

The Collected Works of the Educational Vignettes
that Appeared Under the Title

Amazing--- But True!

in the University of Virginia's student newspaper,
The Cavalier Daily, as compiled chronologically,
with limited annotation by the author,

JAMES D. MAXWELL

a seemingly perpetual student
of the University of Virginia.

Forward

In the course of my years as a student at the University, it was my long held ambition to contribute to the Cavalier Daily's comics page in some form or another. I could never draw, so a path to this dream never presented itself when I was an undergraduate. Little did I know, I had much more time as a student to consider what form my comic might take.

During the sixth year of my graduate career, the tenth as a UVa student, a sudden epiphany took me. Reading one of John Hodgman's excellent books of fake trivia, *The Areas of My Expertise*, I saw that his dry presentation of a mythical, overinflated history of the United States would work wonderfully when turned towards Thomas Jefferson's University. As a place with an already overinflated view of its elite and venerable status among educational institutions, UVa was ripe for parody, and who better to undertake it than a tenth year student? While I could present false trivia which on its own might be quite funny, the pompous tone in which it would be presented would be the hidden joke on everyone at UVa who has taken themselves too seriously – myself included.

Though often harried by “real work” throughout the year they ran, I am nonetheless pleased with how these comics turned out. I thank my editors and my readers alike for playing along with my little joke.

The work contained herein will continue to appear on the Internet at **www.amazingbuttrueuva.com** for as long as I continue to hold that domain name.

As this collection is beginning to bear a strong resemblance to a genuine book, I would be remiss to forgo a dedication. I dedicate this book to my wonderful wife, Ginny, without whose very active help and encouragement this work would never have come to fruition.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

An Introduction

Welcome, dear reader, to the first installment of “Amazing But True UVa,” in which I will present wonderful, little-known facts of our beloved institution. To augment my nearly 10 years as a student here, I have spent countless hours in the special collections library delving through history texts, yearbooks, class records and pornography, and through this effort have uncovered sundry baubles of UVa esoterica to share. Although I expect it to be too dry and verbose for the average Cav Daily reader to find worthwhile, I feel this segment, as a labor of forced, derivative humor, will be right at home on the comics page here. Thank you, and Wa-hoo-wa!

Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

a cappella: *adj*

Musical style used by the many talented "a cappella" student choirs around Grounds. A common misconception, repeated in the Oxford English Dictionary, is that this term comes from Italian "Alla cappella," "in the manner of the chapel," at which music would be sung unaccompanied. In truth it originates from "Al capo, la!" or "To the head, there!" a common exclamation by which a person listening to an a cappella choir would ask to be shot in the face.

Check out old topics at www.amazingbuttrueuva.com

Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Virginia Tech:

Started as a land-grant college in 1872 as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, it became Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1970. VPI is generally accepted to be the best cow college in Virginia, a reputation only occasionally sullied by run-ins with VA code §18.2-361 regarding zoophilia. The "HokieBird" is well known to be a castrated turkey, but few know that the mascot's missing member refers to a disturbing chapter in Virginia's history: until 1942, state eugenics laws allowed institutional sterilization of the "feeble-minded." Why VPI chose a retarded, dickless mascot remains a mystery.

Author's Note : This was the first of my comics to be censored. It would eventually appear in the Cavalier Daily later, with the last sentence reading "Why VPI chose a mentally challenged mascot remains a mystery."

Amazing... But True!

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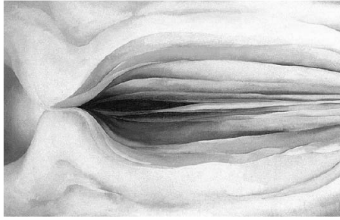
Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Georgia O'Keeffe:

After a period of artistic stagnation, O'Keeffe was inspired to begin painting again while attending a summer session at the University in 1912. According to the University Department of Studies in Women & Gender, O'Keeffe's crisply contoured, flowing paintings of vividly colored vaginas are **not funny**. Your juvenile chuckling throughout class is a distraction to your classmates.



Author's Note : After a couple of comics were rejected for language, I thought there was no way I'd get this O'Keeffe image in the paper. My friends and I were shocked to see I was wrong, particularly when it is so unmistakably dirty in black and white.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

wahoo: *noun*

Strangely, this term for a UVa student does not derive from the cheer “wa-hoo-wa.” Folk etymology claims wahoo comes from the name of a fish, and this is correct, but for a little-known reason. When Thomas Jefferson was asked to join the eponymous Jefferson Literary and Debating Society in 1825, he famously demurred saying, “I would rather make love to a codfish.” In 1826, a student presented Jefferson with a wrapped fish upon his birthday saying, “Verily, sir, here is the consort you have requested.” Quite the droll prank! But the codfish was not in season. The fish presented? A wahoo.

Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "What's with all the VT bumper stickers around Charlottesville?" Roger, SEAS III

A: I thought every child of the Nineties knew by rote the infectious rendition of "The Postal Abbreviations and ZIP Codes Song" sung by Yakko from the cartoon series "Animaniacs," to the tune of "La Marseillaise." Sing along! Verse 45: "Proud Vermont, VT, has Buuuurlington: 05401 through eeeigh! 05620: Montpeeelier" and so on. So, obviously VT stands for Vermont. The presence of so many Vermonters throughout Virginia is a deeper puzzle, one I encourage you all to confront by screaming "CARPETBAGGERS!" at anyone sporting "VT" apparel.

Author's Note : Despite my continued calls for question submissions for these "Mailbag" segments, I never actually received any questions, except from my parents. I use this sad fact to great effect in a later comic.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Tina Fey:

Noted entertainer and member of the socialist liberal elite, Fey graduated from UVa in 1992, a rare exception to the rule that you will never get a job with a BA from the CLAS. Her yearbook page in the 1992 Corks and Curls at Alderman Library is faded from the greasy pawings of a thousand sad nerds. Never a stand-out at UVa, today she bides her time, building strength and influence to one day destroy the University that spurned her. As she towers over us in final wrath, we will bathe in the warmth of her exquisite, gentle, yet maniacal smile.



Amazing--- But True!

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Today's Topic

UVa's Secret

Societies

UNMASKED!

The F.H.C. Society.

The F.H.C. Society is not a UVa organization, but was active at our sister institution, the College of William & Mary, when Thomas Jefferson was a society member as a student in 1762. Colloquially known as the Flat Hat Club, whence W&M's college newspaper "The Flat Hat," the acronym is likely from "Fraternitas, Humanitas, Castitas" or "Brotherhood, Humanity, Chastity." This creed is still followed by William & Mary students today, although the chastity part is less a matter of principle and more a matter of lonely desperation.

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Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

hoo-ification: *noun*

The rampant adaptation of standard American-English words to include the word "hoo," as in "wa-hoo-wa." Examples of these strange met-hoo-morph-hoo-ses are often names of student organizations, and show varying degrees of cleverness. Hoo-ified words include: "Sil-hoo-ettes," "C-hoo-se," "Hoo-mecomings," "Hoo-ps Band," and "Planned Parent-hoo-d." Anyone caught hoo-ifying in public will be subject to a ritualistic death by puns by the Purple Shadows society.

