

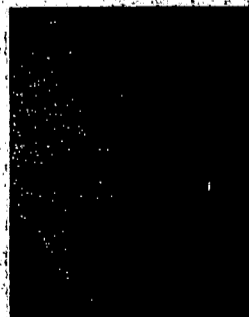
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INSIDE



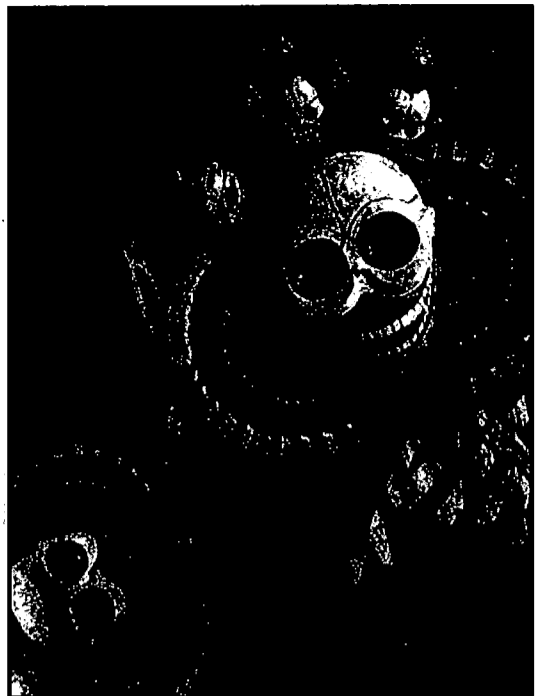
Fans share a special bond with their Highland Cavalier football team and go to great lengths to allow it. Page 3.



"People always ask me if this is my passion, but it's not. It's my own ability to perform." Vocalist John Rusli performs original songs and all-time favorites. Page 4.

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Tibetan monks perform



Tibet's Drepung Loseling Monastery will perform at Greaser Gymnasium on Tuesday, Oct. 29. College students will be admitted free with a valid I.D.

Amnesty fights for increased human rights in Afghanistan

by Stephen Dula
Highland Cavalier Staff Writer

The UVA-Wise branch of Amnesty International met Tuesday, Oct. 2, to discuss options for opposing the Taliban. Those in attendance signed a petition to end gender apartheid in Afghanistan.

"Everything that we do now must reflect the best, not the worst, in our humanity," said Bill Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA, in a message on Sept. 17 to members and supporters of Amnesty International.

Women in Afghanistan are severely oppressed by the Taliban regime. They must be covered from head to foot so that only their eyes show behind a veil, are not allowed out of their houses without the supervision of a close male relative, and can be punished if seen in the company of a male who is not her husband or close relative. Women also have no voting, educational or medical rights. Amnesty International is attempting to end these

and other forms of oppression in Afghanistan.

The UVA-Wise group of Amnesty USA is considering a fund-raiser to contribute to Amnesty International's efforts on behalf of the people of Afghanistan. The College chapter will be selling small pieces of mesh from the Afghan women's traditional garment, called a burqa. The cloth is to be worn in remembrance of women still in Afghanistan and in opposition to the Taliban's gender-biased policies. A \$5 donation supports efforts to end the gender apartheid and provides funds for humanitarian relief of Afghan women in refugee camps.

The Afghanistan project is not the campus group's only focus, however. The College chapter of Amnesty International is planning an additional campaign to end the torture of children around the world. This campaign will be the focus of the group for the remainder of the year. They plan to write letters to our state representatives and use petitions to pressure

national governments around the world to end the torture and mistreatment of women and children.

The campus Amnesty USA group was formed last year and is still in its organizational stages. According to coordinator Danny Carter, it was formed so that members would have an opportunity to participate in humanitarian efforts outside of their own areas.

Amnesty International is a humanitarian group focused on fighting oppression and poverty on a worldwide scale. The group uses letter-writing, petitions and, most recently, an internet-based petition system to stop torture around the world and to apply pressure to national governments. The Net-based system, called Fast Action Stops Torture (FAST), allows Amnesty members to be informed of torture and use their pagers, cell phones or computers to sign a petition to stop the torture. Amnesty International also works on behalf, and in support, of smaller humanitarian groups around the world.

