top to Bottom

Bryn Dotson, staff writer

The Live Arts lobby in downtown Charlottesville was buzzing with white noise and chatter, people talking animatedly with finger food in hand. A sudden ping from a glass grabbed the crowd's attention, drawing their eyes to a couple of women standing in the middle of the cozy seating area. The women, director Betsy Tucker and producer Adrienne Oliver, began a question and answer session, thus allowing the audience to converse with various members of the crew from the female-driven play *Top Girls*. Creating a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, the crew encouraged women and men to open up about personal experiences.

After an hour of conversation, the performance began at 8 p.m.

The theater was small, intimate, and far from empty, with three of the four walls covered with seats. The stage was floor level with a table and six chairs sitting in the middle of it.

The audience settled in quietly as the first scene opened. A confident bobbed blonde, Marlene, played by Claire Chandler, hosted a dinner party with five other women, in celebration of her promotion to manager at Top Girls Employment Agency. The women were all different historical characters with unique significance in the history of women. One example, named Pope Joan, played by Gretchen York, disguised herself as a man in the ninth century to learn in Athens and was eventually elected Pope.

The first act was challenging to understand. The scene created parallels between each woman and Marlene by empathizing the struggle each character was having with patriarchy and oppression. If an audience member could get beyond the play's format of overlapping dialogue, the scene was straightforward. However, for many the scene seemed muddled and disorganized.

Two intermissions separated the three acts during *Top Girls*. Both were long enough to run



Jess Kristensen and Gretchen York on set.
Photography courtesy of Martyn Kyle.

to the bathroom and get a snack, but short enough to comfortably stay in your seat. Following the first intermission was act two. The first scene began with Marlene interviewing a woman named Jeanine, portrayed by Jess Kristensen. After being disappointed in Jeanine's family values, Marlene offers two job opportunities that fail to meet Jeanine's desires.

Scene two starts quickly with a young, troubled teen named Angie, played by Jen Bottas, interacting with a little girl named Kit, played by Madison Weikle. The two girls played and argued with intensity. It ended with Angie telling Kit that she believes her aunt, Marlene, is really her mother.

The next two scenes went back to the Top Girls agency where two working women, Win (Jess Kristensen) and Nell (Gretchen York) arrived for the work day. A series of interviews take place and the second act ends with a confrontation between Marlene and Angie.

The performance let out at 10:30 p.m. leaving the audience with a lot to think about. Many elements and themes of the performance are relevant to today's gender roles.

Betsy Tucker, the director of the play, said, "Responses have been slow in coming, but they have been very positive."

Second Annual Greenway Symposium

Skye Scott, assistant editor

On Jan. 21, 2018, St. Anne's-Belfield School (STAB) held their second annual Greenway Symposium. The Symposium was entirely student run and designed to connect STAB more closely with the local community. The Symposium speakers were all authors in various genres: John Grisham, Paul Perrone, John Hart, and Dr. William Winter.

John Grisham is an author and former lawyer, who was born in Arkansas. He and his family now live in Charlottesville, where his children attended STAB. Grisham spoke on how he discovered his love and talent for writing, since it was never his dream to be an author. He went to law school and loved the courtroom. Ironically, it was this love that led him to begin writing. After an underage sexual assault court case that he could not get out of his head, he decided write about it. This led to his first book, *A Time to Kill*, which explores what would have happened if the young girl's father had killed the alleged assailant. *A Time to Kill* was published in 1988. Ever since then, he has written and published one book per year.

The next speaker was Paul Perrone. Perrone's books are different from Grisham's in that they are more traditionally about technology. He is also the founder of Perrone Robotics, one of the first companies to create prototype driverless cars. Perrone's talk focused less on the books he has written and more on his journey through technology and driverless cars, as well as where he thinks the United States is headed as far as technology goes. He also spoke about the fears many people have about robots taking over the world. He said transcendence was much more likely, which he defines as the blending of technology and the natural life to the point that

machines will have the ability to do what humans can do.

After a short intermission, John Hart spoke next. Hart is from Durham, NC; however, like Grisham, he and his family now live in Charlottesville and his children attend STAB. His story was similar to Grisham's in that he is also a former lawyer. However, he had the desire to write and be an author for much longer. His talk took a more encouraging route for those students who may want to pursue a career in writing. He said, "Dreams are about finding your way to something meaningful." He also said that you should grab dreams if you have them, but don't lose heart if you have not discovered them yet. After many years of being rejected by publishers and following a career path he was not happy in, he was finally published. Now he has five New

York Time Best Seller Awards, including one for his first published book *The King of Lies*. He said that his liberal arts education helped him achieve this success by teaching him to have faith that he could achieve.