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Clemson:

Named after its founder, Thomas Clemson IV, Clemson (pronounced "Klimp-sun") was founded in 1893 as a military school, Clemson Agricultural College. Those who



have seen their gridiron bouts with the Cavs may remember their "Tiger Band" playing "Tiger Rag" over and over and over. At a game as an undergraduate, I once counted 72 glorious renditions before I could no longer resist the urge to strangle myself. At the end of the song, you can look forward to the shouted spelling: "C..L..E..M..S..O..e.eeeN!" Not bad for folks that sign their names with an "X!"

Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

The S.S. Observatory Hill "Dining Hall":

Hurricane Ophelia pounded the eastern seaboard in 2005, bringing high winds and dropping much more than rain here in Charlottesville. Once the terrible storm had passed, students woke to find debris washed all the way in from the sea, the largest of which was the S.S. O Hill. The S.S. O Hill was a three-masted barque, unique among tall ships in that it was built primarily of bricks. Never a nimble sailing ship, now with its masts shorn by the storm, the University made quick use of the vessel as an improvised dining hall. Some old porthole windows remain on its port (now northern) side. Ahoy there!

Author's Note : Once I came up with the name and title graphic for "Unfortunate Erections," I couldn't help but revisit it often.

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Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Washington & Lee University:

Claiming descent from Augusta Academy, founded in 1749, W&L took the name Washington Academy after the first



President's monetary gift saved the school from insolvency in 1796. Robert E. Lee was the school's president until his death in 1870, after which W&L's name was changed for the last time. Although the student body is split roughly equally by gender, the school's proximity to overwhelmingly male VMI makes for intense romantic competition. This led to the school's colors: white for pure virginity and blue for balls.

Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

Grounds: *noun*

While students in lesser institutions see UVa's use of "Grounds" for "campus" as a pretentious affectation, they fail to understand the important, demonstrable semantic distinction. Thomas Jefferson designed his "academical village" to not only house his University, but also to act as a zero reference electric potential for use in his revolutionary electricity experiments at Monticello. An unfortunate side effect of UVa being such an excellent electric grounding point has been the very real threat of lightning strikes. A common 1920s fraternity pledge ritual involving flagpole-sitting would often end in tragedy.

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FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Dave Matthews:

Although never a UVa student, the memory of his time as a townie lives on in Charlottesville. Left by the passing vogue of musical taste, he is still worshiped by a strange sect in C-ville, who meet in secret corners of their friend's mom's pot-infused basement. While a guy named Dakota plays "Ants Marching" haltingly on his alto sax, they crowd around dirty shrines to "Dave," which they claim contain strange relics, such as the "guitar pick found in the grass after Dave's 2001 Scott Stadium concert," or "Dave's entire left pinky toenail." These individuals are colloquially known as "douche-bags."

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Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

The Chapel:

Standing in the shadow of the Rotunda, the chapel was built in 1890 as a direct affront to Jefferson's ghost. As a rejection of the tradition of arraying collegiate buildings around a grand church, the focus of the Academical Village was to be a library – the Rotunda. Jefferson had eschewed conventional religious observance and likewise abhorred the Gothic architectural style. With this in mind, the chapel was built to the precise specifications of the Founder's worst nightmare. Fun fact: an architrave frieze in the narthex shows the chapel's designer austere facing a bust of Jefferson whilst flipping him the bird.

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Amazing--- But True!

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Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The Ten.

A newly founded, reactionary society, The Ten seek to "reclaim elitism," a euphemism for "be very, very pretentious." In spite of its painfully forced, lofty rhetoric, their website, *the10uva.wordpress.com*, shows they're too cheap for a \$10 domain name. This site cites a mystical codex of laws handed down in a "dream vision of Ra-Hoor-Khuit," which is truly an enigma to those without access to the Wikipedia. As they plan to reject the "tool, fratstar, sorostitute or wishy-washy rich kid," The Ten will consist mostly of tools that do not think they are tools. To be fair, these are the best kind of tools. Apply today, tools!

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Author's Note : The Ten announced their existence the week before I ran this. The proclamations on their website were too ridiculous to pass up, although I still think the whole society might have been a hoax. At least, I hope so.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "Last week you said that the O Hill dining hall was actually a boat washed inland in a hurricane. If that's true, what happened to all the sailors?" Kathy, CLAS IV

A: First, the S.S. Observatory Hill was not a sail *boat*, Kathy. I'm sorry for the derisive tone, but I mentioned the O Hill had three masts and was thus properly classified a sailing *ship*. At any rate, a proverbial "boat-load" (or actual "ship-load") of hapless seamen did indeed ride out the harrowing storm below decks. In fact, many still work aboard their old vessel, now as Aramark employees. That's right: Aramark uses loads of seamen to make their delicious dining hall fare.

Write abtuva@gmail.com

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Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

James Madison University:

Located just over the mountains from Charlottesville in the Shenandoah Valley (pronounced "Shan-doh Holler"), JMU was founded in 1908 as the State Normal



and Industrial School for Women. JMU is among the myriad institutions to make a sad attempt to replicate the majesty of Jefferson's Lawn at UVa. Their "Quad" lends the school some dignity, but plainly betrays a latent envy. The JMU mascot, "the Dukes," refers to the uncanny, loose, purple stool produced after drinking Harrisonburg tap water, as in "I've got the Dukes!" Go Dukes!

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Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

William Holding Echols:

A Mathematics professor at the University starting in 1891, William Holding Echols lends his name to both a dorm on Grounds and the CLAS distinguished scholar program. To this day, Echols remains the only professor at the University to have blown up the Rotunda using dynamite. When he wasn't fighting fire with fire, he gave notoriously difficult Mathematics examinations. In fact, he was known among students of his day as "Test" Echols, but it is possible this appellation was instead due to the humorous effect of saying "William Holding Test Echols" aloud quickly.



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Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The P.U.M.P.K.I.N. Society.

Known for their autumn distribution of pumpkins to those they wish to commend, this society ceased the practice of leaving gourds at the doors of those who held their displeasure in 2000. Members see Washington Irving as a prophet that foresaw the coming of the first horseman of the apocalypse, "Der Erste Reiter," or "ἵππος λευκός." This horseman, who is of course headless, rides out to conquer, a pumpkin in his left hand, a cruciform sword in his right. Their motto, "When the Corn's in the bin, Gourds are on the vine," references a society ritualistic sexual act. See urban dictionary for clarification.

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

William & Mary:

Our sister institution to the east, W&M calls itself "Harvard of the South." While this may seem like claiming to be the coolest guy in your World of Warcraft guild, William & Mary is a fine public establishment. Although Thomas Jefferson attended, he referred to it in saying "We have in that State, a college just well enough endowed to draw out the miserable existence to which a miserable constitution has doomed it." W&M's miserable existence continues to this day, an institution as poorly endowed as its male students.



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The following interview appeared on the Cavalier Daily's comics page as part of the recurring "About the Artist" segment.

Q: Why did you choose your comic's title?

A: "Amazing But True" is an apt title for an educational segment whose veritable facts produce incredulity and astonishment. Also, as any fan of anagrams can see, these letters also spell "Amazing Butt Rue," which is a type of bowel movement which I have filed paperwork to secure in a patent.



Q: Where do you usually draw inspiration for your comics?

A: Since 2000, I have been a student of the greatest University ever conceived, in a city that rivals London, Paris and New York; thus my inspiration is all around me. I have such a great trove of factual jewels about our dear University, I cannot help but share them. In fact, you will find most of the information on the Wikipedia was contributed by myself under countless and sundry pseudonyms.