Inaugural whitewater rafting trip provides dose of adventure

by Tawya Bartek
Highland Cavalier Staff Writer

The whitewater rafting trip on Sunday, Sept. 30, was a breathtaking adventure for the students who participated. The 25 participants awoke early Sunday morning and registered for the trip before the sun could break through the foggy morning. Anxious to ride the rapids, they clipped their life jackets, buckled their helmets and took the bus drive from Fayetteville, W. Va., to the Lower Gauley River.

"I think everyone was a little disappointed when we woke up to a foggy day, but when we got to the river it turned out to be a beautiful one," said Chris Davis, coordinator of recreations.

Once they arrived at the river, the participants were separated into four different rafts. Some were nervous, not knowing how dangerous the experience would be.

"I admit, I was scared to death on that bus ride because I know you can die on those rapids. I even called my mom at the campsite. But once I got on the water, I was loving it," said participant Crystal Gray.

The six-hour experience on the water had everyone smiling. There were rapids from "three to plus five," these numbers indicating the size of the rapids and the dangerous environment surrounding them, such as rocks and currents. "Plus five" rapids are the most dangerous. Luckily, no one was seriously injured; however, there were a few minor cuts and bruises.

"We had just gone through a rapid and our guide was congratulating us on our great team work. Then he told us to look out for the rock under the water. I got flipped out of the boat, hit the rock and then got hit by the boat. I must say my favorite part of the trip was getting back into the boat," said Benjamin Zeno.

"I was on the right side of the boat and Kenny [McCabe] does this spastic thing," said Kathryn Cobert, who was accidentally pushed from her boat on one of the roughest rapids. "As he was jumping up, he knocked me back and out of the boat. At first I was a little scared because when I looked back our boat was really close. I tried swimming to it but the rapids pulled me so fast I ended up at a different raft," Cobert said.

Paul Davis also plummeted out of his boat and into a rock. "A big wave came over and practically swallowed the boat," Davis said. "I fell out, not knowing what was going on until I hit a rock. I got a few scrapes here and there, but it made the trip more exciting."

Most of the rafters voluntarily jumped out of their rafts to ride the "swimmers' rapids" near the end of the day trip. Everyone enjoyed pushing each other into the water, and swimming together. Not only did they swim together, but the entire day took a lot of team work. Everyone had to paddle together and follow specific instructions to make it through the rapids carefully and successfully.

"I think all of the students had a great time," Davis said. "We are all ready to go back next fall and get on



Participants on the inaugural whitewater rafting trip glide down calm waters before braving the rapids.

some more exciting rapids on the Upper Gauley."

The day before the rafting trip, everyone waited anxiously as they packed for the four-hour trip to Fayetteville. Once they arrived at the campground, everyone unpacked the vans and pitched the tents.

"After everything was set up, some of us were getting a fire started and others were playing football; it was really good to see. I think some friendships were made from this trip," Davis said.

That night, everyone sat around the campfire, cooked smores and reminisced about their life experiences. Not far from the campsite, two men plucked their instruments and sang bluegrass and old country music songs.

"The musicians were extremely vernacular and the music was great; however, I also wanted to know more about the people on the trip. So I stayed by the campfire most of the time," Gray said.

Choir brings Broadway to College, entertains audience with favorite showtunes

by Kelly Muncy
Highland Cavalier Staff Writer

The UVA-Wise College Choir presented its annual mid-term concert on Wednesday, Oct. 3, in the Chapel of All Faiths. The concert's theme was Broadway, and the variety of well-known and loved showtunes kept the audience entertained throughout the choir's entire performance.

An enormous crowd turned out for the premiere performance of the 2001 UVA-Wise Choir. The choir, along with soloist Brad Ketron, opened the show with the lively performance of "Another Op'nin', Another Show" from the 1948 musical "Kiss Me Kate." The next arrangement was a more recent song from Broadway, "Ragtime's" "Make Them Hear You" from 1998 slowed down the performance while spotlighting all the different voice ranges of the choir from the high sopranos to the low basses.

The next arrangements of the concert were performed by what are known as the singers. The singers are members of the choir who have one or more years

of experience performing with the UVA-Wise College Choir. Stephen Sondheim's "No One Is Alone" from the 1987 musical "Into the Woods" was the first song performed by the singers.

Soloist Johnetta Altizer, accompanied by Mandy Meeks and Kristina Powers, gave an entertaining rendition of "Doin' What Comes Natur'ly" from the current Broadway hit "Annie Get Your Gun." "Someone Like You" from Frank Wildhorn and Leslie Bricusse's 1997 Broadway musical "Jekyll & Hyde" featured Mandy Meeks as the soloist. Kristina Powers could have passed as a true Broadway performer when she captured the audience's hearts with a moving rendition of "I Dreamed A Dream" from "Les Miserables."

