

C THE HIGHLAND CAVALIER

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This Week

Get some friends together to experience Press Play's review of *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, a magical quest for four players.



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Wise students react to 'The Passion of the Christ'

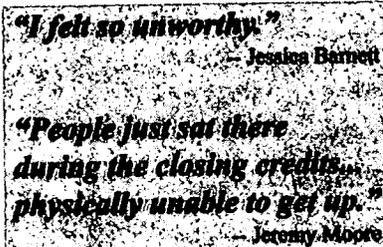
By Roger Hagg, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief

"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

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PHOTO BY ROGER HAGG, JR.

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

By Roger Hagg, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief

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 Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 1 p.m. Held in the fifth-floor conference center of the C. Bascom Slempp 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 SMIDDY, page 4



PHOTO BY NEWMARKET FILM GROUP

Jim Caviezel stars as Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*, Mel Gibson's graphic take on the last 12 hours of Jesus' life on earth.

'The Passion of the Christ' tells of the crucifixion in a 'powerfully personal way'

Movie Spotlight
By Tiffany Hunter
Staff Writer

As I sit down to write this article, I think of all the journalistic "do's" and "don'ts" that I have been taught. I think of the journalist's ideal of objectivity that urges me to separate my emotions from my journalistic work. Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* will not allow me to do this. Never before in cinematic history has there been such a graphic and historically correct portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Never before has this story been told in a powerfully personal way.

The Passion of the Christ brings out the person of Jesus. It doesn't glorify the "superhero" image of Jesus that we often times have. We see Jesus not just as the Holy Deity that He is, but as a son, as a friend, as a person. Gibson has

brought out the very human side of Christ that is often-times ignored. As Mary, the mother of Jesus, kisses His feet, you see a son. The film shows Mary picking up Jesus as a child after he has fallen, then later flashes to Him carrying His cross through the street. As you watch this, you understand Mary's desire to run to her son and embrace him. As the film flashes back to Jesus at the Last Supper, you see Him as a friend. As He prevents a stoning intended for a harlot, you then see Him as a redeemer.

As Christ is shown in a more human way, His sufferings become more realistic. From the moment the first lash is given, it becomes hard to breathe. As the beating scene continues, you believe that soon this man will break; surely this man will give up. Christ, however, having been beaten to the ground, stood for more. He knew what His



Mary (played by Mala Morgenstern) tries to comfort her fallen son, Jesus (played by Jim Caviezel), as he struggles to carry his cross out of Jerusalem in *The Passion of the Christ*.

purpose was, and He knew that it had to be fulfilled. As the cat of nine tails rips into his flesh, you wonder why someone would suffer to this degree for such an undeserving people. Then you see the Savior.

As Christ carries

His cross through the streets, one sees humanity as we know it. Some spit in His face, whereas others embrace Him and try to give Him water. Through all the suffering and all the violence, Christ embraces

humanity. Mel Gibson took many risks with this movie, but deciding that money was not the important thing, he knew that this was a story that needed to be told from a different point of view.



Left, Jesus (played by Jim Caviezel) endures beatings by Roman soldiers as he carries his cross through Jerusalem. Right, Peter (played by Francesco De Vito), Jesus and John (played by Hristo Jivkov) attend Christ's last supper in a flashback scene during *The Passion of the Christ*. This and other flashback scenes were used to deliver some of Christ's teachings and ministry that took place before the film's emphasized events of Jesus' arrest, trial, torture, death and resurrection.



PRESS PLAY

'Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles' offers multiplayer quest

By Audra Bowling and
Bree Bowling
Staff Writers

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
Platform: Gamecube
Developer: Square-Enix
Genre: RPG

While fans of the *Final Fantasy* titles that originally appeared on Nintendo systems may be 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 game takes place in a world ravaged by an evil fog and only the power of a special

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 go into the often inhospitable environments that contain the Mirula Droplets—the items needed to purify the crystal. Up to four players can join in a multiplayer *Crystal Caravan*, a unique experience for a *FF* game.

When first starting out, players can create their own character from any of the four tribes of the world (Clavats, Selkies, Yukes and Liltes), make them male or female, and even pick one out of seven familial jobs that can help in the quest, including a discount for wares, provided, of course, that players reply to their families' letters and such



PHOTO BY SQUARE-ENIX

A female member of the Selkie tribe and Mog the moogle are just two of the many characters to be found in *Crystal Chronicles*.

with appropriate responses and gifts.