Q: What comics did you read growing up?

A: This is the third question regarding my "comic," and this last error I cannot allow to pass. Although "Amazing But True" is published on the comics page, it sits on the right side, with the horoscope and crossword. This should be suggestion enough to show that this is a work apart, of great gravity and factual calibre. Like the horoscope. To answer the question, I read all the great comedies as a child: the "Lysistrata," "Eunuchus," "Much Ado about Nothing," "Le Misanthrope" and "Calvin and Hobbes."

Amazing... But True!

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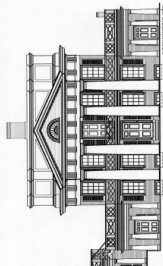
Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

Pavilion X:

Work nears completion on restoration of the Lawn's tenth pavilion, with the goal of returning the structure to



Jefferson's original design. While the work is laudable, it's disappointing to see that some of Jefferson's other lost design specifications will not be added. The structure's parapet will be rebuilt, but there has been no mention of the aviary, panic room or sex grotto. The original sandstone hue of the columns will be returned, but what of the pneumatic dumb waiter, the mooring tower for dirigibles and the iPod docking station? What of them!?!

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Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

University of Maryland:

Students at Maryland have a European flare that is rare in America: hooliganism!

Whether it's football or basketball, victory or defeat, the Terrapins, or Terps, always seem to find a way to turn a sporting event into a riot. Just two weeks ago as the Terps beat Duke at home, police were on-hand with riot gear and pepper spray to take part in the venerated tradition. Although it was short of their 2001 or 2006 performances, the Terps remained true to form, trashing and burning their campus until 23 students were arrested. Now that's what I call school spirit!



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

"The Seven Hills of Charlottesville":

The greatest centers of civilization were founded upon seven hills – Rome, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Moscow, Prague – so it should not surprise Charlottesvilleans that their own dear city shares the same pedigree. Near the University are Carr's Hill, the president's home; and Lewis Mountain, hiding the 7 Society's underground palace. Then there are Starr Hill, with its uncanny spring of beer; and Vinegar Hill, now a Staples. Lesser known are Rose Hill, Mt. Chipotle, and the Palatine Hill, where founder Thomulas Jefferson slew his twin brother, Theemas, for his derision of the freshly built serpentine walls.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "Are any topics sacrosanct? Is there someone or something that you wouldn't explain?" Anonymous

A: From its inception, the onus of this segment has been to inform. Educational integrity leaves no room for the faint-hearted, thus no topic will be beyond the scope of this work. For instance, Anonymous, it is for the sake of this integrity that I must disclose that you are in fact my mother, and that you are the first and only person to submit a question for "Mailbag." I will further reveal my suspicion that you are the only person to actually read my work in the Cavalier Daily. So in closing, Mom, send money. Send questions to mailbag: abtuva@gmail.com

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

serpentine walls: *noun*

Innovative structures designed by Jefferson to enclose the gardens of the Lawn's Pavilions, these walls follow a roughly sinusoidal path. This was thought to enable them to be but one brick thick, but recent theories point to a more nefarious use. As Minister to France from 1785 to 1789, Jefferson was introduced to the mathematical theories of Lagrange, d'Alembert and Fourier. Do the miniscule, yet undeniable, frequency fluctuations in the paths of the serpentine walls contain a cryptic key to unlock Jefferson's fabled Doomsday Device, buried deep beneath the Richmond statehouse? I, for one, hope not.

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Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

Stumpy the Clock Tower:

Squatting sadly in front of the Aquatics and Fitness Center, the University's clock tower – lovingly nicknamed Stumpy – is an architectural abortion. Apparently transported out of some business park, it welcomes you to the “Carl Smith Center,” a nebulous area surrounding the stadium created to honor donor and coal magnate Carl Smith without actually naming a building after him. Side note: beware, ladies! Legend has it that if you sit beneath the clock tower and kiss your beau, his member will forever be cursed with Stumpy's diminutive stature.



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Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "Make fun of West Virginia!" - Kyle, SEAS I

A: First: That is not a question. Second: No! The time has long since passed for the tired old "West Virginia yokel" jests to be retired. The portrayal of shoeless, toothless, semi-literate hill people aiming their flared barrel shotguns across a valley at their feuding cousins is at best played-out. To imagine our mountain-bound neighbors naked but for their overalls as they peer lustily at their sisters through the outhouse window cheapens the discourse between our great states. I believe strongly that joking about slack-jawed, inbred hillbillies writhing in moon-shine seizures at a NASCAR race is over the line!

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Author's Note : Here's another comic that met the chopping block. My editor admitted it was the funniest thing she'd read in a long time, but there was no way they could print it.

Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

The Life and Times of

Thomas Jefferson

Little Known Scenes from a Legendary Life

Today's Topic

Although his uneventful birth betrayed no portent of his extraordinary life to come, hints of little Tommy's genius glinted through the first year of his life. Having already rejected Gothic architecture, at only eight months he fashioned a scale model of Rome's Pantheon out of toy blocks, a feat made more impressive by the tiny hoists and jigs he employed due to his inability, as yet, to walk. By eleven months he had begun to teach himself French, which greatly discomfited his mother. She knew to change his soiled nappy when his tiny voice echoed through the halls of their Shadwell estate with a perfect, guttural French "r": "Merde! MERRRRDE!"

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Amazing... But True!

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

West Virginia University:

West Virginia University is the couch burning capital of the world, so as the Mountaineers head to the Final Four in Indianapolis this weekend expectations are high. West Virginia senior Jim McCoy lays the challenge:

"Last year when we beat Pittsburgh, them couch fires was out of control! For the Final Four, we really gotta get 'R' done, if you know what I mean." Plans laid out by WVU fraternities may tax the upholstered furniture supply in Morgantown as the blaze is expected to be visible as far away as Richmond. Go Mountaineers, beat Duke!



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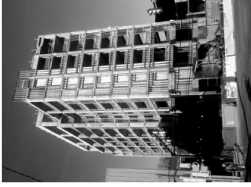
Today's Topic

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The Landmark Hotel:

Those who have visited downtown Charlottesville recently may have noticed a striking new structure which has redefined the city's skyline. The Landmark is a nine story, \$30 million dollar luxury hotel with



cutting-edge style. Since construction finished last fall, the Landmark has eschewed pedestrian trappings such as "carpets," "beds," "doors," "windows" or "walls" to allow for a more spartan, life-threatening aesthetic. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon in a makeshift, construction fence hammock in the ambiance of the future set for Die Hard V.

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Author's Note : Nearly a year later, no further progress has been made on the Landmark.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Academic

ACNE

Academic Departments: Foundation of the Elite UVa Education

McIntyre Department of Music:

The Music Department glosses over the academic rigor of serious musicology and history instruction, instead focusing a student's time on the vast, unrealized promise of oppressed female and homosexual composers. You wanted to be a SWAG major anyway, right? Or you can leave your modern day baggage behind and explore a new world of musical spiritualism! African drumming and dance, taught by artist-in-residence Matthew McConaughy, features the arrhythmic pounding of musical illiterates. Clothing optional!