The works of famed Broadway composer Andrew Lloyd Webber were introduced next with Kat Nguyen, accompanied by the singers, performing "With One Look" from the 1993 musical "Sunset Boulevard." One of the most famous Broadway hits of all time, "My Funny Valentine" from the 1937 musical "Babes In Arms," was the next performance of the concert featuring soloist Jen Cleveland.

In light of the recent terrorist attacks on our country, it only seemed appropriate for members of the choir to use their voices and talents to pay tribute to our country and those who have lost their lives protecting the United States. The singers closed their part of the concert with fourth-year choir member Jesse Horton performing Lee Greenwood's patriotic hit "God Bless The USA." The expressions of not only family and friends of the choir members, but also of faculty, staff and students of UVA-Wise, showed that this was the most moving performance of the day. There were even a few wet eyes at the end.

The entire choir re-joined the singers for the conclusion of the mid-term concert as they performed "Finale" from the 1971 Broadway show "Godspell." The choir was directed by UVA-Wise music professor Michael Donathan and accompanied on the piano by Joy Briggs.

UVA-Wise senior Stephen Dula is a first-year member of the College Choir. He says a love of singing led him to join. "I wanted a chance to perform and a chance to get involved," he said.

There were two main reasons Donathan selected Broadway showtunes for this performance. "Number one, Broadway music is my specialty, and number two, not many students know a lot about Broadway," Donathan said. "Those who do, though, a lot of them [the choir members] enjoy musicals."

Donathan also said that the next performance of the College Choir will be held in December. This performance will be more traditional and will feature Christmas music and other songs. Donathan said the choir members had been preparing for this concert since the beginning of the semester and they would now begin preparing now for the upcoming December performance.

"We've been preparing technically since the beginning of the term," he said.

Donathan noted that the fall choir is an open choir, meaning that anyone can participate. There are currently 50 voices in the UVA-Wise College Choir. Auditions are required for the spring choir, however. "There will only be about 25 people in the spring choir," Donathan said.

Cheerleaders take charge of homecoming festivities

by Kristina Powers
Highland Cavalier Staff Writer

Cheerleaders will be taking charge of Homecoming Spirit Week. During their first year in charge of the festivities, the cheerleaders aim to raise school spirit by adding events throughout all of Spirit Week, as well as giveaways at the football game.

In the past, the Student Government Association has handled homecoming affairs. This year the SGA gave Spirit Week to the cheerleaders. They are hoping to make this year's homecoming festivities something students will never forget.

"We hope to get the students more involved with school spirit," said freshman cheerleader Ashley Bland.

Among the activities scheduled for Homecoming Week are the fun-filled spirit days, during which students will be able to show their spirit by dressing according to each day's theme. This year's daily themes have already been designated.

Monday, Oct. 22, is Get Out of Bed Day, which gives lazy students all the excuse they need to come to class in their pajamas.

Students and faculty are encouraged to show their patriotism on Tuesday, Oct. 23, for America Day. Camouflage Day is Wednesday, Oct. 24. Anyone wanting to show off a costume before trick-or-treating can do so on Halloween Day, which is Thursday, Oct. 25. The week ends with everyone encouraged to show their Cavalier pride on Friday, Oct. 26, by sporting the team's colors on the traditional Red and Gray Day.

At the homecoming game, the cheerleaders will be offering shakers and noise-makers to the fans to aid in cheering on the football players. They hope that the added displays of noise and spirit will help propel the Cavaliers to victory in what will probably be their most-watched home game of the season.

"We want the fans to be more involved than ever this year," Bland said.

The cheerleaders are also preparing goodie bags for each member of the football team. "We want to give them an extra bonus to win the game," Bland said.

Students not only look forward to the football game, but also to the homecoming

dance. This year the dance will be held on Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Holiday Inn in Norton. Preparations are already underway to make the dance one students will always remember.

Though the cheerleaders are primarily in charge of the homecoming events, other College organizations are also involved. Freshman SGA Senators Anne Jones and Sarah Huggins are able to work closely in preparing for Homecoming Week events. "This will be my first college dance. I'm really excited," Jones said.

