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Special J-term Issue

HOLLINS



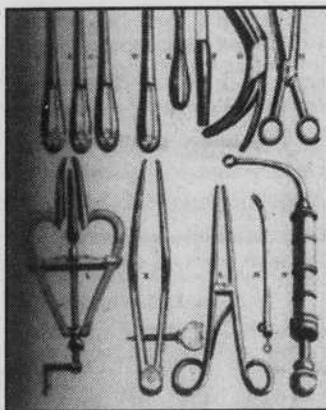
COLUMNS

January 31, 2002

Hollins University, Roanoke, VA

Volume 74, Issue 6

News



Read about midwifery and the J-term birthing class on page 2.

Center Section



Read about viewing winter in grayscale photography on pages 4 and 5.

Freshman transfer rate declines

by Amanda Bull

According to some students who are unhappy at Hollins, 'tis the season to transfer. But according to Siclinda Canty-Elliot, dean of students, Hollins' retention rate is now higher than ever before. Last year was one of the best years in Hollins' traceable history, with an 81.2 percent first to second year retention rate.

This year, only 17 first-year students requested transcripts. Of those, seven have actually left, one has decided to stay, and the rest are pending.

"Hopefully, it will be more of an upward trend," Canty-Elliot said. "At this time, we've seen a decrease in transferring out."

Why did the few students who transfer decide to leave? According to Canty-Elliot's statistics, there are a number of different reasons.

"In 1998," she said, "The number one reason students left was social life. Now it's either being close to family, or Hollins wasn't the right fit. The number two reason is financial."

One new trend is that a number of sophomores are starting to transfer out. In order to improve sophomore retention, a number of changes are being made. One

of those changes took place when Tammy Futrell's title changed from Director of First Year Programs to Director of First Year and Sophomore Programs.

Futrell is "committed to making Hollins a warm living and learning environment" for

ed? What kinds of resources have they used? What additional resources are needed?"

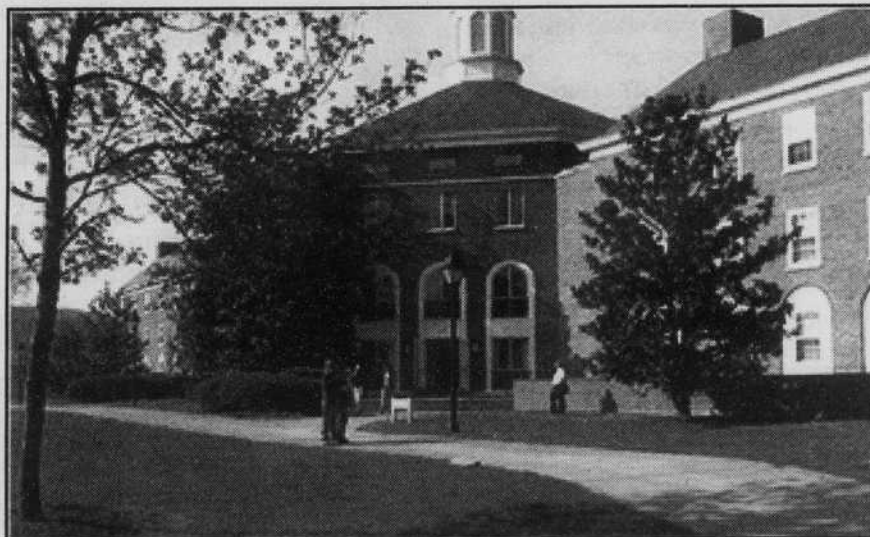
Futrell also had specific goals in mind when arranging the sophomore focus groups. She said, "We look comparatively at their first year and sophomore year experiences.

vide more support services for students."

Due in part to the influence of these focus groups, Canty-Elliot said school officials are "thinking of making some minor changes in the Rat and making Moody more friendly. Hopefully we can

provide a warmer atmosphere in the Rat on the weekends and evenings."

In addition to that project, Canty-Elliot said, "We are looking at ways to integrate first-year students with upper-class students. Part of that has already been accomplished by having an entire hall of sophomores living in Tinker dorm."



File Photo

Tinker houses most of the first-year students. Only 17 first-year students have requested transcripts, indicating a low transfer rate.

all students. She hosted a focus group for first-year students in January, another focus group for sophomores in December and has scheduled two more focus groups for the spring semester.