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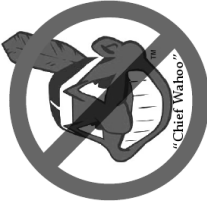
Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

wa-hoo-wa:

Was NOT a cry adapted by University students in the beginning of the 20th century from Dartmouth College's "Indian War Yell," because that would be racist. Although promulgated by the lying liars that edit the "Wikipedia," this is a ridiculous, in-no-way-plausible explanation that should not be investigated. Here at UVa, we are sensitive to the plight of Native Americans, unlike those at William & Mary, University of Illinois, Louisiana-Monroe, San Diego State, Southeast Missouri State, University of North Carolina-Pembroke, Eastern Connecticut State...



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Author's Note : On April Fool's Day, Cav Daily comic writers take control on another writer's comic. My comic was done by one of my editor's, Jane Mattimoe, and I got to parody a new comic called *Make Them Hear You*. This was a plot-based comic that followed gay, lesbian and trans-gendered students. One of the characters had recently come out as trans-gendered to a boy she was dating; he apparently had no idea. I got to play around with the idea that he hadn't noticed that she was really a man in this comic, masterfully drawn by my friend Jonathan Mulholland. We also got to poke fun at *Make Them Hear You*'s hilariously over-wrought backgrounds. On a related note, *The Declaration* does a entire mock Cav Daily on April Fool's, and their rendition of my comic was spot on.

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Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Larry Sabato:

A University graduate in 1974, Sabato's turn as StudCo president prepared him well for a future as one of the most oft quoted political analysts in the nation. Revered as a professor, Sabato is also director of the UVa Center for Politics, from whence he wields the eponymous "Crystal Ball." The clairvoyant properties of this relic –which Sabato discovered in ancient Incan ruins– are not fully understood, but their potency cannot be denied. Fun fact: Each divination from the artifact requires nearly 5 pints of virgin's blood as sacrifice to Catequil, God of Thunder.



Photo: Tom Cogill

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Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

William & Mary: **UPDATE**

The Griffin came out on top last week after a Quidditch match was held to determine W&M's mascot; all accounts record it as a match for the ages. Slytherin 3rd year Lucius Limpwrist vented frustration after his team's dominance throughout the match: "Agh! Our Beaters kept ours Chasers safe the whole match, and we did a fine job putting the Quaffle through the hoops. But Gryffindor has the frigging chosen one as a Seeker! Why do we even bother with the Quaffle?" W&M's tercentenary match to choose a mascot last went to the "Red Indians" in 1710.



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

The Pavilion Gardens:

These beautifully maintained gardens were integral design elements of the Academical Village as ideal havens for public intercourse. The advent of co-education has brought a vivacity within the serpentine walls that Jefferson could scarcely have imagined. Each garden offers unique benefits to amorous adventurers: the privacy of Garden VI, the exhibition of Garden I, the summer blossoms of VIII, the warding winter warmth of IV's boxwoods. Need protection? Look for a friendly chap distributing prophylactics as he walks the gardens with a telephoto lens and a smile. Spring has sprung!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

News in Brief

The Straight Dope, No Flim-Flam

Cavalier Daily Liquor Ad Ban Upheld:

While demonstrating both a disregard for the First Amendment and a hilarious insulation from campus life, the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruling negated a potential \$30,000 per year of crucial advertising income for the Cav Daily. When asked, after his 8 am discussion section, if ads in the student paper might abet dangerous drinking behavior, a first-year Biology student lifted his head from a puddle of vomit to grunt "What?" before passing back out. "Aristocrat" was scrawled on his forehead in Sharpie. Were liquor ads allowed in the Cav Daily, he would likely have chosen a classier poison.

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Academic ACME

Academic Departments: Foundation of the Elite UVa Education

Department of Psychology:

The Psychology Department invites you to participate in one of their many studies, none of which involve electric shocks or permanent hearing damage.

Psychology has left behind the extreme measures of the past; no need to worry at all. Your time in the Skinner box will be limited to a few hours. Just react appropriately to the flashing colored lights and you won't have to worry about the electric shocks. Did I say electric shocks? I meant negative reinforcement units. There will be no electric shocks. Say, you don't have a pacemaker, do you?



"Now, just clear your mind and tell me what you see."

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

streaking the lawn:

The nighttime nude dash down the Lawn from the Rotunda to Homer makes it on a short list of traditions one should take part in before graduating from the University. Don't forget to say "Goodnight, Mr. Jefferson" upon arriving back at the Rotuna's keyhole, or the Founder's shade will forever haunt your dreams. Although being caught naked in public is technically a sex offense, streaking the lawn remains a popular feat. Hopefully, this is the reason why so many UVa alumni are on the national sex offender registry. Hopefully.



From Alumni News, 1963

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

Balz House:

The demolition of several of the aging "New Dorms" last summer was a truly devastating blow to University humorists;

Balz House is gone. A staple of Cavalier Daily comics, Declaration columns and Pep Band sketches for decades, Balz was one of the finest jewels (no pun intended) in the University's crown of awkwardly named buildings. For a satirist, Balz was an irresistible low-hanging fruit (no pun intended), the belle of the ball (no pun intended), a true testis among testes. Oh, lamentable fate! To have our Balz torn from us so roughly! You shall be missed, old friend.



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

My Birthday

Today is my birthday.
I am 28. Get off my Lawn, you crazy kids.

Things that have occurred while I've been a UVa student:

- I voted for Al Gore
- Wikipedia launched
- Al Groh became coach
- iPod hit shelves
- Post 9/11 World began
- Euros entered circulation
- You hit puberty
- "Mission Accomplished"
- Abu Ghraib "thumbs up"
- Arnold won Governor
- UVa added to Facebook
- I voted for John Kerry
- Va. Pep Band exile began
- Brownie: "a heckuva job"
- YouTube launched
- I got married, sorry ladies
- U.S. became socialist
- Mount Chipotle formed

If graduation is like death, graduate students are zombies, unnatural shades wandering grumpily among the living.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

foxfield races:

A bi-annual steeplechase colloquially referred to by the oddly pluralized "Foxfields," these races gained increased social importance after the bacchanalian "Easters" were banned from Grounds in 1982. First years, hop on the chartered UTS buses for a relaxing 5 mile, 2 hour drive down Barracks Road to the races! You might see a horse! Be prepared to burn your clothes once they acquire the pungent cocktail of odors known as Foxfields' Revenge. It consists of, in the order acquired: tequila, mud, vomit, tears, Natural Light and urine. Look up "foxfield trough dive" on YouTube for further clarification. Have fun!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

steam tunnels:

While most corridors were laid in the 1950's, the astute adventurer will discover ancient bedrock passages where, hidden among the usual scrawls regarding what to dial for a good time, are written far older, stranger glyphs. These obscured glyphs were stark and lustrous two centuries ago, when Thomas Jefferson himself became the first modern man to gaze upon them. His curiosity was fired by this unexpected discovery; fetching a torch he delved deeper into the uncanny tunnels and beyond. The hollow places yielded up their long guarded secrets, secrets which have since been guarded by others...

Tomorrow: the continued adventures of Thomas Jefferson and the Hollow Earth!

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Author's Note : The entire final week of spring semester I tried a little experiment, forming a narrative that continued through the week. While the "Secret of the Sevens" sequence wasn't laugh-out-load funny, I enjoyed creating this mythical history of the University's inception.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

The Life and Times of

Thomas Jefferson

Little Known Scenes from a Legendary Life

When last we left our hero, he strove deeper, beyond the steam tunnels into a new world...