The last speaker for the Symposium was Dr. William Winter. Winter is the owner of Charlottesville

Neurology and Sleep Medicine Clinic. He is also the author of *The Sleep Solution: Why Your Sleep is Broken and How to Fix It*. He

spoke a lot about common reasons people cannot sleep well, especially regarding insomnia. He said that sleep is a skill, and he gave the audience some facts for mastering it. These facts included that sleep hygiene does not cure sleep problems, sleeping pills work on the placebo effect, and that body temperature may matter for good sleeping conditions more than light.

After a brief period of questions, the student symposium leaders thanked everyone for coming before dismissing the Greenway Symposium.





The PVCC library offers many spots for students to work. Photography by Madison Weikle.

PVCC Library, Ensuring Academic Success

Madison Weikle, staff writer

“You can always start here,” says the Director of Library Services Crystal Newell. Whether someone needs help finding resources and access to a computer or just a place to study, the Betty Sue Jessup Library, located in the main building of PVCC right across from the coffee bar, is happy to oblige. The PVCC Library is open from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturdays.

The library offers many services for students and faculty including, but not limited to, group study rooms, interlibrary loans, and access to a vast amount of physical and virtual records. All the librarians are willing to help students find information and resources for essays and academic projects.

Through the interlibrary loan system, the PVCC Library is able to request books from different colleges and universities if they are not readily available. The librarians host classes and teach the proper ways to search and cite sources,

helping students avoid legal issues like copyright and plagiarism. The library offers services to help students with completing assignments and computer and printer services are also available. Printing costs 5 cents per page side in black and white and 25 cents in color, scanning and emailing services are free.

Students can sign up for a study room for group projects. Newell recommends reserving a room a couple of weeks ahead as they tend to book up quickly.

Libraries are often seen as enforcing strict rules and policies. However, Newell believes students will be excited to learn that while telephone conversations are not allowed, food and drinks are. She just asks if anything is spilled make sure to notify a librarian right away. There are labeled parts of the library which do not allow talking, but most of the library is open to conversation and group discussions.

Newell explains, “We very much enjoy having students come and work with us, we live and breathe for it, and we will at least attempt to answer any questions.”

Technology Squad of PVCC

Andrew Ferralli, staff writer

It is the day before a paper is due, but MyPVCC is not logging in, nor is Gmail accepting any password. Will the paper get in on time? What is the best option while in this panic situation?

IT Support Services are the ones to contact for assistance. From students having issues logging in to their account, to professors needing technical assistance, IT Services is here to help.

Many students enrolled at PVCC do not take advantage of the amenities that are available to them. Two of the reasons are they do not know the services that are offered or how to access them. According to the IT Support Services page on the PVCC webpage, the main service they offer for students are the many computers on campus which are free to use. These locations include Jessup Library, Chemistry Lab M257, and the IT Help Desk room M832. A complete list of computer labs can be found at www.pvcc.edu/student-services/it-support-services.

Some students on campus do not have internet access or the higher speeds required for completing course material at home. There are many students who are also unable to afford a decent laptop or desktop for school work. Having free access to computers and internet solves these core issues. Even if students own a laptop, they are still welcome to use the facilities on campus.

Students have access to another great resource on campus, free technical support at the IT Help Desk. What the help desk provides specifically

varies on a case-by-case basis, but there are common issues they are more than happy to solve.

Student login issues are prominent at PVCC. Students can forget their login and sometimes MyPVCC just does not want to cooperate. Students have access to the help desk assistance Monday through Friday with the doors opening by 8 and 9 a.m. The specific hours can be accessed on The Hours of Operation page at www.pvcc.edu.

If a student, faculty, or staff member needs assistance when not at school, there is a phone number (434.961.5261) and email (help@pvcc.edu) for the Client Services Help Desk. In attempting to reach IT Services via email, *The Forum* received no response. If a student specifically has Blackboard issues according to PVCC's website, they should "visit the PVCC Blackboard support page or email bbsupport@pvcc.edu." If issues pertain to another online service or one is not sure what to do, the IT help desk can assist you.



Technology Wing Entrance. Photography by Andrew Ferralli.

