



INSTITUTE REPORT

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Family Weekend Returns in Full Force

By Maj. Michelle Ellwood

Maybe it was because Family Weekend was canceled last year due to the coronavirus pandemic, but the Family Weekend festivities on post held Oct. 8–10 seemed livelier than ever.

Loved ones arrived early to post from across the country on Friday, and by the afternoon, parking spots were filled and the sidewalks were busy.

“That face to face contact with other families of VMI was



Friends and family members capture photos with cadets while visiting post Oct. 9.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

just so awesome,” said Rob Diamond, co-president of the VMI Parents Council. “VMI is an extended family for many, and being able to socialize with families and cadets sure made things seem like they are getting back to normal.”

Friday afternoon, faculty had the opportunity to host cadets with their parents to talk about the academic year so far. The evening

See Family Weekend, page 4

Former Coach Returns as Interim AD

By Mary Price

The Institute’s interim athletic director (AD) is a return visitor to post—with a memory of recruiting a certain basketball player from Hyattsville, Maryland.

Norfolk native Jim Miller, who began his duties as interim AD Oct. 1, was an assistant basketball coach for the Keydets from 1979 to 1982, and in that capacity, he was in charge of recruiting. After hearing about a standout player, Cedric Wins, Miller got in his car and drove north to check him out.

“I went to every single one of his home high school basketball games,” said Miller of Wins. “He was the number one recruit on our list.”

Miller helped coach the team through Wins’ rat year, but a coaching change brought a period of transition after that, and Miller decided to go to law school rather than continue his career in college athletics. He earned his J.D. from the College of William & Mary and practiced law for approximately five years, but over time, Miller became increasingly sure that the legal profession wasn’t for him.

“I was really missing college athletics and college life,” he recalled.

See Interim AD, page 16

High-Profile Projects Move Forward

By Maj. Michelle Ellwood and Kelly Nye

Exciting construction projects continue to move forward for VMI, which is certainly no secret to those driving on Route 11 through post. The Corps Physical Training Facility Phase III, the Aquatic Center, is a \$44 million project that began in December 2020 with one more year of work scheduled.

Current activities on the project include installation of the foundation and the subfloor system on the main floor, as well as erection of the steel frame for the mezzanine area and interior walls. The large glulam roof trusses are scheduled to be installed in February 2022, with the goal of the roof being completed in the spring. Formal building inspections should begin in October 2022, leading to a substantial completion in early November.

Just down the street in Foster Stadium a new videoboard was installed in mid-October. The previous scoreboard was installed in 2006 and displayed a 23mm pixel pitch. The new videoboard will display a 10mm pixel pitch as well as live statistics



Piros Signs of St. Louis, Missouri installs a 10mm videoboard to replace the Foster Stadium scoreboard. –VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

tracker for games happening around the country. Piros Signs of St. Louis, Missouri installed the 48-foot wide by 24-foot tall videoboard that can be controlled by a touchscreen from the press box. That system

was installed by Daktronics with electrical work by Saunder's Contracting, Inc. of Hampton, Virginia.

"This has been a fun project that will add a great deal of enjoyment to the fan experience at Foster Stadium for years to come," said Evan Simmons, physical plant engineering technician, who oversaw the project. "It's been a pleasure working with our athletics staff to make this happen."

Users of the Chessie Nature Trail will also be pleased with recent updates. Runners, walkers, and cyclists have been using a detour onto Stuartsburg Road since 2003 when the footbridge over South River was washed away by Hurricane Isabel. Completion of a new bridge this November will keep people on the trail. The \$2.1 million project, funded primarily through a grant from the Federal Highway Administration along with VMI funds and funds from



Construction workers assemble the steel frame for interior portions of the Aquatic Center located on Main Street. –VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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Header photo on page 1 by
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COVID-19 information and current VMI protocols can be found at www.vmi.edu/COVID.

local municipalities, began in December 2020. In mid-October, bridge assembly was taking place onsite, and the full bridge was pushed across the river in two phases. Contractors then focused on adjustments to the grade on both sides of the river, finishing with clean up and adding a parking area. 🌲



The frame of the Chessie Nature Trail footbridge arches almost halfway across South River as of Oct. 14.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Among the Top Cadets in the Nation

Cadets Michael Hoffmann '22 and Christopher Soo '22 have been recognized by Army ROTC Cadet Command as top cadets in the nation, with Hoffmann ranking No. 5 and Soo No. 7.