He stretched the torch before him, staring hard into a new passageway. Hours of delving offered cavern upon cavern of uncanny discovery, but nothing like this. The passage, no, the shaft shot straight as an arrow, climbing gently behind him, diving before him as he was drawn down, down, down. The flames shone sharply off the polished, seamless black walls, but the air was close, stifling. Finally, a void opened as his footfalls echoed back; Jefferson stood on the very verge of a yawning chamber, a perfect sphere, here half a league beneath Monroe's farm. And in this sepulcher slept a secret which would forever shape his life, his University and his nation.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Fulton Fitzhugh:

Part three of *Thomas Jefferson and the Hollow Earth*.

An ace reporter for the *College Topic*, Fulton claimed to have the biggest scoop the young paper would ever print, but few paid heed to him once he began ranting about secret caverns beneath Grounds. On July 7th, 1907, Fitzhugh stormed out of the newspaper office, spouting something about a "Society of 7," though the Sevens were unknown before 1915. He was found a week later, his eyes milky white as he mechanically repeated, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men;" Mark 7:7. Fun fact: Fitzhugh died in Western State Mental Hospital in 1914.

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The Seven Society.

Part four of *Thomas Jefferson and the Hollow Earth*.

Once the plans for his University had been laid, Thomas Jefferson turned to protecting the vital secret of the vast chamber that lay twice 7 furlongs below the site of his Rotunda. For their intellect and swordsmanship, seven gentleman were chosen to be guardians of the place, and ordered to perpetuate their charge with new acolytes. In 1907, a leak by an irksome journalist obliged a public guise: the philanthropic society we know today. The Sevens reside in the uppermost levels of the sprawling caverns beneath Grounds, lavish underground palaces atop the clandestine caves they are sworn to protect.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "What did Thomas Jefferson find in the caverns deep below the Grounds of UVa?" - Janet, CLAS I

Part five of Thomas Jefferson and the Hollow Earth.

A: Is it not clear, Janet? Could the singular genius of Jefferson, the wonder of his inventions, the mystical properties of his Grounds here about you, could they really result from mere human endeavor? Or is it perhaps more likely that Jefferson found something here, some [REDACTED] from an ancient, unknown race that guided the founding of our University and nation? Is it crazy to envision him gazing down into the pit to behold mangled remains of a [REDACTED] from outside [REDACTED] experience? He found an [REDACTED], and its [REDACTED]

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

An Apology

Last week this segment contained a fanciful story about the origins of the University and the Seven Society. I must apologize for any misunderstanding caused or damage brought to reputable organizations by this farce. There are no caverns beneath Grounds, Fulton Fitzhugh never existed, and the Sevens are just a bunch of old guys with a lot of money. I urge my readers, please stop trying to find the secret wing of the Special Collections library; it does not exist, and if it did it would certainly not contain any enigmatic clues. I must bid you adieu for a time, but not because I have been forced into hiding.

Ever yours, James Maxwell

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Author's Note : This didn't appear in the Cav Daily, but I put it up on my website in the middle of the summer as a bonus for anyone paying attention.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Upon Your Return

Welcome back to another enlightening semester of *Amazing... But True*, your educational oasis here on the puerile comics page. While the undergraduate population issued forth from Charlottesville to volunteer in Africa or save the whales for the summer, we graduate students have remained as ever here, occasionally emerging from our study caves to hiss at the sun through warding, upstretched fingers. Fortunately for you all, my long hours sequestered in the Special Collections Library have yielded plenty once again, and I return with a new trove of incredible facts concerning this, the greatest University that is or ever shall be. Enjoy, and Wa-hoo-wa!

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Author's Note : In spite of my better judgment, I continued the comic on into the Fall 2010 semester. I managed to keep up with three comics a week until the end of the comic in December.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "Why are UVa's diplomas so huge?" Sarah, CLAS III

A: Like everything else wrong with our society, our mammoth 17-by-22 inch diplomas can be blamed on special interest groups. The University charter dictates that the diploma should be of "only be fynest unsplit vellum" – wording inserted through lobbying by the Virginia Farmers Guild. This meant each document could only be made from the skin of an entire stillborn calf, which measures roughly 17-by-22 inches. The addition of this clause was a boon to cattle farmers who formerly could only use their stillborn calves to make terrifying puppets for children.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The Eli Banana Society.

Founded in 1878, the Mystic Order of Eli Banana is the oldest secret society at UVa. Near the end of the 19th century, it held vast sway over the student body and its organizations. In 1894, profligate behavior prompted a faculty censure from which the group never fully recovered, but Eli Banana remains an active philanthropic group. The all-male society's name comes from the unique genital piercing which is a sign of the order, and in turn the piercing is named for Herbert Eli, personal secretary to Queen's consort, Prince Albert. For obvious reasons, large magnets are forbidden from society meetings.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Kenneth Elzinga:

One of the University's renowned lecturers, Elzinga has won myriad teaching awards. An expert in anti-trust economics, he teaches nearly one thousand students each semester in two massive sections of "Principles of Microeconomics." Within a year after taking his class, most students will probably only remember these facts: Kenneth Elzinga loves Jesus Christ, water-skiing, and hot rods; our "sister institution to the north" is Michigan State University for some reason; and economic theory makes for an incredibly boring murder-mystery novel. Apologies to "Marshall Jevons."



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

University of Richmond:

Richmond began its athletic history as the "Colts" until 1894, when a lice infestation struck the Commonwealth's capital. In those days, polite parlance often cast a louse instead as a "spider," and these lice were large enough for the name to seem apt. Legend has it that during a gridiron bout with rival W&M, Richmond's coach urged his defense to "*stick to 'em like damned spiders*" as he intently itched his unmentionables. The name stuck, and they've been the Spiders ever since. Although the infestation soon passed, Richmond's football team remains lousy to this day. Go Hoos, beat Richmond!



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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

Brownies:

With its choice location atop Monroe Hill, the student-governed, residential Brown College entices those who seek comfortable, central quarters. Brown residents, or "Brownies," tend to be of a more creative, eccentric bent, although somewhat alien behavior is to be expected. The 12 houses of the college, known as "portals," are so named for the inter-dimensional gates whence sprung the accursed K'thari swarm in the incursion of 1825. Notable Brown alumni include Ken Rodgers, Maria Ferraro, and L'ithlara, the K'thari swarm queen, who matriculated into UVa after the last K'tharling was killed in 1827.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

Scott Stadium:

In 2000, an \$86 million dollar expansion to Scott Stadium was completed, which equals about \$2 million for each Wahoo win there since. Holding 62,000, it can seat every UVa graduate since 1989. In this light the stadium seems an ostentatious distraction from the University's charge of education, but Jefferson says otherwise: "This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it, nor to flag in the costly pursuit of mediocre football."

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

first year: *noun*

While most American universities prefer *freshman*, *sophomore*, etc, the University's long tradition has been to use ordinals to refer to the seniority of its students. This practice originates with Thomas Jefferson himself, whose time as a freshman at William & Mary haunted his memory. The ginger, lanky Jefferson was an easy target for upperclassman pranks, from powdered wig lousing, to breech breaching, to the infamous "Powhatan burn." Jefferson once orated with "Kickest thou mine kiester" posted on his back. Shameful!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The Cloak and Dagger Society:

The Cloak and Dagger Society is a bunch of old, rich guys that gave UVa a pile of money so they could paint an enigmatic symbol on a building.