Club Day 2018: Students' Passions Shine

Andrew Ferralli, staff writer

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2018: Popcorn, candy, and knick-knacks everywhere you look with people all interacting happily. No, this is not the boardwalk or Busch Gardens, but PVCC's Club Day.

PVCC's Club Day 2018 was a crazy day for both students and faculty; over 100 people filled the club tables at a single moment. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., students had the opportunity to walk around the Bolick Student Center to explore the wide assortment of clubs offered.

This semester, Club Day had more than 20 options to explore and sign up for. Most tables offered a sheet to sign if a student was interested in a club, with no obligation to join. By 1 p.m., many of the clubs had their sheets filling up fast.

Among the crowds were many returning clubs, most of which had students happy to represent and inform anyone interested. A pleasant surprise were the new club tables spread among the waves of students. These included both social and goal-based clubs. To name a few are the Vegan Club, Cyber Security Club, and M2: Missions for Our Military.

Most of the clubs can be found listed in our last issue of *The Forum*, digitally at Piedmontforum.com, or at pvcc.edu/student-life/clubs.

Although many clubs are student run, a faculty or staff representative is required to get a club started. Shawn Anderson is the man to talk to about starting a new club. Anderson is the coordinator of student engagement and student life for PVCC.

Although Anderson is a newer faculty member at PVCC, he is approachable and demonstrates that he truly wants students' club ideas to become a reality. All clubs should have a beneficial contribution to PVCC.

Some clubs work to accomplish certain goals. One of which is Earth Guardians. The club's Vice President, Lawson Leavell, strongly shared their message and was eager to answer any questions. Leavell said Earth Guardians is an international organization, with PVCC in the Charlottesville Chapter. One of Earth Guardians' current focus is on The Great Garbage Pacific Patch, an island of

garbage the size of Texas.

The Earth Guardians do more than just talk, they take action. Leavell said the US branch is suing the US Government for not enforcing its environmental regulations. The local chapter is currently seeking a grant from the National Earth Guardians.

PVCC'S Air Force ROTC Detachment 890 also had a table at club day. One of the representatives was ROTC cadet Ivan Hernandez. Hernandez is an engineering student here at PVCC. He chose PVCC specifically because of the Air Force ROTC program offered here.

Hernandez stated, "When I began last year, there were only three of us. 2-3 years before that there was only one cadet." PVCC is part of a four-school group that makes up the detachment. Most of the current Air Force ROTC cadets are going for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) field degrees and are eligible for potential scholarships.

If interested in serving your country or being a part of The Air Force, Detachment 890 may be for you.

"The first two years are considered GMC (general military courses) and carry no military obligation- you can drop out any time and you are not obligated to serve," Hernandez said, "I have been looking forward to this (club) day for a year and a half now."

Detachment 890 cadets work hard as a group and have extra courses to take at UVA. Although it is not a club, Detachments 890 at PVCC has very dedicated students who want to serve and help others.

Around 2 p.m. many of the club tables started to slow down significantly with little to no students and by 3 p.m. it was a ghost town. Club day this semester showed how many of the clubs at PVCC are truly dedicated to their work outside of being a student.

If you missed club day or were not interested in the crowds, it is not too late to join a club. Contact information can be found for each club on the PVCC club page at www.pvcc.edu/student-life/clubs.

Students passions seem to shine brightest on club day. One anonymous student said, "I love it here."



Club Day Hallway. Photography by Madison Weikle

M2 Club. Photography by Madison Weikle



HOPE. Photography by Madison Weikle

Air Force ROTC. Photography by Andrew Ferralli



Earth Guardians. Photography by Andrew Ferralli

Vegan Club. Photography by Madison Weikle



Lia Wallace watching the campers of summer 2016 in their session 1 shows.
Photography courtesy of Lindsey Walters.

Life Lessons From William Shakespeare

Madison Weikle, staff writer

“The world sucks... being a teenager sucks,” states Lia Wallace, college prep programs manager and camp director of the American Shakespeare Theater Company in Staunton, Virginia. Wallace was born and raised by a Shakespeare-centered family in Philadelphia. Although she reveled in the nerdy stigma of being a “Shakespeare kid,” she admits she never really enjoyed his works until her college years.

While attending the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at NYU, a former director of hers, Patrick Spottiswood, recommended she go down to Staunton, Virginia, and take up an internship with the Blackfriars Playhouse. Wallace was doubtful she would stay but decided to check it out anyways. While investigating the playhouse, she fell in love with a production of *Richard III* starring Benjamin Curns, and thus began her journey into the world of Shakespeare education.