Soo and Hoffmann embody the finest attributes of a VMI cadet through their efforts and the example they set for others.

"Cadets Christopher Soo and Michael Hoffmann earned their positions in the top 10 above thousands of their peers because of their intense focus on excellence in everything they did," Cpt. David Sperry, professor of military science, explained. "They refused to settle for good enough or competent enough."

Army ROTC uses a variety of metrics, such as GPA, physical fitness, leadership evaluations, and technical competency, to rank the performance of cadets across the nation.

"Those rankings help in determining cadet component (Active Duty, U.S. Army Reserves, National Guard) as well as their branch within the Army, such as infantry or aviation," Sperry stated.

Soo and Hoffmann have excelled in their Army ROTC training, and were recognized for their leadership.

"During peer evaluations, they were both recognized by their peers for the positive influence they projected on those around them," Sperry stated.—VMI Photo by Eric Moore.



Corrections

Two faculty members were not included on the tenure and promotion recipient list in the October Institute Report. Congratulations to these individuals.

Dr. Sabrina Laroussi, promoted from assistant professor to associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures.

Dr. Youna Jung, promoted from assistant professor to associate professor in the Department of Computer and Information Sciences.

A new full-time faculty member's name was written incorrectly.

Maj. Curry Kennedy is a new full-time faculty member for English, rhetoric, and humanistic studies.

hours were filled with fan support at the women's soccer game against the Citadel, the VMI Commanders and Glee Club joint concert in Memorial Hall, and the VMI Theatre's production in Gillis Theater.

The theater, which is back in business after taking a break during its 50th year, presented "It's a Theatre Thing!" on both Friday and Saturday nights, as well as Sunday afternoon. The variety of one-act plays was open to the public, with nine cadets, including five rats, making up the cast.

Saturday morning was misty and cool, but that didn't stop the parade on the Parade Ground and tailgating at McKethan Park, located about five minutes from post. Family members were also welcome in a barracks open house. The Keydet football team then put on a show for a large crowd in Foster Stadium, coming off the tough loss at the Citadel the weekend before. The skies cleared and the momentum stayed



Cadets march in the Family Weekend parade Oct. 9.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

strong as the Keydets won in overtime against the Chattanooga Mocs, 37-34. Following his 37-yard field goal in overtime to win the

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Josiah Richter '22, Melvin Rubio '22, and Andrew Mills '22 pose for a photo while tailgating at McKethan Park Oct. 9.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Korey Bridy '22 breaks through the Chattanooga Mocs' defense during the Oct. 9 game in Foster Stadium. Keydets won the game in overtime, 37-34.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



William Longacher '24, Samuel Patterson '24, and Alton Moon '24 cheer for the Keydets in Foster Stadium Oct. 9.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Cadets salute during the National Anthem in Foster Stadium just before the Oct. 9 football kickoff.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

game, redshirt sophomore Jerry Rice was named the Southern Conference Special Teams Player of the Week.

Another win of the day was the VMI men's club rugby team, who beat VCU in a game held on North Post.

Several religious services were held on Sunday morning in Memorial Hall, followed by another women's soccer home game against Mercer. ❁



Cadets pose with their friends and families after the parade Oct. 9.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Forward Riley Flanagan '25 keeps the ball from her Citadel opponent Oct. 8 on Patchin Field.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



The cast of "It's a Theater Thing" pose for a photo after the Oct. 10 performance in Gillis Theater.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Constitution Day Event: A Review of the Historic and the Complex

By Eric Moore and Mary Price

On Monday, Sept. 20, the history department, in conjunction with the English department, sponsored a Constitution Day event supporting VMI's emerging Constitutional history program. Constitution Day, which commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787, is observed on post and throughout the nation each year, but this year's event was held a few days later because Sept. 17 fell on a Friday.