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Author's Note : Truth is stranger than fiction.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

UTS:

The University Transit Service is an opportunity for the most deviant students at UVa to cast our very souls about in restraintless death shuttles. UTS drivers are undeniably the coolest people on Grounds; your bus driver will mostly likely be a blue-haired, tattooed, thoroughly pierced 20-year-old who often contemplates fondly the cold embrace of the abyss that comes with one's final breath. This does not bode well for you. Responding to complaints, in 1997 the University removed the flame decals from the sides of the buses, along with the death's-head kill markings beneath the driver's-side windows.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

The Life and Times of

Thomas Jefferson

Little Known Scenes from a Legendary Life

Jefferson's passion for architecture is well known, but few would guess this passion would drift into perversion. He once wrote, "Here I am, gazing whole hours at the Maison Carre, like a lover at his mistress," the simile thinly masking the truth of a 4-month affair with the Vitruvian masterpiece. His trips to Europe were peppered with such dalliance, and he felt most comfortable among the French, who did not blanch at the sight of a man making love to an edifice. In America he found no substitute for these affaires de coeur; it was rumored that Sally Hemmings quickly tired of her fluted marble column costume, despite its amorous affects on her master.

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Virginia Military Institute:

Cadets at VMI, the oldest state-supported military school in the nation, undergo a grueling freshman year as "Rats," a 9-month hell which ensures all humanity has been utterly driven from them. The trials of VMI Rats make fraternity hazing at every other school look like Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. While these cadets perform myriad feats of self-denial and discipline, no trial is as dreaded as the "Nutcracker Suite." VMI's recent introduction of female cadets saw the attempt of an equivalent deed, to be called "Madame Ovary," but the logistics of the act soon led to cooler heads.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

The Adventures of Cavman:

Since 2001, each game in Scott Stadium has been preceded by a short film showing "Cavman" slaying the visitors' mascot in humorous fashion. These films inherit a tradition of gridiron satire that found its apogee with the halftime shows of the Pep Band. While the Pep Band's irreverence led to their exile, we needn't worry Cavman will meet such a fate. The mediocre production, repetitive plot, and sterile corporate humor ensure neither offense is taken nor real enjoyment had, excluding the primal, zealous rush they create in a vacuous host anticipating the spectacle of equally poorly executed football. Go Hoos!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Florida State University:

FSU enjoys the official sanction of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, which enables it to be one of a few schools permitted by the NCAA to retain a Native American mascot. FSU fans are infamous for their "war chant" and "tomahawk chop," which are not so offensive to Native Americans as they are to people of good taste. Although the FSU fight song includes the lyric "we've got to scalp 'em, Seminoles," this does not refer to the stereotypical, grisly act of the Hollywood Indian, but instead the friendly head massage for which the Seminole people were once renowned.



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Francis Eppes VII:

This Saturday marks the 16th gridiron battle for the Jefferson-Eppes Trophy, a match which commemorates our own founder and Francis Eppes VII, de facto founder of Florida State University. Eppes was Thomas Jefferson's grandson, and he grew up at Monticello before settling near Tallahassee. He thrived in Florida, despite constant trouble with alligators carrying away his small children, a common annoyance in Florida even today. Eppes possessed an inventive mind like his grandfather, although his "gator-proof" body armor for toddlers never received much attention outside his adopted state.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The Visitor's Skull Society.

Congregating in the dank cellar beneath Monroe's farmhouse, just steps from the Lawn, the Visitor's Skull society jealously guards the severed head of James Monroe. The skull in question was "liberated" from the President's coffin by founder Ashley Adams who said he was instructed to do so by Monroe's ghost itself. The society spends long, dark hours in unholy rituals during which the skull is rumored to whisper arcane secrets into the Stygian gloom. Outside their duties skull-watching, the group enjoys gardening, hiking and inner-tube water polo.



Photo: D. Deocourts

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Rugby Road

As Long as Love and Liquor Last...

The singing of UVa's great drinking song, *Rugby Road*, is the most hallowed of our traditions. You may have streaked the Lawn and painted Beta Bridge, but you're no true Wahoo if you don't have at least two verses memorized. The Glee Club, the oldest music group on Grounds, produces the finest rendition, but no group matches the Pep Band for sheer quantity of libertine verses in their repertoire. Sadly, few new verses have reached my ear of late, so for the remainder of the week, I offer here my own verses both novel and germane. Raise a glass and sing along for the glory of the U-V-A.

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Rugby Road

As Long as Love and Liquor Last...

*This week, I present new verses to U-Va's great drinking song,
Rugby Road, sung to the tune of The Son of a Gambolier.*

An E-school student knows that π is 3.142,
that is, at least, at times when only 4 "sig figs" will do.
But, down the road in Lynchburg, at Falwell's Liberty
they've heard The Word, and Jesus says that π 's exactly 3.

Oh, I think we need another drink!
I think we need another drink;
I think we need another drink for the glory of the U-V-A!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Rugby Road

As Long as Love and Liquor Last...

*This week, I present new verses to UIVa's great drinking song,
Rugby Road, sung to the tune of The Son of a Gambolier.*

A Lawnie's life is next to none; at least that's what he'll think,
but doubt may creep into his mind, while pissing in his sink.
While lounging in his rocking chair and gazing at the Lawn,
his head is so far up his ass, you'd think that it was gone.

Oh, I think we need another drink!

I think we need another drink;

I think we need another drink for the glory of the U-V-A!

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Rugby Road

As Long as Love and Liquor Last...

*This week, I present new verses to UVa's great drinking song,
Rugby Road, sung to the tune of The Son of a Gambolier.*

Excluding worthy women was the Old Virginia way,
But now we've given Sullivan the helm at UVa.
She'll lead us all to greatness
 now that got she's got the chance.
But don't tell the Old Virginia boys
 they'd all just shit their pants.

Oh, I think we need another drink!
I think we need another drink;
I think we need another drink for the glory of the U-V-A!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Georgia Institute of Technology:

Georgia Tech's fight song, *A Ramblin' Wreck*, shares a tune with UVa's own drinking song, *Rugby Road*. Today I offer a variation on the fight song as a *Rugby Road* verse to sing along as you watch Saturday's game:

He's a Ramblin' Wreck from Georgia Tech,

a hell of an engineer,

a helluva, helluva, helluva, helluva,

hell of an engineer.

The Internet has always been his one and only friend;
he asks his Twitter foll'wers

when his testes will descend.



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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

Homecomings:

Like "Reunions," this is a chance to welcome alumni to once again enjoy the fruits of their alma mater. It seems odd to actually desire the company of cranky old-timers like myself, but this is not why we have Homecomings. The event is yet another excuse to pump us old bastards for as much money as we're worth. Prepare yourselves, 4th years, for the life of an alum is rife with cloying pleas for donations and ads disguised as news. You may pay for a lifetime membership, but the alumni association will only stop their mendications once your estate has been sucked as dry as your withered, lifeless corpse.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

University of North Carolina:

This Saturday we welcome the Tar Heels to Scott Stadium for the 115th meeting of "The South's Oldest Rivalry." Although a clash with our bitter rivals should be the apex of the football season, much of the vitriol of the old days has sadly been lost with the emergence of less historic in-state rivalries – Duke for UNC and VPI for UVa. In the spirit of restoring the venerable hatred of the past, remind our visitors that they wear a feminine shade of blue, their accents are most uncouth, and "First in Flight" refers to a Carolinian's noted cowardice. Thereafter, suggest pistols at dawn.