She was drawn to working with teenagers because she liked to “be real” with them. She explained she understands teenagers are developing many new hormones without the hardware to deal with them, and because of this they do not have the ability to realize their current

feelings are just temporary, to them everything is permanent. This is where the American Shakespeare Center Theater Camp comes into play.

Wallace explained, “Camp is about getting prepared for life.” She teaches campers to prepare for life by performing Shakespearean plays. Shakespeare deals with characters who lack the same skills teenagers have yet to learn, like dealing with death, sexuality, and love. Wallace told me, “We use Shakespeare to teach these skills, and we use performance to test them.”

She is not only working hard on helping children diversify their skill sets, she is also working on diversifying the crowd the theater attracts. “Camp is super white, and it is super expensive,” she admitted. Wallace realizes that the cost of the camp creates a huge roadblock for diversifying the American Shakespeare Center’s educational outreach. However, she is determined to break the financial boundaries, and is putting a ton of work into offering a full scholarship for one camper each year. She recognizes it is not a lot but it is a step, and she is continuing to put effort into reaching out and spreading the skills of Shakespeare to every child she can. She stated, “If I can make life for one teenager suck less, that’s my goal.”

This Party's a Hit: Interview with Ray Feola

Andrew Ferralli, staff writer

Dreams of owning a local business are common, some people take a shot at one and end up closing down. Then there are some local businesses that fit like a puzzle piece needed to complete the picture. The picture in this scenario is Charlottesville and that puzzle piece was Party Starts Here. Although this piece worked in various locations of the puzzle, 30 years later it has found a perfect fit.

“My Dad and George moved down here from New Jersey. They both were in the grocery business. They had an idea to open up a party store, they took a shot on it and its been pretty Successful,” said Ray Feola. Feola is the current owner of the local store Party Starts Here.

Ray's father, Auggy Feola, created Party Starts with his friend George Elder back in 1988. “They started it back in 1988 down on the downtown mall actually, in a tiny store,” said Feola. Feola went on to say they had two locations over the years on the downtown mall. The company continued growing and moved into Seminole Square. “We were in a smaller store in Seminole Square where we are now. And then, about 15 years ago, we moved to the location we're in now,” said Feola.

“Last year we did a big expansion that took on even more space,” he said. Feola was only a child in the earlier years of Party Starts Here, but he had the goal of one day taking over from his father. Feola's siblings assisted with the store in varying degrees but did not plan on being the owner.

“I decided in high school that I was going to work there at the store and had planned to take it over. That was kind of when I made the decision, you know, I chose between going away to a four-year school or getting a two-year associate's degree while getting the hands on experience, that's where I made that decision,” Feola said.

“During that two years, I took a real hands-on approach with my dad and with George, really

training with how they run the business day to day... I didn't want to just sit there learning it all in the classroom and then try to apply it to real life; I liked having a mix of both. I was learning on the job while taking some business classes at Piedmont,” Feola said. George Elder is still an owner of the business today.

“So, it's been kind of cool to see how it's grown over the years, to start out as a tiny, tiny little balloon and simple party favors store to kind of the gigantic store than it is today,” said Feola. Over time as the store changed, so did the crazes. Feola said unicorns are the most popular party theme currently and that they were also a hit 10 years ago: “It's ever changing so it keeps you on your toes.”

Party Starts Here's most popular times of the year are Halloween and graduation. Ray said they do anything from custom invitations to balloons and everything in between. They keep the store up to date with current trends, recently including Etsy and



Pinterest project supplies.

Party Starts Here is a brick and mortar store which can make it hard to compete with online companies like Amazon. Feola said, “We provide a customer service level to customers that, you know, you obviously can't get online and we have competitive pricing as well.”

In addition to helping customers, Feola likes to give back to the community. Party Starts Here has donated money as well as sponsored various local youth sports. The store recently contributed to Northside Baseball League, which Feola played in as a child.

For over 25 years, Party Starts Here has been part of Charlottesville and continues to do so. If you need anything from unicorn headbands or masks, to graduation supplies Party Starts Heres got you covered.

So, the party actually started here in Charlottesville and, for Feola, continued at PVCC. Feola has his own family of four now, and who knows, maybe his children will one day take over the business, just as he did for his father.

Free Movie Friday: Pixar's Coco

Andrew Ferralli, staff writer

Friday, Feb. 16, 300 people sit in a large auditorium, all waiting for one thing. PVCC faculty and staff, students, children, parents, and seniors are all ready for "The Moment."