Approximately 40 cadets attended the event, which was held in Marshall Hall and followed by a dinner.

Participants included members of the VMI Pre-Law Society, the VMI chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honors society, and cadets enrolled in a pilot course in the history department, the American Civic Experience. Cadet facilitators drawn from

the ranks of Phi Alpha Theta and the Pre-Law Society led a series of discussions grounded in the results of a Constitutional knowledge assessment completed by the 4th Class.

"The majority of VMI graduates take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States when they assume public office or when they are commissioned and promoted in the United States armed forces," explained Col. Turk McCleskey, professor of history and Lt. Gen. John W. Knapp '54 Chair for Academic Excellence. "It's vital for those graduates to be well-informed about the complex document to which they're swearing allegiance."

Before the event, the 4th Class completed an assessment on Constitutional literacy.



Col. M. Houston Johnson V, professor of history, speaks to William Rich '23 during the Constitution Day event held in Marshall Hall Sept. 20.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

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Col. Turk McCleskey and Col. M. Houston Johnson V, professors of history, discuss today's knowledge of the Constitution with a table of cadets during the Constitution Day event held in Marshall Hall Sept. 20.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

“The quiz for rats is one way to measure the depth of cadet familiarity with the Constitution,” McCleskey explained.

The data from the knowledge assessment, as well as the results of the Constitution Day discussion, will help history department faculty refine the American Civic Experience course currently being taught by McCleskey; the data will also support the development of additional Constitution-related programming. Col. M. Houston Johnson V, professor of history and head of the department, believes that these efforts will “play an important role in furthering the Institute’s mission of producing educated, honorable men and women with a high sense of public service.”

“I am incredibly honored to have been involved with this conference,” said Ryan Fix ’23, a history major and a student in the American Civic Experience course. “In my opinion, it is our duty as VMI men and women to uphold the principles of our Constitution, whether we become officers or not. Patriotism and reverence for the

American form of government is something I believe is lacking in today’s society, and I am proud to say that the cadets of VMI display no such problem from my experience.”

Agreeing with Fix’s assessment was Eric Mulcahy ’23, also a history major. “This event was quite special in that it was a discussion on what we have learned previously about the Constitution, such as our preconceived notions and things learned throughout grade school as well as what courses at VMI so far have taught us the most about the Constitution,” he commented.

Currently, the history department is seeking candidates for a Constitutional historian, who would come on board for the 2022–23 academic year. The individual hired for the position will not only teach a class in Constitutional history but also build a program with speakers, symposia, and other materials focusing on the Constitution. ✪



Harvest Hop

After a year of socially distant events due to the coronavirus pandemic that consisted of cornhole and online game tournaments, the S7 staff was able to bring creativity and excitement into the planning of a homecoming event for the upper classes Oct. 16.