"The goal is to hear firsthand from first-year students what their focus and goals are," Futrell said. "We want to see how their transition into the university is. What have they experienced? What type of activities have they attend-

ed? What were the challenges they faced? Why have they decided to stay? Why do they think some students decided to leave?"

"Once all this information is compiled," Futrell continued, "we look at all the information and decide what we need to do next. Do we need to develop new programs? Do we need to refine those we already have?"

"After that," Canty-Elliot said, "we look at ways to pro-

vide more support services for students." Although some students will probably always transfer out for a variety of reasons, Canty-Elliot still hopes to drastically improve the first-year to sophomore year retention rate. She said, "We still want to make some more changes so that maybe 85 percent of the first to second year students decide to stay. That's a long-term goal, so we gradually want to be there in three to five years."

Students explore childbirth as doulas

by Jeilenn Gerlach

My roommate, Reed Middlemas '04, laced her fingers into my hand and gently massaged my palm. "When you are pregnant, even the slightest touch is very sensual," she said. Reed was explaining relaxation techniques for mothers in labor.

When Reed returns from class, she passes on what she learned to me. Reed, among many others, is a student in a Short Term class called "Childbirth in America."

The "birth class," as we have come to call it, is taught by Julie Pfeiffer of the English department. Childbirth in America is a class that covers all manner of useful information, including how to track signs of ovulation, the social history of women and the medical rituals associated with childbirth

in the United States from colonial times to the present. The class especially questions modern hospital practices in dealing with women in labor and explores alternative procedures for women giving birth.

"I think it's a wonderful class because I am learning so much," said Gunter Davis '05. "Before, I thought you just did what the doctor told you to but now I know that doctors think by procedure instead of what is best for the individual. They are taught to think medically instead of listening to what women feel."

"This class was a good surprise. I think Julie Pfeiffer is a good teacher' and she defi-

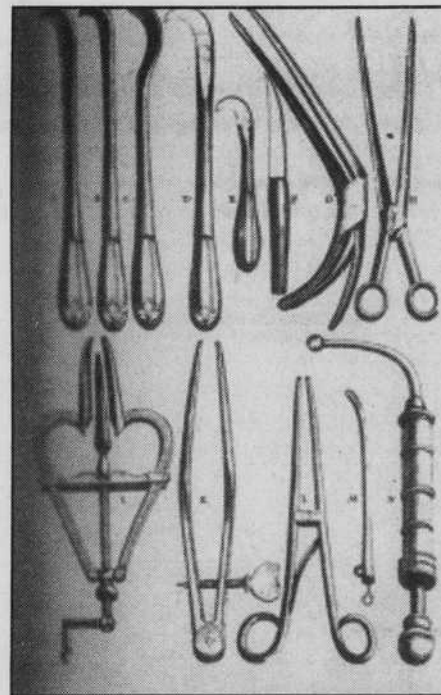


Photo courtesy of Yale University Press

Instruments used during childbirth during the 18th century have changed dramatically.

nitely is excited about what she is teaching about," said Davis. "She really is trying to inform us and wants us to know things. Though there has been a lot of reading and work involved, I like that she lets us do presentations instead of lecturing every day."

The class has had a number of hands-on assignments. One assignment sent students sleuthing in the Roanoke area to investigate organizations dealing with pregnant women, such as Crisis Pregnancy Center or Planned Parenthood. For another assignment, each student was instructed to write her own birth narrative with her mother's help.

The class culminates in a training program

for students to become doulas, informed attendants, whose role is to focus especially on a delivering mother's needs. The preliminary training in the doula program can be continued at the student's discretion.

"This class has taught me that there are more choices than most people realize when you are going to have a child," said Middlemas. "It's really important to interview several doctors before you choose one."

When asked whether this class had changed her mind about having children, Carissa Suter '01 said, "I wouldn't say that this class has changed my opinions on birth but I would say that it reinforced my feelings on birth. I guess you wouldn't

SEE CHILDBIRTH PAGE 3

Hollins Columns

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We welcome letters from all members of the community. Please include your signature, address, and for verification only, a phone number where you can be reached. Unsigned letters will not be published. Because of the volume we receive, we regret we can only publish a portion of them. Letters should be left in the Hollins Columns box in the campus post office.