Lights go out and a screen flickers on, out of nowhere appears a small lamp. Everyone goes silent immediately as the word Pixar appears on the screen. The small lamp comes to life and eventually turns facing the crowd. This is "The Moment," the movie *Coco* is about to begin.

Free Movie Friday's: Pixar's *Coco* premiere started at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening at 6. The PVCC website and Facebook Event page advised movie goers to arrive early for a better chance of receiving a ticket. Current student Gigi Gett, a long time Free Movie night goer, said, she had already seen Pixar's *Coco* twice but had to see it again. Both Gett and former student and volunteer Daniel Hillard said the free movie nights are usually packed. Hillard said, "There is always a full house for a Pixar movie."

They were not wrong. Waves of people started coming in continuously making a line going out the door. Two volunteers were handing out the free tickets and were practically getting swarmed. The volunteers kept the lines moving with a positive attitude.

By 6:30 p.m., minivans filled a wide section of Dickinson's parking lot. Some of the early birds, mostly families with young children, went into the dining area of Dickinson to have a snack and play before entering the theatre.

PVCC's showing of *Coco* was in fact a full house, as anticipated. Most of the theatre with 300+ seating was filled 30 minutes till show time. At the same time, potential movie goers were conversing on the Facebook page in hopes of remaining tickets. With lines out the door, it was going

to be a close one, but the PVCC Arts page assured the Facebook users there were still available tickets.

As the lights went down, a few stragglers came in, as shadows to find one of the few remaining seats. Disney Pixar's *Coco* caused many laughs among the audience with some adult humor here and there.

As for the film itself, fans seemed to love it. Especially GiGi Gett who said, "Stunning, beautiful, gorgeous, touching and heartwarming is how I would describe *Coco*."



Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Jesus Duran Reyes, staff writer

Screenwriter and director Martin McDonagh, added another dark comedy to his resume, along with seven Oscar nominations in his fourth featured film. *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* is the story of an ambitious mother of two, Mildred Hayes, played by Frances McDormand. She is a fearless woman willing to take down anyone who opposes her, even if it means breaking the law.

Eight months earlier, her daughter was kidnapped, raped, and murdered. Due to the lack of arrests of potential suspects by the police, she takes matters into her own hands and rents three billboards that question the chief of police, Bill Willoughby, played by Woody Harrelson.

The conflict is revealed by the relationships they have with each other and the changes that are offered in them. From start to finish, situations exposed to the characters depict who they are by their responses.

McDonagh exploits the past with a series of

confrontations combined with drama of the present, resulting in a rich understanding of the characters current positions. Dialogue is serious, explicit, and funny. Although in some scenes the comedy feels forced and takes away from the story. Most importantly, the unpredictability of every scene makes this movie a must watch.

Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson and Sam Rockwell's performances are without a doubt one for the books, they have been all nominated for the 2018 Oscars Ceremony. McDormand adapts the arrogance of a mother and determined woman, while Rockwell, through vague language, abuse of power, and racist views, shows a sad side of humanity.

This film showcases the willpower of individuals when they are forcefully confronted with something they have forgotten, something not personally important, something that makes them uncomfortable. It shows the changes and sacrifices they are willing to make for their own good or for the betterment of all. In a way, it mirrors how we are as a society today.

Violet Crown Black Panther Premiere

Madison Weikle, staff writer

It was an unusually warm Thursday night when the movie *Black Panther* hit theaters in Charlottesville. The local movie theater Violet Crown, located on the downtown mall across from Mudhouse Coffee, released the movie in the early evening at 7 p.m. With crowds out the door and a strong presence of cultural diversity, one might think the festivities would last throughout the whole night.

However, when the 11 p.m. showing rolled around, the mood shifted greatly. While bars were filled and jazz music was blaring from Miller's, hardly anyone stepped near the theater. The crowds from the 7 p.m. showing had left and the lonely building, all lit up for celebration, stood still and silent. Inside the theater was no different. The floors had been swept and the plush leather chairs faced the purple, glowing screen. A few people trickled into the theater closer to the showtime, but the seats remained mostly empty.

Violet Crown opened in October 2015 and quickly became a place of high public interest. The theater was a new movie-going experience

for the Charlottesville community, offering full meals, alcohol, and free four-hour parking. Violet Crown made a name for itself. So why is the theater empty during the premiere of a highly popular movie?