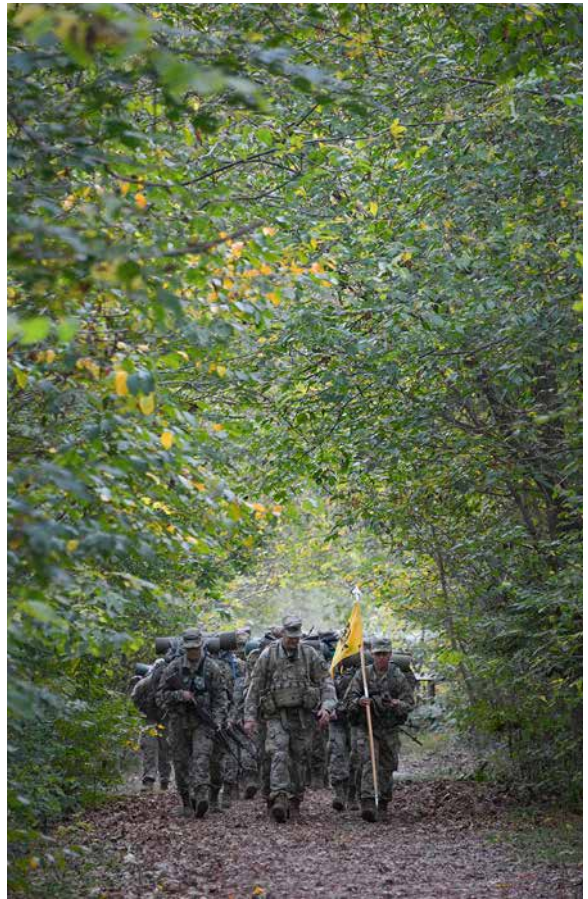
The theme for the fall hop held in Cocke Hall was “Summer in the City.”

“That gap in in-person events has made this Homecoming Hop so much better,” said Andrew Henderson ’23, a member of the S7 staff that plans activities for the Corps. They had a “year’s worth of ideas stored in the ‘think tank.’”

Henderson and the others planning the event knew what was ahead of them. Prior to the event, he said, “Expectations are unbelievably high for this hop, and the S7 staff is ready to meet those expectations and provide the Corps the experience that makes up for the sacrifices that everyone has made for the past year following COVID-19 guidelines.”—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.







Fall FTX

Cadets participated with their respective ROTC branches in field training exercises (FTX) Oct. 22–24. Utilizing various locations on and off post, cadets learned land navigation skills, participated in team building exercises, and practiced tactical maneuvers. Activities took place on the Chessie Nature Trail, McKethan Park, and around post. Army ROTC sent the Blue Ridge Battalion to the Goshen Scout Reservation while Naval ROTC conducted swim qualification tests and training on post. Air Force ROTC visited a paintball course in Glasgow, as well as training facilities on post.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin and Eric Moore.



Yearbook Staff Overcomes Difficult Year

By Eric Moore

“It is such an incredible feeling to encapsulate everything VMI has to offer,” said Christina Skaggs '22, editor in chief of the VMI yearbook staff.

For 136 years, the yearbook staff has carried the legacy of documenting life at VMI through the Bomb. It's a daunting task every year, but creating the Bomb amid a pandemic was an especially difficult endeavor for the yearbook staff.

“It was hard to make the yearbook during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Skaggs stated. “It was not easy with all the COVID-19 protocols.”

“Everyone looked the same with masks on, which prevented us from getting the full facial expressions of the rats huffing and puffing or the cadets actually smiling during events,” Katie Feng '22, also a member of the Bomb staff, added.

Despite the challenges, Skaggs and the yearbook staff are proud of what they accomplished with the 2021 Bomb. Skaggs presented Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, his own copy of the yearbook in a special office call once it was printed.

“Creating a yearbook amidst COVID was one of the most difficult experiences of my cadetship, but seeing the finished product was one of my proudest moments,” Skaggs stated.

“COVID had to be documented in the yearbook, and you can see the various ways we made it work through taking group photos through a Zoom screenshot or socially-distancing people for group pictures,” Feng said.

The first Bomb yearbook was created in 1885. Skaggs continued, “Every class has a story, every cadet has a story, and the Bomb is able to share those stories.”

“Working on it puts pressure on us to correctly represent the year for the future generations to understand what cadet life was like in the past,” said Feng.

Capturing the highs and lows of the Corps in each Bomb takes a lot of planning. At the beginning of the academic year, the yearbook staff meets to plan out what the year's publication will look like.

“We organize every single page of the yearbook from start to finish,” Skaggs explained.

Each Bomb consists of five main sections: portraits, Corps events, clubs, NCAA sports, and advertisements. The team works hard



Christina Skaggs '22 presents Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 with a copy of the 2021 Bomb in his office, Sept. 9.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

to include the big moments of the year and all the small moments in between.