There will also be a homecoming parade held on Thursday, Oct. 25, at 6 p.m. The parade is a favorite event of both College and community members and is expected to have seven floats sponsored by local businesses.

"The floats give organizations a chance to express their artistic abilities and imagination. It gets their names out in the community," Huggins said.

Homecoming Week is something that many students look forward to. "It is a time for old friends to get together, dance, celebrate and compete," Jones said.

O'Donnell addresses impact of non-conformity at BSU's Upper

By [Name] Highland Cavalier Staff Writer

At the BSU's Upper School Assembly, O'Donnell addressed the impact of non-conformity on the lives of students. He spoke about the challenges of being different and the importance of staying true to oneself. O'Donnell shared his own experiences and encouraged students to embrace their individuality. He emphasized that non-conformity is not just about appearance, but about having unique thoughts and feelings. He concluded by reminding students that their differences are what make them special and that they should be proud of who they are.

Students of all faiths welcome at joint Wesley/Baptist Student Union worship

The Wesley Foundation and the Baptist Student Union are sponsoring an interdenominational worship service Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. in the Chapel of All Faiths. The service began on Sept. 9. The service is a come-as-you-are gathering that incorporates student-led praise and worship with a praise band and a student speaker.

"We want the students to have the leadership over it as much as possible," said Ginger Howe, United Methodist campus minister.

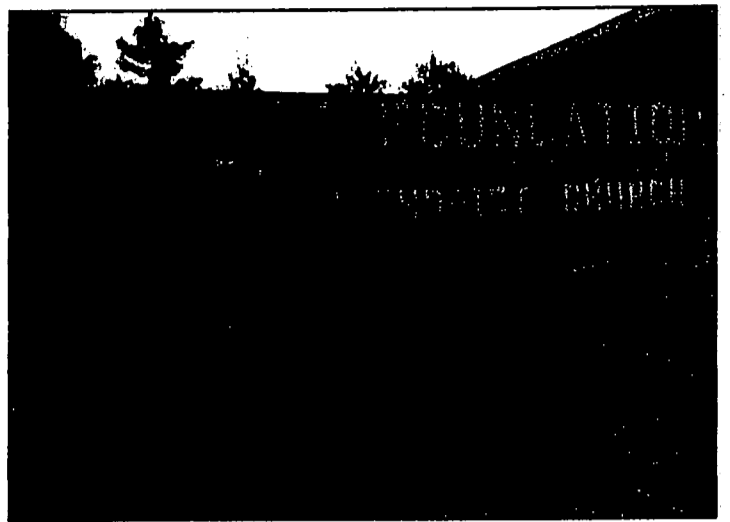
The service is intended to cross denominational lines and introduce students to new ways of exploring their faith. One of the major keys to the service is a student praise band composed of Chad Counts on drums, Abraham Jun on bass, Stephen Dula on guitar, Terrah Boy on piano, and Brittny Seltner, Bridgette Stallard and Tiffany Hobbs on vocals. The band, called Ransomed Jacob, plays upbeat contemporary Christian praise music. The idea was to use the praise band to expose students to a form of worship with which they may not be familiar.

The motivation behind the service comes entirely from members of the student body.

"There have been several efforts in the past at chapel worship and this is the most successful. Our students really want this to happen," said Jim Collie, campus minister associated with the Baptist Student Union.

When asked what he thought the difference was between this service and other attempts to bring students together through faith, Collie replied that student leadership was key and that this group of students seems much more willing to work to make the service a reality.

The service is open to anyone who wishes to attend. Howe said one of the objectives of the service is to reach students "where they are in their life's



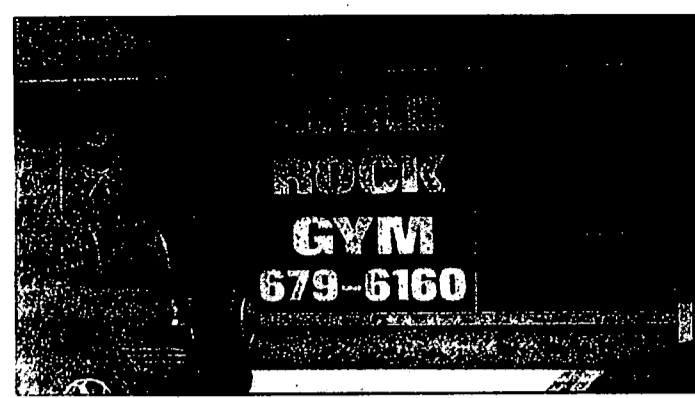
The Wesley Foundation, in partnership with the BSU, offers interdenominational worship services.