The main factor of decreased success for Violet Crown is new competition. The Alamo Drafthouse, located off 5th street, provides extreme competition for Violet Crown, it offers snacks and full meals before and during the movie. Alamo also announced on their website an "opening night fan event," stating, "Fans attending will see exclusive content, receive a collectible coin, and be given a special event only concessions offer."

While the Alamo's success certainly impacted the turn out of the *Black Panther* premiere at Violet Crown, the crowd audibly enjoyed the movie and *Black Panther* earned the spot of 5th biggest opening of all time bringing in \$201.8 million in just three days, according to Frank Pallotta, CNN Media. The movie's success provides inspiration for African-American children everywhere and paves the way for increased diversity in the film industry.

A Look at a Local Taco Restaurant

John Matthews, staff writer

Located down the street from Charlottesville's downtown mall, Brazos can be found in the IX building. Created by Peter Griesar, Brazos has been going strong since 2016.

Open seven days a week, it is a great place to grab some food. Brazos has indoor and outdoor seating with plenty of grass; it makes a pleasant place to eat for adults but also leaves space for children to run around and play while their parents eat.

The tacos may be higher in price than other tacos restaurants, ranging from \$2.50 to \$4.50 per taco. The price is made up through the tacos being well packed and filling.

The type and number of tacos desired is completely up to the customer. From choosing between three different tortillas of flour, corn or local organic corn with another option of having it in a cup. With plenty of fillings to choose from what's on the menu from breakfast tacos that are served all-day, except for a few, to that of lunch and dinner meat tacos including a vegetarian menu. If none of listed options are suited to your

liking, then you always have the option of creating your own taco from top to bottom.

The service was good; the employees were polite and smiling; and the time from ordering food from the register to receiving the food was only a couple of minutes. Though it was not busy at the moment I was there, it left the impression that they would still be quick at getting the food out to customers even when they are busy.

FTW, Carne Asada, and Carnitas were the three tacos I ordered, and I would recommend all three, but there's more on the menu to consider. Overall, the meal was delicious, quite filling for three tacos, and the service was great. Though the price maybe a little high, especially for a single taco, I found it to be worth the cost.

Brazos is open Monday through Wednesday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursday to Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Brazos is also available to order online or by phone.

On a side note, I do know the owner, but I did not let that affect my opinion on the environment nor the food. I also did not inform him or any of the employees that I was writing a review.



(From left to right) FTW, Carne Asada, Carnitas. Photography by John Matthews

Review: Rancho Loco Burrito

Charley Hilliard, staff writer

The Rancho Loco Burrito is delicioso and ranks as a favorite dinner meal at Mono Loco, a popular Mexican restaurant on Water Street by the downtown mall.

The signature burrito does not only enwrap crispy pork with rancho sauce, but includes a savory fried egg. The combination puts Rancho into my category of crazy good. In addition to the protein from pork, the menu says, “all burritos contain rice, beans, pico de gallo and queso fresco and are topped with chipotle and avocado cremas.” The dinner also comes with a zesty salad as well.

The companion drink to the Rancho Loco Burrito, if you’re feeling loco, is the house margarita. Served in a pint glass with 100 percent Agave Gold Tequila, Triple Sec, and fresh lime juice, the margarita is a refreshing splash of icy

green that maintains an ideal balance between sweet and sour. For most margarita fans, the blend is a virtue that becomes increasingly important per drink. Mono Loco, which means crazy monkey in Spanish, is a place where drinks quickly disappear and people enjoy a night full of great food and fun.

The buzzing community around the bar makes you feel alive because the people let it. Out of all the local Charlottesville restaurants, Mono Loco is one of the greatest because it offers a leap to an island vacation. The staff is friendly and always inventing new specials.

In the summer, the outdoor seating is vast, breezy, and on fire with local style. Moreover, live music abounds, filling the air with bubbles of funky tunes. As a salty smell like the ocean lingers around the restaurant. Every Monday through Thursday there is a 15 percent off entree for UVA and PVCC students and faculty.

The Hidden Gem of Charlottesville

Mathew Fragola, staff writer

Blue Ridge Country Store is almost too good of a hole in the wall. If you are lucky enough to notice it, you have found a hidden gem. Walking into the shop, I was overwhelmed by the aroma of fresh fruits and vegetables. I saw Patty, the owner, immediately, and she was so welcoming she reminded me of my grandmother in a way.

As I walked through the store, it became difficult to decide what to eat because the options of healthy foods were endless. It was all so appealing, and I wanted to just have a sample of it all. I went to the register and I ordered the turkey and cheddar wrap, a custom pasta salad that I put together myself, and an iced coffee. I was astonished by how only \$8 could get me that much food.