“We want people to look back and remember exactly what happened that year,” Feng said. “It takes a lot of planning to make sure we get the main events, such as Matriculation Week, the dances, Ring Figure, graduations, and Breakout.”

Alexis Wade '22 and Jessica Hankin '22 agreed that photographing Breakout is a highlight of their year.

“It's an incredible opportunity to get to capture such a memorable moment in these people's lives,” Hankin said.

“My favorite moments to photograph are the ones where the Corps comes together to accomplish something big or have a grand time,” Wade added.

Skaggs takes true pride in what she does, and she sees the long-term value. “I hope that this Bomb brings pride and joy to the Class of 2021 and every other class in barracks, and I hope the Bomb continues to thrive for the future generations to come.” ✨

Class of 1995 Reunion Gift

On Sept. 25, the leaders of the reunion campaign for the Class of 1995 presented the initial proceeds of that campaign to VMI. Members of the class, represented by Kurt A. Polk and Lloyd Taliaferro, made gifts and commitments totaling \$1,929,595.95. Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Sgt. Maj. William T. Sowers, and then-VMI Alumni Agencies CEO Steve Maconi accepted this gift.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Leading Side-By-Side

By Maj. Michelle Ellwood and Eric Moore

Many ceremonious events at VMI have a face and a voice. They're often that of Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, or Kasey Meredith '22, this year's regimental commander. The VMI community has become familiar with Meredith from events like Matriculation Day and parades.

The Corps of Cadets marched with pride in a morning parade for Family Weekend as loved ones looked on, but the face and voice leading that event were different—a last-minute substitution for the commander of troops.

Though she still marched in the parade, Meredith was unable to call commands due to losing her voice, and instead Regimental Executive Officer Robert Hoefft '22 led the parade.

"I had the full trust and confidence he could perform in place of me," Meredith stated. "This display of teamwork is only a slight insight as to how much we actually work together and support each other in each of our objectives. [We] can always rely on [each other's] support, because we are not just co-workers in our system, we are brother rats who will go the extra mile to help each other."

"This was a unique experience in which I got to see how the RCO and I truly have each other's back," Hoefft said. "While I had to step up and call commands, Meredith still fought through her sickness and stood behind me at parade to make sure I knew all of the commands. I thought this perfectly portrayed our selflessness and willingness to help another."



Kasey Meredith '22 and Kathryn Christmas, Citadel regimental commander, exchange memento covers at the Citadel.—VMI Photo by Eric Moore.

Wins took note of this switch and the examples set by both Meredith and Hoefft that day. "Leadership is not only shown in stepping forward," Wins said. "Knowing when to step back and perform a support role is also a display of leadership, and it's a significant one. Both will take this memory with them as they lead in the future."

Meredith had another unique opportunity to represent VMI at the Oct. 2 football game against the Citadel in Charleston. VMI rats and cadets spent the morning touring the Citadel, meeting their cadets, and witnessing a parade of their Corps of Cadets.

After the parade, Meredith exchanged memento covers with her Citadel counterpart Kathryn Christmas, a historic moment in an already momentous annual event known as the Military Classic of the South.

Christmas is the Citadel's second female regimental commander, and this is the first time in history that both corps are led by women.

"It was an honor to meet Ms. Christmas," Meredith stated. "What is monumental is the relationship we've formed so that we can learn from each other and seek advice using different perspectives."

It's different perspectives that no doubt make up the true strength of the VMI Corps. ❁



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 salutes Robert Hoefft '22, regimental executive officer, as Hoefft leads the Oct. 9 parade.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

CE Labs Show Breadth of Engineering

By Mary Price

This academic year, 2nd Class cadets majoring in civil and environmental engineering (CEE) are the first to experience lab classes purposely designed to teach engineering as it's encountered in the real world and make better use of the academic day.