Journey." She is hoping for a broad-based program in which students may explore or come to a faith in Jesus Christ. Howe also hopes students will address issues such as the pressures of college life and the transition between high school and college.

The service is currently a free-flowing program, but there are possibilities for more traditional worship services. Collie hopes to incorporate traditional church practices, such as the singing of hymns and perhaps a Holy Communion service. He also hopes to expand the service to include other cultures and their worship styles.

Another goal of this worship service is to encourage other groups of different faiths to use the building. Though the Chapel is open to members of all faiths, it usually remains empty except for official events held there, such as faculty lectures and other non-religious presentations.

Both Howe and Collie hope that by having a Christian worship service in the Chapel, other faiths, such as Islam and Hinduism, along with all of the other religions and faiths represented on campus, will begin to use the building for their own worship services. **Stephen Dula**



Norton's Hard Rock Gym is one of several gyms in the area hoping to attract UVA-Wise students.

Area gyms offer special rates to entice students to work out

There are a variety of specials going on at the local gyms, which are located in Wise, Norton and on the UVA-Wise campus. These gyms offer an assortment of equipment that can be appealing to different workout preferences. These financial deals are effective through the first few weeks of October.

"I like [Hard Rock Gym] because of all the nice equipment and there are a lot of familiar College faces working out," said member Charlie Calton.

Hard Rock Gym is located in Norton at 904 Park Ave. The gym's special is a membership until June 1, 2002, for \$125, a deal including a key that can be used for 24-hour access. The equipment at this facility consists of nautilus weights, free weights and an array of cardiovascular equipment.

Dyna Body Gym is located in Wise at 517 Mullins St. It's special is \$23 a month with no contracts. The gym's equipment includes circuit training and free weights, and the gym also offers equipment sales.

"The friendly atmosphere and new equipment make for a wonderful workout experience," said Jennifer Law, a member of Dyna Body Gym.

If money and transportation are a problem, UVA-Wise offers a weight room on campus located in Greear Gymnasium. There are no financial obligations to use the weight room. The gym offers an array of older equipment that is used by all of the athletic teams on campus, including nautilus weights, free weights and leg-press machines. There is also a track circling the field for jogging.

"It's fun to be able to play basketball and lift weights with friends while on campus," said Preston Brickner, a campus gym enthusiast.

These gyms can fulfill a majority of every person's workout desires. Each has different equipment that can be matched to the preferences of the individual. It is important to be in shape and joining a gym to work out is the best way to take a step in the right direction. **Keynen Almer**

John Rush entertains College with mix of original songs, old favorites

Singer/songwriter John Rush performed on campus on Wednesday, Oct. 3, and played many cover songs, along with his own material.

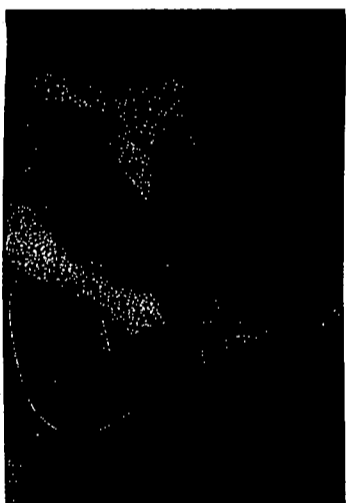
Rush played to an audience of nearly 100 people in the cafeteria in Cantrell Hall, with the performance kicking off around 8 p.m. and lasting until around 10 p.m. The atmosphere was very informal and laid-back as Rush performed his routine one-man show.

Using his own unique style of live sampling, Rush is capable of playing songs that would normally require two or more guitarists. "I do this all the time," Rush said. "People always ask me if this is pre-recorded music, but it's not. I rely on my own ability to perform; the technical effects are only there to enhance what I do."

Rush took the stage armed only with his acoustic guitar and his sound equipment and played various songs. Most of the numbers were performed by request, chosen by audience members from books he circulated throughout the room. These books contained his set list which included over 500 hundred songs from more than 100 artists.

Rush performed covers of several well-known songs, which proved to be crowd favorites. Among them were "Lightning Crashes" by Live, "Crash" by the Dave Matthews Band, "Hotel California" by the Eagles, "Wading in the Velvet Sea" by Phish, and "Interstate Love Song" by Stone Temple Pilots.