Childbirth

FROM PAGE 2



Photo courtesy Yale University Press

In the nineteenth century, doctors designed equipment for American women to prevent the womb from falling within the pelvic cavity.

want to make the decision of what type of birth to have based only on sheer feelings, but this class really gave me more of a factual foundation for that decision.

"The information [from the class] empowers

you because it lets you know what your rights are, and which questions to ask," said Suter. "This class is extremely important because of the way it is going to change the lives of the students themselves. Birth can be either an empowering or a defeating experience and to learn this information is how women will make changes in Virginia law since midwifery without

doctor backup is illegal in Virginia.

"I had Julie as a teacher in the fall and she and I had already talked about natural family planning and it was interesting to meet someone else who had done that," said Suter. "She told me that she was a

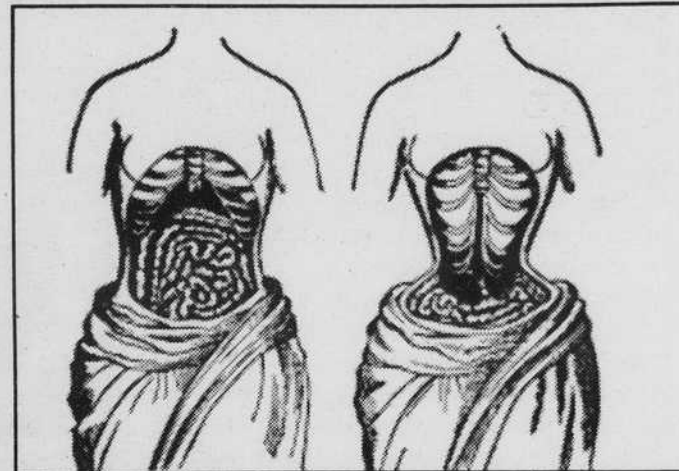


Photo Courtesy of Yale University Press

According to "Lying-In" by Richard and Dorothy Wertz, physicians emphasized that corsets, a popular fashion in the nineteenth century, were not conducive to the health of expectant mothers.

doula and she told me about the class. It turned out to be a great thing. It is nice to have a different view. It was an enlightening experience."

Corrections

In the Dec. 3 issue of the Hollins Columns, the incorrect caption was printed in the Ring Night spread. The caption should have read, "Betsy Coe '03 poses after the Scooby Doo final group skit."

Also in the Dec. 3 issue of the Hollins Columns, the author's name was left off the "Another White Perspective" Letter to the Editor. The letter was written by Kathy Berg '04.

The Hollins Columns regrets both errors.

THE COLUMNS WANTS

YOU!

The Hollins Columns
is looking for new recruits!

Join the Columns as a writer,
photographer
or a member of the layout staff.

Meetings every Wednesday at 6 p.m.
or call the Columns Office at x6400

Shooting winter in grayscale personal experience

by Alysha Wood

These days, everyone's going digital.

DVDs replace VHS in an overwhelming pace, and digital cameras usurp the once sophisticated 35-mm system.

But things have not always been so high-tech. Back when nerds were cool, my father set up camp in his college's darkroom, teaching himself how to use a plastic "toy" camera.

Here, decades later, I can be seen experimenting on a similar camera, the artistic value of which is still praised in a time of advancing technologies.

This is where our experiences with photography begin.

It's seldom that I remember my father without his trusty Nikon or piles and piles of unsorted pictures.

Sometimes he stumbles upon old rolls, shot 10 years ago, which he has yet to develop.

He became a professional photographer for his local newspaper and still takes pictures with his 35-mm. But now he opts to use his company's digital camera, which cuts the cost of developing film and makes pictures easier to share online.