While I sat in a rocking chair getting ready to eat, I could see the salad bar and freshly baked goods seemed like the most popular options for the daily customers. The slow country music was low, and the chatter was at a minimum, probably because everyone was too into their food. As I bit

into my wrap, I had to use two hands because it was rather large. The turkey melted in my mouth. I could tell that it was fresh, and I could not put down the first half. I then moved on to the pasta salad. The mixture of cold pasta, with a warm chopped boiled egg and feta cheese could not have tasted better.

It is located on the downtown mall at 518 East Main Street. Go in any time during the week before 5 p.m. and you will be satisfied. If you are looking for food that can fit your budget and diet, look no further than the Blue Ridge Country Store.



Photography by Mathew Fragola

Sugar, Spice, and Marco and Luca

Bryn Dotson, staff writer

Most locals have been to the beloved Marco and Luca restaurant. There are three restaurant locations in Charlottesville: one on the historic Downtown Mall, one on the corner, and one in Seminole Square Shopping Center on 29-North.

When you first enter the quaint restaurant, the order desk is directly ahead. You are almost instantaneously hit with the smell of sizzling dumplings, a compliment to the subtle smell of peanut oils used.

The staff is always friendly, even in times of culinary chaos, with lines out the door, and orders stacked on one another. The staff are incredible and clearly comfortable in their element.

The downtown location has a cozy and intimate atmosphere, with soft, warm shades of orange and muted reds in the decor. The tables are perfectly spaced, avoiding a cramped environment.

Even on busy days there is enough seating. While waiting for your food, you can sit in the comfortable seating with friends and family.

The restaurant is incredibly family friendly and always plays appropriate music for all ages. There is a large window lined with bar stools to eat at and is an ideal place to people-watch. A front row seat to the many unique, colorful street performers of Charlottesville is the best view in downtown.

The wait for food is generally pretty short. You are signaled to pick up your delicious dumplings from the front counter usually under five minutes.

The dumplings are the main attraction at Marco and Luca, with good reason. While they may not look like much externally, the pork, ginger, and leek-filled flavor bombs are delectable. The crunch of the outside compliments the soft, warm inside.



Dumplings to go. Photography by Bryn Dotson

The dumplings are blanketed with a sweet and spicy soy sauce concoction. One order includes six delightful dumplings at the reasonable cost of \$4.

Marco and Luca also offers vegetarian options, such as their mouthwatering sesame noodles and their homey veggie hot bun. They have just included new items to their menu, including their chicken curry, which is average. The texture of the chicken can be unappealing at times.

Marco and Luca is a fine dining restaurant, it thrives off of the diverse community on the Downtown Mall.

I enjoyed my experience not only for the food, but the sense of community and the scenic view from the large glass windows, by which you can observe the personalities of Charlottesville.

Review: Made in Asia

Tyler Gaines, staff writer

On Sunday, Jan. 21, I paid a visit to Made in Asia, a local diner that specializes in Asian food and cuisine. I arrived at the establishment around 11:38 a.m. The customer volume was low, but the service was still good. I did not have to wait long before I was seated. The hosts there were kind and courteous at all times.

Feeling welcomed at a restaurant is key for satisfactory reviews and customer loyalty. It felt like an overall relaxing atmosphere. I had a good conversation with the bartender. While I was there I was asked how my food was and if there was anything else I needed. It was truly commendable service by the whole staff there.

I noticed that the servers were able to handle multiple customers at once and provide them with the same quality of service as me. I had the Szechuan Crispy Cod, which according to Made in Asia's website, is a "Filet cut deep fried cod with Szechuan spicy sauce and a side of stirred fried mixed vegetables and rice" for \$15.95. I also had some Japanese craft beer with my meal.

The menu has a variety of options to choose from. Everything is organized from signature entrees down to types of Asian cuisine, such as Thai or Chinese for example. There is also a menu option for kids that parents and caretakers will find particularly convenient. Pricing varies between all the menu options, however there are affordable options for you to choose from. Their lunch menu ranges anywhere between \$6.50 and \$7.50.

Made in Asia is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. You can contact them by phone, email, or by visiting their website. They are located in Zion Crossroads, a reasonable drive for good Asian food.

The food was of great quality and I recommend it to anybody. There is a take-out option as well for those in a hurry. Having these options makes things that much more convenient for everyone. I would rate my trip to Made in Asia over the weekend a 8/10. I cannot speak enough about how everyone there is treated as a welcomed guest.