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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

The South Lawn:

The design of the newly completed South Lawn Project has not been without its critics. An A-School professor was quoted in *The Hook*: "It's clumsy in its detail, its massing, its materials... On the interior, I look up and down those halls, and I feel as if there is a colonoscopy awaiting me behind every door." Of course, UVa responded to concerns such as this, and even altered the design to address them. Where once the plan included an empty basement, the subterranean floor now contains a special dungeon for said professor, its impossibly long hallway hiding a clumsy colonoscopy behind every door.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

student governance: *noun*

Ideals set down by Jefferson to allow students to control their academic environment, from creating a course of study to policing wrongdoings. In Poe's day, this nascent system caused chaos and a high dropout rate. The administration has since worked to erode any dependence upon student control even in extracurriculars, e.g. evicting the Cavalier Daily in 1979, and banning the Pep Band in 2003. While I have decried this war on student governance, as an aging alum I have finally come to understand the administration's position: students are children. They can't be trusted to wipe their own arses, let alone make unsupervised decisions that might affect the course of their University. Sorry, kids!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Eastern Michigan University:

Only seven miles from Ann Arbor, EMU sits in the shadow of the legendary University of Michigan, a school envied for



both its academic and gridiron success. This embarrassing geographical juxtaposition might be crushing to EMU, but for the solace of one saving grace: they're #1 in troll dolls. Yes, the student body's troll doll fever has never abated; the campus is covered with rainbow-haired dioramas, tiny smiling faces everywhere. They are inescapable, which can be distressing for visitors; lidless, glassy eyes stare from every shadow, making it quite difficult for anyone to pee.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Mailbag!

Expert Answers to Your UVa Queries

Q: "Why do fans leave football games early?!?" -Lauren, CLAS III

A: These fans are leaving because they are football fans. In the past, games were popular social events. As UVa rarely won, football fans were not interested. Once Coach Welsh brought a taste of victory, we slowly began to look towards the field. Soon even people who weren't UVa students started attending games to -strangely enough- watch football. Although UVa has recently imported all the trappings of a big, State-U football school, this sword is double-edged. Can one really expect football fans anticipating an epic battle to remain for something as one-sided as the kitten episode of "Will It Blend?"

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Ghosts on Grounds

Macabre Tales of the Unfortunate
Spirits which Abide Here Still

Secret societies of the 19th century took a much more active role in student life as executors of the single sanction. In a time when honor was more dear to a gentleman than life, the single sanction could only be death. Every society had their "Honor Men," grim, hooded vigilantes which would confront an accused cheater and offer him a duel. Declining was an admission of guilt, and one's next repose would be interrupted with a knife. Accepting was equally luckless against skilled duelists. Sadly, this old single sanction is no longer practical due the vast number of executions needed for today's guileful student body. However, we still hold dear the words of James Hay Jr.'s poem "The Honor Men": "I have worn the honors of Honor, I have murdered a dirty cheater in his sleep."

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Author's Note : I decided to have some fun with some ghost stories during the week before Halloween.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Ghosts on Grounds

Macabre Tales of the Unfortunate
Spirits which Abide Here Still

Gustav, the murderous hobo of Kerchof Hall, was a jolly German drifter who charmed an RA into keeping a small room on the lowest floor of the then dormitory. The spitting image of a dirty, homeless Father Christmas, he lived happily at the generosity of dorm residents for years. But, when it was decided to convert the dormitory into the Math Department, he showed himself to be a bit deranged, bellowing for revenge as they dragged him bodily out. A week later, several important UVa officials went missing, and suspicion fell quickly upon poor Gustav. The bodies were soon found, garrotted with piano wire and strung up festively in a fir tree. Gustav met his end by lethal injection; a jolly smile was on his fat, hoary face as he drifted into his final sleep, merrily humming "O Tannenbaum."

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Ghosts on Grounds

Macabre Tales of the Unfortunate
Spirits which Abide Here Still

The University's cemetery is unmatched on Grounds for spookiness, and many strange tales are woven around this abode of the dead sitting so near the lively youth of first year dorms. One black October night, Jimmy Hollins, a resident of Lefevre, was awoken by a eerie moaning which drifted in his window from the burial plots below. As if in a trance, Jimmy was compelled outside to seek out the source of the long, haunting bellows of woe. A low fog stifled the night air as he wandered amongst the gravestones, fear tightening in his gut. Just as the dread of the unholy spirits threatened to overwhelm his constitution, Jimmy stumbled upon the sound's cause: it was just the Buried Bones society's annual, ritualistic cemetery orgy! The ghosts were quietly manning the video camera.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Ghosts on Grounds

Macabre Tales of the Unfortunate
Spirits which Abide Here Still

Fraternity brother Arty Wiggins (CLAS 1980) was an immense fan of the movie *Animal House*, so his re-creation of Belushi's famous "sorority-house-window ladder" scene was inevitable. The reproduction was uncanny, in fact. Atop his ladder, his mouth was wide with disbelief as the coed disrobed through the window. Instinctively, he turned to look back to a camera which wasn't there, lifting his eyebrows just so. As he turned forward, her fingers began lightly gliding over her silky skin, heading playfully, purposefully South. The next moment deviated from cinema slightly, for as Arty swooned, falling backwards, he managed no comical look up from the ground. Still, though his brains were dashed across the pavement with the impact, no one would argue his Belushi homage wasn't just as hilarious.

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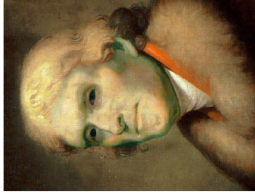
Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Ghosts on Grounds

Macabre Tales of the Unfortunate
Spirits which Abide Here Still



In 1893, anatomy professor Filbert Cummings obtained permission to exhume the body of Thomas Jefferson to “determine the anatomical provenance of such an extraordinary intellect.” Records of the casket's opening relay an uncanny preservation of the corpse, some 84 years after the great man's death. After the body was left unattended overnight, a parchment was found near the cadaver containing a treatise, written in a struggling hand, on the inalienable rights of undead man: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Zombies crawl from their graves as equals, that they hold unalienable Rights, that among these are a perversion of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of **BRAAAAINS...**”

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Author's Note : This is the only comic that ever appeared in color, a special treat for the day before Halloween. Visit the website to see it in all its grotesque glory.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Duke University:

Few know that Duke's athletic nickname, the Blue Devils, comes from "les Diables Bleus." Up until 1923 they were known either as "The Methodists" or "the Blue and White," and the new name came from a sobriquet for the French Alpine light infantry battalion, "les Chasseurs Alpins." The "Blue Devils" was chosen by student vote, and it was said that the football team's history of miserable failure prompted the rather ill-omened name of a French military unit. Other names considered were, "the Faeries," "the Fighting Anemics," "the Glee Club," and "the Hokies."



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

The Life and Times of

Thomas Jefferson

Little Known Scenes from a Legendary Life

Today's Topic

"Not less than two hours a day should be devoted to exercise... Health must not be sacrificed to learning." Here the Founder refers not to a simple daily walk or jog; he was actually an early pioneer of power-lifting. Combining strength training with a protein-heavy diet, Jefferson was the most formidable statesman of his day, and for good reason: When Aaron Burr tied Jefferson in electoral votes during the presidential election of 1800, electoral custom stipulated a runoff by Greco-Roman wrestling. When not shaping the new republic in his powerful hands, Jefferson spent much of his free time separating church from state using the consummate might of his massive triceps.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

UVa's Secret
Societies

UNMASKED!