An admirer of photographer Jerry Uelsmann CQ, my father's photography has always inspired me -- the par-

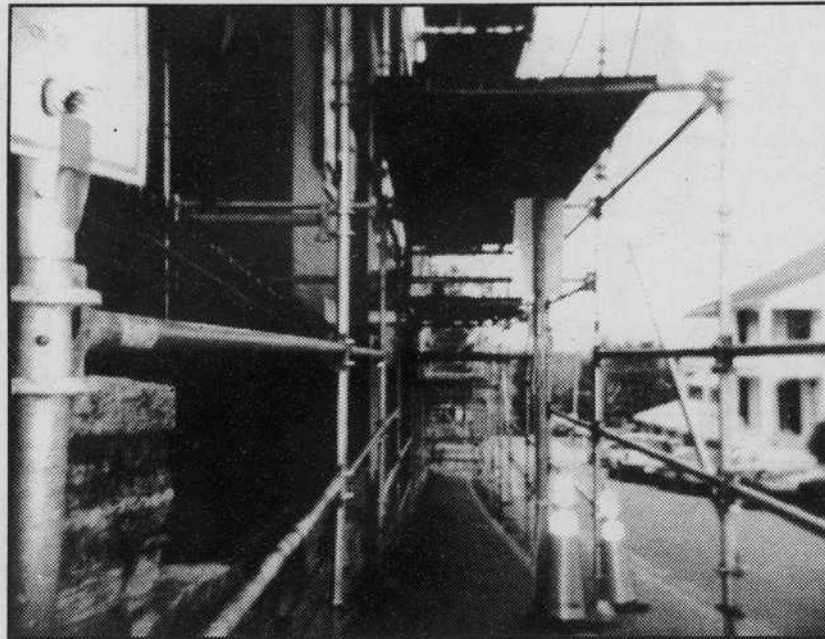


PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD

"SCAFFOLDING" Scaffolding peers down into infinity on the side of buildings in downtown Fincastle.

ticular way he captures his camera.

love for mossy rocks, trees, leaves, rivers and mountains.

Intense portraits in magazines such as National Geographic also strike me; each person or landscape incorporates centuries of timeless colors and textures.

My own 35-mm camera has served to document my life, giving it an artistic edge and an occasional panoramic view. But never before had I worked in black and white or learned how to develop negatives and make prints.

So I jumped at the opportunity to take the short-term photography seminar, "Winter Light/Plastic Lens," taught by professor

Robert Sulkin. Some of the students had worked in photography for their high school newspapers; others had never been in a darkroom. But we both explored the possibilities behind the Holga plastic lens

We were urged to focus on light and space, two



PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD

"PRESSER" Shadows on the Presser Building weave through the lines of tree trunks and lamp posts.

aspects the Holga translates much differently than a regular 35-mm camera would. The shocking white light of a clear winter sky was the optimum time to shoot, when the interplay of sun and shadow

and the contrast of lights and darks would be at its peak. Flash units were also available for night shooting or overcast days. As a class we have taken field trips to Carvin's Cove and Fincastle, filling us with ideas for our final projects.

In just three weeks I learned how to load film, shoot pictures, roll film onto reels and develop negatives. I've spent hours in the darkroom making contact sheets and test strips, tweaking my prints and dry mounting them. Having access to the chemistry and equipment outside of class time has been extremely beneficial.

Tackling a totally new art form within the short burst of J-term, has given me the enthusiasm and desire to work more with photography in the future. I will always be

driven by the thrill I receive in the exact moment that the image begins to surface from the paper -- out of water and film developer, underneath orange-tinted safelights.