The battle system for this game differs from other RPGs in that players do not gain experience points after fights. Characters are instead required to increase their

attack, defense, and magic stats by equipping various types of armor and items that are uncovered in the dungeons they enter. Also, the Game Boy Advance feature is rather ingenious, allowing players to use their handheld system as a menu while dungeoning.

The chalice that the party uses to contain the Mirula Droplets 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 stray 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 is over.

Replay value in this particular title is pretty high. If one decides to have another adventure, one can get more powerful weapons and items and even see the changes that have taken place in his or her character's hometown over the past year. All in all, as far as traditional single-player RPGs go, this title can prove to be a bit lacking, but for those who enjoy trying something new and who have fun playing in groups, *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* should provide ample entertainment.

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

By Tiffany Hunter
Staff Writer

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 Revisited* and *Sister Speak*.

In *Harlem Renaissance Revisited*, Johnson will perform the works of Langston Hughes,

Anne Spenser and Sterling Brown. The performance's first showing will be Monday, Mar. 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Jettie Baker Center in Clintwood. The second showing, at the Virginia-Kentucky Opry in Norton, is scheduled for Wednesday, Mar. 24, also at 7:30 p.m. The last performance of *Harlem Renaissance Revisited* will be at Lee High School on Thursday, Mar. 25 at 7:30 p.m. Admission for all three

showings will be \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$2 for students.

The second of the two programs is *Sister Speak*. Poets such as Nikki Giovanni, Emily Dickenson, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Alice Walker are highlighted in this program, which will be presented on Tuesday, Mar. 23 at 12:15 in the Goodloe Center of Mountain Empire Community College, and also at UVa-Wise at 7:30 pm

in the Chapel. Admission is free to both showings.

Harlem Renaissance Revisited is co-sponsored by Dickenson County, the town of Clintwood, Dickenson County Hospital, *The Dickenson Star*, the city of Norton, the C. Bascom Slemp Foundation, Lee County, the town of Pennington Gap and *The Powell Valley News*. *Sister Speak* is part of the UVa-Wise Cultural Arts Series

and is partially supported by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Patricia Johnson is a graduate of Ferrum College and Virginia Commonwealth University and was named a "poetry slam" champion in 1996.

For more information, contact Daisy Portuondo at 376-4520, or visit the Pro-Art website at www.pro-art-va.org.

A Birthday Surprise

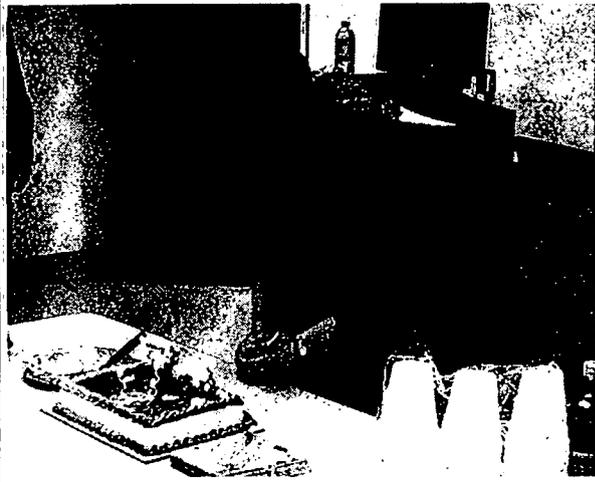


PHOTO BY JOE KERN

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!

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

(continued from page one)
can have your choice, but it's CVC for us," Smiddy told the audience.

Smiddy also said that the University of Virginia asked that the newly opened Clinch Valley College provide students with the same academic quality as that of the main campus in Charlottesville. Smiddy agreed and said that the College always tried to help students find the talents to help them succeed in life by following a Biblical verse that says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee."

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.

The UVA-Wise "kick-off" celebration was

hosted by Chancellor Kaplan and the Fiftieth Anniversary Coordinating Council.

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Students express opinions of 'The Passion of the Christ'

(continued from page one)
film's Ash Wednesday debut, many churches throughout the country were reserving entire theaters for both their congregations and anyone who wanted to see the film.

Another source of the film's fame has been generated by the controversy surrounding some people's claims that the film is anti-Semitic.

None of the UVA-Wise students interviewed, however, felt that the film collectively blamed the Jews for Christ's death.

In fact, according to the Associated Press, Maia Morgenstern, a Jewish actress who portrays Jesus' mother Mary in the film, said that Gibson approached the film with great respect for Judaic traditions.

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.

"It was a good movie," said student Marc

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

—Bridgette Stallard

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."

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