The **IMP Society**, the reincarnation of the disbanded Hot Feet, is now best known for its prominent markings around Grounds, which are so easy to deface. Chalk wielding tricksters have taken "IMP" through the spectrum of language: from the obvious "**GIMP**," "**PIMP**," or "**WIMP**," to the contemplative "**WHIMPER**," "**LIMPID**," or "**SIMPLE**." For my part, I have abstained from such high jinks, with the exception of one drunken escapade. Stumbling home late one night in 2003, I suddenly felt a pressing biological urge. After relieving myself against the Chemistry building, I made what I supposed was a most droll addition to the wall. The next day I recalled little of the night before, until I was mortified to see the wall now read "**T'M-PEEING!**"

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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Unfortunate Erections

Modern Blemishes on Jefferson's Architectural Vision

The Small Special Collections Library:

At the start of its construction, Special Collections was a great pit. Stolen glimpses through the construction barrier showed a terrifying abyss, stretching down into utter black. Walking over the library today, you'd never guess at the hulking structure just beneath your feet, but floor upon darkened floor sprawl below the surface. The horrors that lurk deep in its bowels are just a whispered rumor above, but I have seen their pallid faces. Piteous creatures, doomed to delve the murky depths of the library without a hope for a gainful future; they are... the English graduate students!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

NRAO:

Since 1965, the headquarters of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory has been an unassuming building on Observatory Hill, from which it coordinates the largest telescopes in the world. While its observatories have been used as the setting for movies such as *Contact*, it has never reported any signs of extraterrestrial communication. The NRAO has disavowed any incidents involving O-Hill dining hall food and alien larvae bursting from students' chests. If you experience any such symptoms after eating at O-Hill, please direct your comments to Aramark's National Radio Astronomy Observatory.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Academic ACME

Academic Departments: Foundation of the Elite UVa Education

Mathematics Department:

The Math Department is in hot water this week after the football

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team's loss to Maryland has mathematically eliminated UVa from a bowl game. The Athletics Department's requests to alter the logical foundations of mathematics to give the Cavs one more shot at a bowl game have gone unheeded by the ivory tower types in Kerchof Hall. A representative for the Math Department defended the inaction: "While we have stretched the constraints of abelian algebra for sports teams in the past, this season's numbers offer no wiggle-room. I mean, we lost to **Duke!**"

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Author's Note : I could never quite contain my glee at watching the football program's long slump, but I think I abstained from too much gloating.

Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

Edgar Allan Poe:

Poe only attended the fledgling University for one year before dropping out over gambling debts. Known as a master of the macabre and bizarre, it is nonetheless shocking to learn that Poe's child-bride, who was 13 upon their marriage in 1835, was also his first cousin. He was 27. If that weren't bizarre enough, Poe nicknamed her "Sis," though she was named Virginia – look it up. Debate has raged over how unusual this marriage was for its day; Poe biographer Virgil Ellis sees nothing strange in the union, but his opinion is suspect as he is a West Virginian.



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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Revisited):

"If God isn't a Hokie, why do leaves turn maroon and orange?" reads a popular VPI bumper sticker. Aside from the puzzling idea that the omniscient creator would be an alumnus of a middle-tier public university, this makes one wonder if Hokies understand that we witness such leaves as they wither and die. Were Tech's colors grey and blue, would the pallor of a 95-year-old reveal a divine Hokie hand? Nevertheless, were we at UVa to make a bumper sticker of similar sentiment, we might be guided by Thomas Jefferson's Deist leanings: "If God isn't a Wahoo, I suppose we'll have to learn to fend for ourselves."

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Blacksburg Survival Guide

Crucial travel information for those heading to the away game at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute

- To reach Blacksburg, take I-64 West until you hear the banjos. Good luck!
- A Hokie's raw hatred for us is based on an abiding inferiority complex. Avoid multisyllabic words. Consider wearing only overalls to fit in.
- You may notice Hokie fans jingling their keys for a "key play." Don't make fun! This sad, little pun is considered sophisticated word-play to Tech graduates, most of whom continue to struggle with literacy.
- The recent addition of running water to Lane Stadium has brought a welcome end to the old pee troughs, but drinking the water is discouraged. Symptoms of "Hokie's Revenge" include hives, slack-jaw and basing one's self-worth on the performance of a football team.
- If you hear anyone say "squeal like a pig," flee in the opposite direction. Wildly discharge pepper spray behind you for good measure.
- On the way home, consider how fortunate you are to be out of that crap-hole. Contribute generously to the "Hokie Rescue Foundation," which funds the education children need to avoid ending up at Virginia Tech.

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

Envious Institutions

UVa's Lesser Scholastic Neighbors

University of Mary Washington:

Mary Washington was UVa's women's college until coeducation separated our institutions in 1972. Today, you can see billboards on Interstate-highway 64 advertising UMW as a "best buy" university, as determined by a college ranking guide you've never heard of. Thanks to this distinction, UMW has become a destination for bargain hunters. After you pick up those clearance decorative soaps from Dollar General, don't forget to stop by the blue-light special on bachelor's degrees down at Mary Washington College, now with 100% more "university" in the title!



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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

FAMOUS FOREBEARS

Legendary Personalities of UVa's Past

James Maxwell:

Author of the short-lived "Amazing But True!" segment of the Cavalier Daily's comics page, Maxwell was very, very old when he began the project in 2009. Though he was quite out of place among the youthful staff of the CD, the soft, crinkling sound of his Depends® undergarments soon became a familiar fixture in the newspaper's offices. His incoherent ramblings made for a strange addition to the comics page, but as old as he was, at least his platitudes weren't incredibly racist. As he finally leaves UVa, he continues to struggle with fecal incontinence.



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Amazing--- But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

hoo-cabulary:

Critical lexicon for the UVa neophyte

the lighting of the lawn:

The tradition of the Lighting of the Lawn began during the terrible Boar-beetle scourge of the winter of 1847, a harrowing infestation that would later be the inspiration for the Vin Diesel film, *Pitch Black*. Each night, the students of the University would light great bonfires on the Lawn, as they were the only sources of light intense enough to injure the sensitive eye-stalks of the innumerable, dog-sized beetles. Today, we still gather once a year, now in the glow of electric lights. We gather to give thanks that we huddle together for warmth and season's cheer, and not as protection from a horrible dismemberment in the countless, hungry mandibles of a hoard of insectoid monsters. Happy Holidays!

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Amazing... But True!

by James Maxwell

Today's Topic

A Farewell

Now, with a heavy heart, I must bid the University, and thus you all, adieu. I hope that over the past year I have brought you some enlightenment as I have brought to light many of the hidden wonders that surround this hallowed institution. Alas, eleven years is far too short a time to live among such excellent and admirable students. I don't know half of you half as well as I should like, and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve. But, I have things to do. I've put this off for far too long. I regret to announce – this is the END. I am going. I am leaving NOW.

GOOD-BYE!

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Author's Note : The first draft of my farewell comic was caustic and snarky. In the end, I couldn't pull the trigger on such a negative ending to both my comic and my long tenure at UVa. I instead went with a sentimental Tolkien reference, which I found both fitting and personally meaningful.