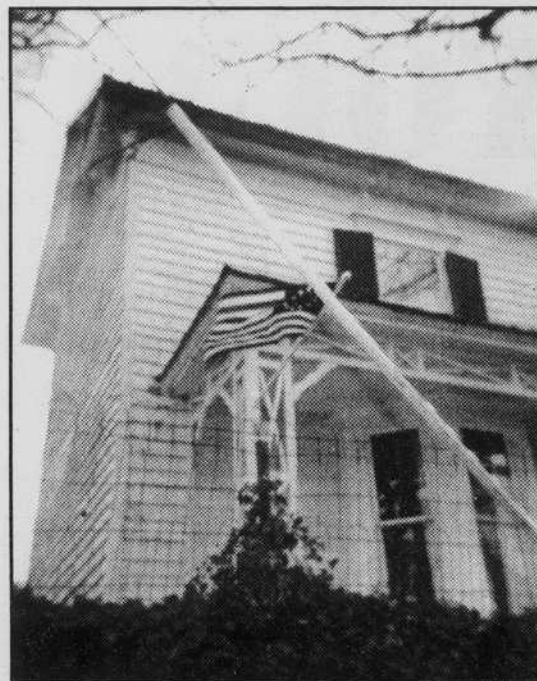


PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD

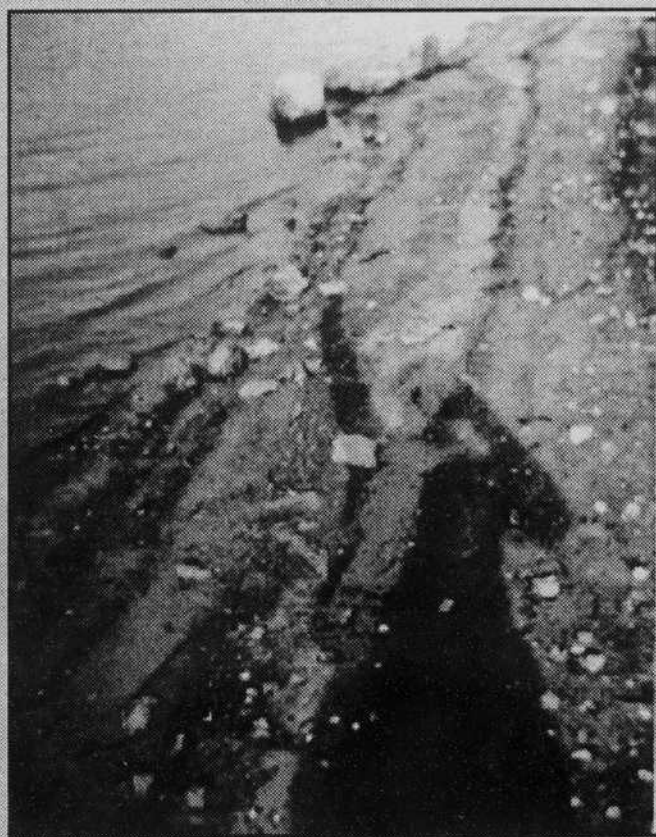
"OLD SCHOOL AMERICA" An old flag waves in front of a house outside of Fincastle.

These photographs were taken during a class field trip to Carvin's Cove.

The sky was slightly overcast and cloudy, but increasing the developing time for the negatives provided more contrast in the prints.



"GNARLED" PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD



"SHADOW CAST" PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD



"EYE" PHOTO BY ALYSHA WOOD

Get inside student-led 'Vagina Monologues'

by Amanda Bull

Get inside the "Vagina Monologues," a play designed by women, for women, in celebration of women.

This winter, Alexandra Howes '02 directs a theater presentation of "The Vagina Monologues" as her senior project. Tickets are \$5 for students, senior citizens and Hollins' faculty and staff. General admission for the public will cost \$7. The show is slated to premiere at Hollins' Theater at 8 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 8, with a follow-up performance at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 9.

Howes' production is not only for a grade, but for a good cause as well. All proceeds will go to charity. Ten percent of the profits will aid the women of Afghanistan. The remainder of the profits will be donated to a local charity as determined by the cast.

According to Howes, "One charity is the Women's Resource Center in Radford, and they deal with violence against women. Another one of them is the S.A.R.A. program. They deal specifically with sexual assault. The remaining 10 percent of our proceeds will go to the Afghan Women's Fund."

"I feel nervous about having to charge students," Howes said, "Because I know students don't have a lot of money, but \$5 isn't a whole lot when it's going to someone who really needs it. I hope the Hollins community comes even though we have to charge."

Despite the solemnity of some of the monologues and the tragic plight of the Afghani women whom those involved wish to aid, this production is sure to be fun for the audience. Cast members intend to dazzle the audience with intriguing polls, the sale of exciting trinkets and rousing instances of audience participation. Supporters of the play will not only help women in need, they will also be treated to a fabulous show and a wonderful time.

"I really hope it becomes a tradition each year," Howes said. "I first encountered the Vagina Monologues while I was in London last spring. It's a different kind of theater in that it's more of an event than a play. It's really for the whole community. It's never been done at our school before, and I think it should be because here we are, a women's college, and we haven't done this thing that's totally about women. I think we should. It being my senior project, this was the perfect opportunity. I really hope it becomes a Hollins tradition."