Over the summer, Col. Charles "Chuck" Newhouse, department head, worked with other members of the CEE faculty to revamp the lab courses, which are an integral part of the civil engineering curriculum.

"We essentially took three labs and combined them into two while keeping the same total number of credits," explained Newhouse. "This has allowed cadets a little more flexibility in scheduling, which was necessary because the academic day is very restricted for STEM majors."

To revise the labs, faculty members went back to

a previous approach. The department once had two labs, simply called CE Lab 1 and CE Lab 2, so that model was used as a guide.

"Going back to the past has actually allowed us to bring new topics into the lab sequence and modernize what we are able to cover," said Newhouse.

In addition, lab class sizes have been intentionally kept small, at just seven or eight cadets, to ensure that each cadet gets individual attention. Labs now meet once per week, for three hours at a time, and over the course of the academic year, the goal is to cover 20 to 30 topics.

Teaching one of the new lab classes this fall, with a focus on structural engineering, is Col. Matt Swenty, professor of civil engineering.

"This lab is designed to expose [cadets] in two semesters to different experiments and different applications that they'll see in the field," said Swenty. "Environmental engineering,

materials engineering, geotechnical engineering, structural engineering, transportation engineering, and water resources engineering—there's all of that mixed into these labs."

On a Monday afternoon in late September, seven cadets gathered in the structures testing lab to perform an experiment on an aluminum I-beam. After helping them refresh their knowledge of load-bearing equations that



Col. Matt Swenty answers a question from Braden Kerr '23 in Swenty's civil engineering lab.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.



Cadets in Col. Matt Swenty's civil engineering lab set up gauges before stress testing an aluminum I-beam.—VMI Photo by Mary Price.

Continued on next page

they'd learned in solid mechanics, Swenty told them they'd be testing the service load, or realistic load, of the beam by having one cadet stand on it while the others measured the stress and strain on the beam via a variety of gauges.

A week earlier, the cadets had measured the pressure inside a soda can that had been shaken up and compared that to the pressure of an unshaken soda can.

"This approach to the lab makes us see so many more aspects of civil engineering than we'd otherwise be able to see," said Liam Iovinella '23.

Max Brimigion '23, a wide receiver on the Keydet football team, appreciates the usefulness of the math that undergirds engineering concepts.

"I like the variety that we're doing," he said. "We're applying all of those concepts that we've learned in math classes to the real world, which is neat to see. It makes those difficult classes worth learning because now we get to see how we can apply it."

Next semester, new labs covering soils and fluids will be offered as well. ❁

Flight Simulators

ROTC unveiled three new state-of-the-art flight simulators in Kilbourne Hall Oct. 12. The simulators utilize virtual reality headsets as well as tactile controls to create an immersive flying experience.

A joint ROTC asset, cadets interested in aviation will be able to train on a variety of aircraft, including an Air Force T-6 Texan II trainer, a Naval T-6 Texan II trainer, and a helicopter simulator.

"We in the ROTC departments are excited that these simulators will give our cadets a competitive advantage at pilot training," Col. Philip "Coop" Cooper, commander of VMI's Air Force ROTC, stated. "Hopefully, [they] will spark a love for aviation in those who maybe have never considered the career field."

After a brief ribbon cutting ceremony, Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, and Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99 were invited to try the simulators out for themselves under the guidance of ROTC staff and cadets.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



POST BRIEFS

Laroussi Contributes Essay to Book

Dr. Sabrina Laroussi, associate professor of modern languages and cultures (Spanish), has had a chapter on Spanish art and cinema published in an anthology, "Crear entre mundos: nuevas tendencias en la metaficción española" (Creating Between Two Worlds: New Trends in Spanish Metafiction). The 15 essays together offer a new look at Spanish metafiction, not just in literature, but also in television, film, theatre, photography,

and art. Laroussi was awarded funds from the Jackson-Hope Funds Faculty Development last year to cover the production costs of the book. This book represents a collaboration between faculty of all three local universities. Co-edited by faculty from VMI and Southern Virginia University, the book also features two articles from faculty at Washington and Lee University.