He also performed some of his own material from his CD "They Don't Know My Name." The songs included two tracks, "Fifty Dollars" and "Walk with Me," which also appear on the soundtrack to



Singer/songwriter John Rush

the 2001 motion picture "Autumn and Everything After." One audience member won a free copy of Rush's CD when he correctly named the artist of one of the songs Rush picked from his repertoire.

The audience gave Rush a lively round of applause at the end of each song. There was a very high level of interaction and communication between Rush and the crowd.

Rush travels nationwide performing at college campuses and clubs, transporting his own sound equipment and stage lighting. **Adam Moore**

Classics, moderns make up field for car show; benefits go to terrorists' victims

The Student Activities Board of UVA-Wise will be hosting a car show on Saturday, Oct. 20, hoping to raise money for the relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Sam Ostrander, treasurer of the Student Activities Board, expects the show to be a big hit. "I was thinking of something we could do for a fundraiser when Andy Corbett, my roommate, came up with the idea of the car show," Ostrander said.

Ostrander traveled around the region looking for people who would be willing to show off their unique automobiles. Members of the Student Activities Board went to Mountain Heritage Day in Whitesburg, Ky., to hand out fliers in an attempt to get some positive feedback from the gatherers.

The show will consist of seven categories of automobiles: classic cars, domestic sports cars, foreign sports cars, classic trucks, new trucks, sport bikes and cruising bikes. All vehicles are invited to compete for a title in one of the seven categories.

Ostrander is strongly recommending that contestants show up early in order to get a good spot. All vehicles must be registered by 12 noon and the judging will begin before 12:30 p.m.



Antique cars will be among those featured.

Admission will be \$2, with children 12 and under being admitted for free. Each vehicle will have a \$10 entry fee.

Volunteers are needed to help out at the show. "We are still looking for people to help with the concession stand, registration desk and car placement," Ostrander said. **Nate Stalnaker**

ENTERTAINMENT

WISE-FM gains new audience by singing blues

The WISE-FM radio station is now including a whole new genre in its repertoire. A new blues program is adding a whole new flavor to the airwaves.

Due to a collaboration between WISE-FM station manager Loretta Mays and UVA-Wise theater instructor Jon Menick, a new drama program featuring blues music from the 1960s to the present airs each Friday night from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Fictional radio personality Mo Joe Man, created by Menick, leads listeners on an exploration of the blues genre.

"I created a character that is a synthesis of the kind of guy I heard in the '60s," Menick said. "He's just a cool dude. Everybody looks up to him."

Broadcasting alongside of Mo Joe Man is the character of Low Down Loretta, played by none other than station manager Mays herself. "She's a lot younger than Mo Joe and she gives him a hard time and gets under his skin," Mays said. "He comes onto her and she doesn't have a clue what's going on. She's pretty much clueless."

According to Mays, Mo Joe Man resembles the disc jockey on the once-popular sitcom "WKRP in Cincinnati." Menick's love of the blues began as a teenager and was instigated by his friend Paul Black, who is now a recording artist. The experiences he encountered with the blues spawned this idea of a blues program that would enable him to share his affinity with others. "I'm bringing it back and taking us on that journey, the same discovery I had," he said. "It's kind of like a gift."

Menick related this idea to Mays, and the WISE-FM program was born. "Jon came to the station one day and asked me about a series of radio dramas and some ideas he had about incorporating theater and drama students into some radio dramas here at the station," Mays said. He said,

"Where's your blues? It's not funky enough around here for me."

This suggestion excited Mays immediately. "This was on my list of things to offer here at the station because this isn't something you can get anywhere," she said. "It's programming that's just not available on every other station."

Menick brings his knowledge of blues music and his collection of blues records to the show. Blues fusion, which consists of a musical mix between blues, rock and jazz, dominates the program.

According to Menick, it is not delta blues but a more urban and contemporary blues display. The line-up includes music from such classic artists as Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughn, B.B. King and Led Zeppelin. "I think there will be something for everybody," Mays said.

Mays hopes for a great response from a diverse listening demographic. "I'm hoping that we do appeal to some younger folks, but we also want to get some of the people who were listening to this music in the '60s: the Vietnam War-era hippies."

Menick hopes to recreate the aura from that era, the era in which his experiences with the blues occurred.