Created by Eve Ensler, the play consists of a series of monologues, chorus sections and a few dialogues that serve to communicate the experience of life as a woman to the audience. The play focuses on issues relating to women and the one thing that makes women everywhere uniquely feminine: their vaginas.

Women from all walks of life were interviewed about their vaginas: black women, white women, Muslim women, Jewish women,

Native American women, female sex workers, lawyers, lesbians and heterosexual women, just to name a few. These interviews were categorized and analyzed until monologues could be derived from them. Sometimes a monologue would originate within one specific woman's story. Other times, a monologue would be crafted from several monologues related by a central theme. These monologues were always from a female perspective and always based on the reality of life as a woman. This play shows that femininity should be celebrated.

This production includes many familiar names and faces as well as some newcomers to the Hollins theatrical community. Howes said, "I'm amazed with the people I've put together. They're willing to donate their time and even some of their own money towards the cause."

'Vagina Monologues' Performances

Friday, Feb. 8
and
Saturday, Feb. 9
at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$5 for
Hollins students,
senior citizens and
Hollins' faculty / staff.
General admission \$7.



Photo Courtesy of www.royaltenenbaums.com

'Royal Tenenbaums' projects humor, brutal honesty

Synopsis:

Royal Tenenbaum and his wife Etheline have three children—a family of geniuses. Each genius' ability appeared unparalleled until Royal and Etheline separated and virtually all memory of the Tenenbaum brilliance was subsequently erased. The tale follows the family's sudden and unexpected reunion one winter.

Runtime: 90 minutes

Rating: R

Cast: Gene Hackman, Anjelica Huston, Ben Stiller, Luke Wilson, Gwyneth Paltrow, Owen Wilson, Bill Murray, Alec Baldwin, Al Thompson, Seymour Cassel, Kumar Pallana

Showtimes:

Valley View Grande: 1:45, 4:45, 7:45, 10:15

by Janet Lubas

With "The Royal Tenenbaums," director Wes Anderson has succeeded in making a film that truly explores the lives of its characters with an honest, yet sympathetic eye.

Anderson and co-writer Owen Wilson both embrace an unending affection for underdogs. The film tells the story of Royal Tenenbaum [Gene Hackman], the patriarch of a dysfunctional family of eccentric over-achievers. Broke and disowned by his family, he attempts to make amends.

The star-studded cast of children is comprised of Ben

Stiller as a resentful businessman, Gwyneth Paltrow as a brooding and secretive playwright and Luke Wilson as a love-struck tennis star. Royal's former wife [Anjelica Huston] forges a relationship with the family accountant [Danny Glover]. Meanwhile, Paltrow's character cheats on her older husband [Bill Murray] with a drug-addicted cowboy [Owen Wilson].

The narrator of the movie, Alec Baldwin, describes the characters of "The Royal Tenenbaums" in almost an analytical way.

SEE TENENBAUMS

PAGE 7

'Cherry' re-creates teenage experiences

by Rachal Hatton

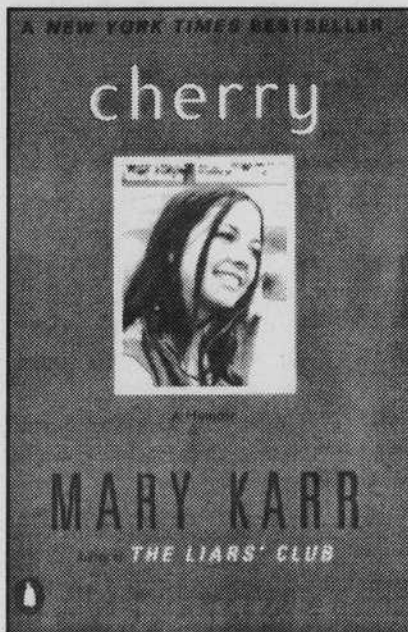


Photo courtesy of Penguin Books

The night started like this: I was with my friend Philip and we were supposed to go to a concert. We got to the Capri Theatre, in Augusta, Ga., and I decided I'd rather go read. While I walked around the bargain book section, Philip was tailing me with "I'm bored. They don't sell porn here."

Then I saw Mary Karr's name on a book that wasn't "The Liars' Club." I'm sure I screeched. I bought it without even reading

the back. I danced all the way to the counter, and the cashier looked at me like I was a maniac.