Brodie Cartoons to Benefit Medical Research

Col. John Brodie is often known for his musical talents, directing the VMI Glee Club, as well as the Regimental and Pipe Bands. But it's his drawing and humor that are on display in a book of cartoons called "Mowing the Grass on the Lawn of Life." He's selling copies of the 72-page book with the help of his wife to benefit the Paul A. Levine M.D. Research Grant at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. "We printed 300, but we

may have to print more," said Brodie, who sings the praises of Dr. Levine, among other remarkable doctors, who saved his life seven years ago when he faced his own cancer battle. "They were fantastic! I'm grateful to be alive, and this is something I can do to give back." To learn more, contact Col. Brodie at brodieja@vmi.edu.

Brown's Book of Poems to be Published

A prize-winning book of poems written by Lt. Col. Julie Brown, associate professor of English and fine arts, called "The Adjacent Possible," will be published this fall. Poet Laureate of the Commonwealth of Virginia Luisa A. Igloria praises Brown's "poems of lyric beauty and intelligence," and Alice Fulton, a MacArthur fellow, describes the book as a "beautifully

sinuous collection" of poems that, "like Emily Dickinson's, 'dwell in possibility,' considering the interweaving of one and many, tracing ecosystems, seasons, and 'lovers' synchronicities.'" Most recently Brown was the recipient of a Philip Freund Prize in Creative Writing from Cornell University, where she has a reading of her poems. ✨



Career Fair

Representatives from more than 40 companies met with non-commissioning cadets in Marshall Hall, Oct. 23 during the Career Fair. Cadets spoke with recruiters from various career fields including law enforcement, engineering firms, health care, and government agencies. Several recent VMI alumni participated and talked to cadets about their transition from VMI into the work force.—VMI Photos by Eric Moore.

Overnight Visits Return to Open Houses

By Mary Price

As the world adapts to an environment of managing COVID-19 risk, VMI admissions staff have been able to bring back a staple of pre-pandemic life: overnight visits by prospective cadets, but with safeguards added.

Approximately 55 high schoolers attended the September open house, and two more open houses were also offered this fall. All participants in this year's open

houses are required to submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination upon arrival to be able to stay the night, and are only allowed to stay in rat rooms overnight if all rats in that room have been vaccinated. Any participant who is not fully vaccinated may attend the open house, wearing a mask and staying socially distanced, but is not allowed to spend the night in barracks.

Last year, as the coronavirus pandemic raged, VMI held six open houses, but they were limited to one day only—Saturdays—and prospective cadets could only bring one adult with them.

This year, open houses look much more like they did before the pandemic—an overnight experience with two adults allowed per high school student.

“We wanted to get as close to the pre-Covid schedule as possible, and we pretty much have, outside of some small changes we were going to make anyway in terms of different presenters and moving some things around,” said Maj. William “Chase” Perry '07, assistant director of admissions.

As in years past, open houses begin on a Friday morning with remarks from the superintendent and dean. A discussion of financial aid is also a part of that first gathering, as is a presentation from VMI Alumni Agencies, which is beginning a program to pair prospective cadets with alumni. After a short talk from a representative of the Center for Leadership and Ethics, high schoolers and their parents head to lunch in Crozet Hall.

The meal is held early, at 11 a.m., so as to not overload Crozet Hall and to allow for social distancing.

Then, it's time for a major fair, held on the second floor of the Hall of Valor in Marshall Hall. Perry explained that this event gives the visitors a chance to chat with professors from a variety of majors and identify fields of



William Wallace '22, Dane Hamilton '22, and Kelly Rollison '22 greet prospective cadets and their families in Lejeune Hall during Open House Oct. 15.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.

study suited to students' life goals.

Next are two separate presentations—one for students and one for parents—about ROTC units. Visits to academic buildings come next, so open house attendees can see the classrooms and labs they may someday occupy.