"In the show, I'm working on a feeling of the music," he said. "Music sensitized me personally to the anti-war and civil-rights movements. I think the sensitizing of people to social movements will never happen if it doesn't happen in college."

Mays and Menick hope to air a new show each week with few repeats.

According to Menick, the show is not live and will take much work with writing and production. "The Mo Joe Man is a directed deal. It's poetry."

The show is broadcast to the entire WISE-FM lis-



"Low Down Loretta" and "Mo Joe Man"

tening area which encompasses Norton, Pound, Big Stone Gap, Wise and even as far as Abingdon. The station can also be heard on Adelphia Cable Channel 51.

Mays hopes to add new programs to the station's line-up in the near future and already has several ideas she is thinking about using. "I want to focus a lot on public affairs and there's a couple of things I'm going to do in that regard," Mays said. "I would like to make a weekly program where we focus on public affairs going on in the community or on the college campus that would be of interest to listeners." **Emerald Robleson**

Michael Douglas film "Don't Say a Word" breathes life into old genre

My first thought upon seeing the trailers for "Don't Say a Word" was, oh, great, another one of those movies. You know the ones. There's this guy. He has a wife, a child and things couldn't be going better, then some psycho comes along, abducts the precious kid, and demands an unreasonable ransom. I've never been a fan of these kinds of movies but decided to give this film a chance.

The film centers around psychiatrist Nathan Conrad (Douglas), whose daughter is abducted by the villainous Patrick Koster (Sean Bean), who is in search of a number that will give him access to a rare red diamond. Koster stole the diamond from a bank ten years ago, only to have it stolen from him by one of his double-crossing henchmen.

The number Koster needs to discover the jewel is locked away in the very disturbed mind of Elisabeth (Brittany Murphy), a seemingly catatonic teenager who has been in and out of mental wards for 10 years. Nathan has less than 24 hours to extract the number from Elisabeth or Koster will kill his daughter. Nathan is given no indication of what the number is, other than the fact that it is six digits long.

Though Nathan quickly establishes himself as something of a working man's superhero (through almost unbelievably rapid breakthroughs with his

patients before picking up the Thanksgiving turkey to being the world's greatest dad to giving his injured wife a sponge bath), he seems to meet his match in Elisabeth. As he begins to unravel the pieces of her mind, Nathan discovers that the girl's past is fatally linked with Koster's. Elisabeth has also gone to great lengths in order to stay out Koster's grasp, including slashing a hospital intern she believed was working for the villain.

As it turns out, Elisabeth's paranoia is justified. After Nathan's daughter, Jessie, is abducted in the middle of the night, Nathan and his wife, Aggie (Famke Janssen), awaken the next morning to find not only their daughter missing from their apartment, but their home bugged with listening devices and cameras. How this feat was accomplished without any of the family's knowledge is a point that was never fully explained but presumably meant to show how clever Koster is, and how determined he is to recover the missing diamond.

While the main story unfolds with Nathan and Elisabeth, a second tale is also being told. This story focuses on Detective Sandra Cassidy (Jennifer Lopez), a tough-gal cop who finds a dead woman's body in the river. Though the story seems at first unrelated and does, in fact, take too long to intersect with the main story, Cassidy also ends up

facing off with Koster as her story slams climactically into Nathan and Elisabeth's.

Part of what makes this movie such a delight is the supporting cast. Brittany Murphy, best known as Tai in "Clueless," has grown up and proven her acting ability as the deeply troubled Elisabeth. Oliver Platt, as Nathan's former co-worker at the state mental ward, provides some much-needed comic relief and Esposito is a delight. Nathan's daughter, Jessie (Skye McCole Bartuslak), is a joy to watch — intelligent, witty but not absurdly overdone, as most of today's child roles are. The only real disappointment in the film is Janssen, who made a name for herself in action-oriented roles such as "GoldenEye" and "X-Men." Though Aggie does have her heroic moments, she is also confined to traction due to a broken leg, and has very little to do other than look beautiful, bored and afraid. Even Bean, who has made a career out of acting badly in mediocre movies, embraces the role of Koster, giving him a sinister, yet almost sympathetic, bite.

In a year full of hyped movies that have turned out to be mediocre at best, "Don't Say a Word" is a refreshing breath of cinematic air. Though the script has a few holes, the film still has enough twists to keep the audience wondering what waits around the next corner. **Angela Markham**