Szechuan fried cod. Photography by Tyler Gaines

Snowing in Space, Transforming Coffee

Madison Weikle, staff writer

Snow had finished falling on the cold Wednesday morning when I walked into a vibrant coffee house filled with neon colors and rocket ships. I lifted my boot off the melting snow outside and stepped onto the white washed floor and realized, while spring may be approaching outside, it would always be Snowing in Space.

Located off West Main Street is Charlottesville's first nitro cold brew coffee shop, Snowing in Space's Space Lab. The Space Lab opened their doors April 2, 2017, and since then expanded their reach by canning cold brews and, according to their website, sending them as far as the District of Columbia.

The Space Lab is decked out all in white with zig zags of bright blue, yellow, green, and red coming from a spaceship on the surrounding walls. All around are white study tables paired with white chairs and a large dark wooden bar with bar stools each the color of the spaceship's exhaust. While the amount of spaceships and rockets present in the store might lead someone to believe the Space Lab is space themed, it is not. According to the owners the spaceships represent the high caffeine content in nitro cold brew coffee. Either way, the upbeat setting certainly added to my coffee experience.

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Space Lab Commander Julia Minnerly, the manager of the Space Lab, and tasting four different coffees for only \$5. My favorite coffee, Big Blue, was the most popular among the cadets, employees. Big Blue was a strong, sweet tasting brew with notes of blueberry and dark chocolate.

Julia informed me, nitro cold brew coffee is naturally sweeter and less acidic than regular hot brewed coffee and because of its long steeping

time of twenty-four hours, cold brew coffee contains much more caffeine. This explains why I got shaky after one drink.

As I sipped my coffee, I became aware of the socially interactive setting I was in. Julia informed me that The Space Lab was designed like a bar. The setting impacts the relationships cadets have with their customers, Julia said, "The relationship we have with customers is a little bit less of a get in, get your coffee, get out vibe and more of a conversation."

While nitro cold brew coffee is all the coffee served at the Space Lab, lattes and other specialty drinks can still be made from it. Cadets can steam the cold brew for a regular hot coffee. By adding

milk and different flavored syrups to the espresso cold brew, the cadets have learned to make lattes and other specialty drinks. One of the cadets, Paige Naylor, told me the great thing about cold brew is it is still developing, while traditional espresso is set to specifics. The cadets at Snowing in Space are encouraged to play around and add new specialty drinks to the menu.

I enjoyed my time at Snowing in Space's Space Lab. I am fortunate enough to have had the chance to sit

down with a manager and enjoy the perks of seeing my significant other work behind the counter. Regardless of my advantages, I see many other customers enjoy their experience at the Space Lab.

It is fun to see such a local business collaborate with the Charlottesville community.

Before I walked back out into the melting winter wonderland, Julia let me in on the real space mission, "We have this whole rich coffee culture in Charlottesville, we have a coffee trail, and a coffee community... so we want this to be a place of collaboration and fun."



Paige Naylor posing with her pistachio latte.
Photography by Madison Weikle.

Review: Gastropub Serves Great Burgers



An “Original Burger” topped with bacon, lettuce, mayo, house sauce, and tomato; every hamburger comes with a salad on the side. Photography by Richard Hollis.

Richard Hollis, staff writer

Burger Bach, in the Stonefield shopping center, is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. It serves one of the best hamburgers anyone will ever enjoy in their life. Modeled after a New Zealand style gastropub, Burger Bach serves high quality and well prepared food. My waiter informed me, Burger Bach receives entirely grass fed beef and lamb from Silver Fern Farm in New Zealand.

In my opinion, it was a fantastic hamburger, but I also wanted to get the opinion of a fellow patron. I asked a man sitting at the table across from mine what he thought of his food. “This is

the most well prepared and well cooked hamburger I have eaten in a long time; I can see myself coming here on a regular occasion for a very long time,” John P. said. No words can capture how wonderful the food is.

With its extensive menu, you will never run out of food to order. Their food ranges from appetizers like triple cream fries covered in blue cheese and garlic aioli to their seven hills nachos, an assortment of flavors atop classic tortilla chips. The menu’s fresh cut fries and long list of sauces will not disappoint. If you do not like hamburgers, you can still find a great meal with all the seafood they have. Burger Bach has a great menu and atmosphere, and I can almost certainly say it will not disappoint.



Classifieds

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