Students and parents then attend Friday afternoon's parade, and students go with the S5 staff for dinner, a question-and-answer session with rats, and a tour of the Corps Physical Training Facility.

Parents, meanwhile, attend a Parents Council so-

cial after the parade with representatives of academic departments and ROTC units there to answer questions.

The next morning, the commandant speaks to the newly reunited high schoolers and their parents, as do some cadets holding senior leadership positions within the Corps. Wrapping up the event are an admissions brief and a question-and-answer panel with cadets.

The upcoming open houses for this fall filled quickly, with 80 prospective cadets signed up for each.

“It's a good problem to have,” said Perry. ❁

Class of 2011 Reunion Campaign

A number of alumni classes held reunions at the end of September, including the Class of 2011. At halftime during the football game against Wofford Sept. 25, the leaders of the class's campaign, Julian J. Bowers and Chad A. Lawson, gave VMI a check representing their brother rats' pledges and donations of \$110,020.11. Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Sgt. Maj. William T. Sowers, and then-VMI Alumni Agencies CEO Steve Maconi accepted this gift.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.





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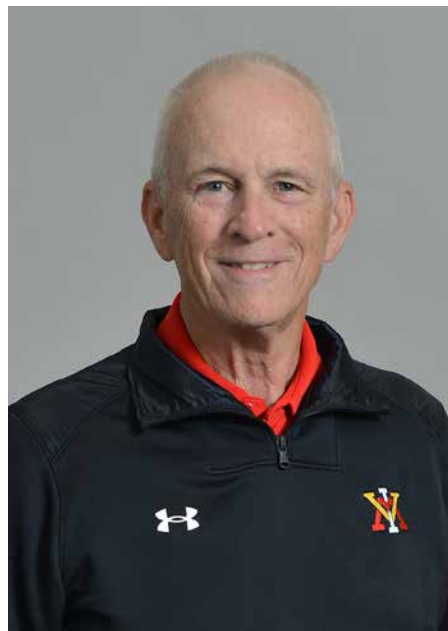
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Over the years, Miller had kept up with Eric Hyman, who was VMI athletic director in the 1980s. When Hyman moved on a position as deputy athletic director at North Carolina State University, he helped Miller secure the job of assistant athletic director for compliance. He wound up staying at N.C. State for nine years, working in a variety of positions, before becoming athletic director at the University of Richmond in 2002.

During his time there, the Spiders won an FCS national championship in football, had three NCAA tournament appearances in men's basketball including a trip to the Sweet 16, and captured 44 conference titles among 12 sports. As athletic director, he was an advocate for student-athletes, an effective fundraiser, and a strong proponent of the fan experience.

In 2014, Miller retired from the University of Richmond. He later went to work for Collegiate Sports Associates, which offers consulting services to colleges and universities seeking athletic



Jim Miller

directors. The firm also conducts reviews of athletic programs.

When Miller heard that Dr. David Diles, who'd been athletic director at VMI since 2013, was leaving for a position elsewhere, Miller reached out to Wins, letting him know that Collegiate was available to help in the search for Diles' replacement.

A short time later, while Miller and his wife, Celia, were on day five of a planned 24-day trip across the United States, Wins called to offer Miller the position of interim athletic director.

"I am honored to answer Major General Wins' call to serve VMI," Miller said. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time at VMI and look forward to contributing to moving VMI athletics forward. There's no doubt in my mind that VMI can compete and win in every sport on a regular basis. My job will be to determine what obstacles and opportunities exist to get us to that point."

Wins has asked Miller to conduct an initial assessment of the VMI athletic experience within the context of Wins' "One Corps—One VMI: A Unifying

Action Plan."

The Millers are currently getting settled in the athletic director's house on post, and hoping their cat, Mint Julep, will settle in as well. The couple's daughter, Gray, works in development at the Richmond SPCA—and played matchmaker in getting her parents the cat. 🐾

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