Wise students react to ‘The Passion of the Christ’

By Roger Nagg, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief

“I’m speechless.” That’s what UVA-Wise student Michelle Stallard said after watching last week’s number-one movie, The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson’s take on the last 12 hours of Jesus’ life, focusing on Christ’s brutal beatings and death on the cross.

“It was a life-changing movie,” Stallard said.

Despite The Passion’s graphic violence, which earned the film an R rating from the MPAA, moviegoers throughout the U.S., including many UVA-Wise students, helped the film skyrocket to $125.2 million in five days, the best five-day totals ever for a Wednesday debut, surpassing last year’s The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King, which debuted with $124.1 million. The Passion also had the second-best R-rated opening in cinematic history.

“It was the only movie I’ve been to where the people just sat there during the closing credits,” said student Jeremy Moore. “It was like they were just dumbfounded... physically unable to get up.”

Indeed, many students felt dramatically affected and changed by The Passion’s realistic depiction of Christ’s suffering.

“I felt so unworthy,” said student Jessica Barnett. “I was speechless.”

“After walking out of the theater, you come out very humbled,” said student Bridgette Stallard. “It makes Christians and non-Christians reevaluate themselves.”

Gibson’s grassroots campaign to Christian leaders throughout the nation for the film’s release has obviously been a strong source of The Passion’s success. Days before the

Chancellor Emeritus Joe Smiddy speaks at the College’s 50th anniversary “kick-off” ceremony held on Feb. 18.

‘Papa Joe’ Smiddy helps College kick off 50th anniversary celebration

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Students, faculty, alumni and friends of the College were treated to an afternoon of songs and stories by Chancellor Emeritus Joe Smiddy at the official “kick-off” ceremony for the College’s 50th anniversary celebration, held on Feb. 18 at 1 p.m. Held in the fifth-floor conference center of the C. Bascom Slemp Student Center, the ceremony included Smiddy’s humorous stories of the College’s early days and songs honoring the school with some help from his banjo.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to share with you the kind of foundation the College had,” Smiddy told the audience.

Smiddy, the first chancellor of the College when it opened as Clinch Valley College (CVC) on Sept. 13, 1954, provided listeners with a detailed history of the school’s genesis, including the fact that the school’s first class of 109 students had to pay $250 in tuition and fees, which was “hard to come by” in 1954.

The College also opened with a mere eight professors, including Smiddy, who taught biology. Smiddy said that when he asked his biology students if they would have chosen a different school before Clinch Valley College opened, only two of the 36 students said that they would have. According to Smiddy, the other students disagreed.

“They said, ‘You...
The Passion of the Christ' tells of the crucifixion in a 'powerfully personal way'

By Brada Bunting and Bree Swearing Staff Writers

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
Platinum: Gloucester
Developer: Square-Enix
Genre: RPG
Platform: GameCube

While fans of the Final Fantasy titles that originally appeared on the Nintendo systems may have been eager to play Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles for the GameCube, they should note that this game plays very differently from previous FF games. Crystal Chronicles is more or less an action RPG, taking elements from another well-known Square game called Secret of Mana, rather than from Final Fantasy. The gameplay takes place in a world ravaged by an evil fog and only the power of a special crystal can help unify the seven familial jobs (Clavat, Selkie, Yukes and Lillae), make them male or female, and even pick one out of seven familial jobs that can help in the quest, including a discount for wars, provided, of course, that players reply to their families' letters and such with appropriate responses and gifts.

The Battle System that plays from other RPGs in that players do not gain experience points after fights. Characters are instead required to increase their

Award-winning poet Patricia Johnson to present Pro-Art programs throughout community

Award-winning poet Patricia Johnson is scheduled to present two programs in the area to be sponsored by the Pro-Art Association. Five area venues will feature Johnson's Harlem Renaissance Revisted and Sister Speak.

In Harlem Renaissance Revisted, Johnson will perform the works of Langston Hughes, crystal keeps the evil at bay. The crystal has to be replenished each year, so the villages send out adventurers in what's called a "Crystal Caravan" to the Game Boy Advance Advance Feature is rather ingenious, allowing players to save their progress in a single adventure rather than a handheld system as a menu while dungeon-exploration. The chalice that the party obtained from Miriel Drollets also plays an important role. A character must always hold the chalice while walking around areas in order to protect the party from the effects of the fog. In a single-player game, this role is performed by a moogle named Mog. Characters cannot stay too far from the safety provided by the chalice. Once the player has completed all of the dungeons, the chalice will become full, and the characters return to their hometown as the year's journey begins.

'Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles' offers multiplayer quest

For more information, contact Daisy Williamson at 376-4320, or visit the Pro-Art website at www.pro-art.vrgv.
A Birthday Surprise

Dr. Rachel Tighe thought that she was merely going to teach her students about systems theory on Friday, Feb. 27, but was instead treated to a surprise birthday party from her communication students. Above, Dr. Tighe "makes a wish" as she prepares to blow out the candles on her Scooby-Doo birthday cake. Happy Birthday, Dr. Tighe!

In addition to telling stories, Smiddy also sang a few songs with his banjo, including an ode to the College to the tune of "You Are My Sunshine." Smiddy thanked all those who have helped to make 2004 the College's "jubilee year" for an anniversary celebration, including Chancellor Steve Kaplan.

"What a blessing it was to work here with students and to have so little," Smiddy said.

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Chancellor Emeritus Smiddy sings songs, tells stories to honor College's history

Students express opinions of 'The Passion of the Christ'

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The UVa-Wise "kick-off" celebration was hosted by Chancellor Kaplan and the Fiftieth Anniversary Coordinating Council.

"I would advise everyone to see it... it puts everything in a new perspective." — Bridgette Stallard

"It was a good movie," said student Marc Hale. "I'd watch it again."

A strong contributing factor to The Passion of the Christ's theatrical continuity will perhaps be nationwide word of mouth, including that of many students throughout the Wise campus, who are talking about and discussing the film.

"Personally, I would advise everyone to see it," said Bridgette Stallard. "When you actually see it, it puts everything in a new perspective."

The film is also a unique "hit" movie because the dialogue is spoken in two dead languages, Aramaic and Latin, and has English subtitles. In addition, Gibson paid out $25 million of his own money to release the film through Newmarket Films, the only distributor willing to release the Christian movie.

After the film's record-breaking opening, many industry analysts believe that The Passion, 2004's first $100 million movie, will continue to increase its box-office strength at least until Easter next month, despite the film's graphic violence and emotionally serious subject matter.

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