I'm in absolute love with Mary Karr. Her most recent memoir, "Cherry," is such a strong continuation of "The Liars' Club," and yet so different, that it caught my breath on several occasions.

She does so much in this book. She talks about what being a teenager is really like. She discusses the Self and shape-shifting. She talks about learning sex, her wonderfully insane mother and the wildly funny friends she grew up with.

Karr reminisces with a sort of intellectual elitism that isn't quite snobbery. All in all,

this woman weaves a serious narrative. She makes your own life seem real and conse-

kept reminding me of such and such, I'd remember so and so's face. I was swimming in my own experience and enjoying the voyeurism of learning her history.

When I read personal nonfiction, I always wonder how people dredge up enough details to even re-create their story. But once

"The changes are coming fast and blind now, and in your skull sits an hourglass with a grainsize hole through which numb seconds are sliding."

- "Cherry" by Mary Karr

quential. She takes the mundane and polishes it into the truly poetic.

So many times I'd put this book down because it

you're deep into reading "Cherry," it's not hard to see your own thought process leading you to things nearly forgotten in your own mind.

Tenenbaums

FROM PAGE 6

"The Royal Tenenbaums" is ultimately about the feelings of love, death and loss that all the characters experience.

The eclectic soundtrack includes such artists as Paul Simon, Nico and The Ramones. It provides an already great comedy with depth and heart.

At times, the film seems over-reaching. It seems obvious that Anderson is trying very hard to orchestrate a career-defining piece. But who cares; he's created a touching and quirky film that is definitely worth watching.



Photo courtesy of www.royaltenenbaums.com

This provides for many funny moments in the film. Although, for all of its humor,

quirky film that is definitely worth watching.

Volunteer Opportunities and Service Events

S.H.A.R.E.

Friday, February 1
Serve lunch at Ram House
11:30 to 1:30
Game Night At Friendship
Manor 6 to 7

Tuesday, February 5
SHARE Fair, PDR, Moody
11 to 1
Baby-sit at TAP Head Start

Upcoming Events
Clean Valley Day
Easter Egg Hunt
More One-shots with RAM
House and other agencies

For More Info Call:
Micki x6823 or Laura
x6719

SANDUSKY SERVICE HOUSE

**Thursday and Friday,
lunch and dinner**
Make Valentine's Cards for
Patients at Lewis-Gale
Hospital

Upcoming Events
Field Day
Car Wash

For More Info Call:
Casey x6829

HABITAT

**February 28 to
March 2**
Building In The Blue Ridge
and Beyond Conference

March 2
First Habitat Build

Upcoming Events
Carnival at May Fest
Easter Egg Sale

For More Info Call:
Sarah x6824

Don't ditch Hollins

by Alysha Wood

Lately I've been hearing a lot from freshmen about how much they hate Hollins.

It sucks here. Too small a school, too small a town. And don't even get me started on the food.

A year and a half ago, I almost forgot to open the letter I received from Hollins. The amount of college letters and brochures I'd accumulated had simply been too intimidating. But one day I took my letter opener to the envelopes.

What attracted me to Hollins initially was the cre-

ative writing program. That was what the letter had addressed. I realized that it was a small women's college, not smack-dab in the middle of a bustling metropolis -- aspects that most people, now that they are here, like to complain about.

I wanted to find out what else the school could offer, so I visited its website. Its travel and study abroad program was excellent -- almost every student was given the opportunity and the funds for a semester overseas. Looking further I found that students received healthy amounts of financial aid and scholarship

money.

I entered the Nancy Thorpe Poetry Contest, which the school sponsored, and was a winner. The prize included an invitation to visit during the spring Literary Festival, and it was then that I realized one more thing.

Hollins had a beautiful campus. Though some may argue that Back Quad lacks the glamour of its counterpart, I must say that the walk out of Tinker each morning leaves me with exhilaration, no matter the weather. In snow, rain or sun, it was the combination of light, cloud and ancient trees twisting

against the sky that finalized my college decision.

And since I've been here, I've found more good things to talk about. The small campus gives students more personal, one-on-one help with advisors, professors and career counselors. Internship opportunities are readily available within the context of a flexible J-term.

I've found a community of writers that inspire me daily. Plus, the dance program has allowed me to feel a renewed joy out of movement. The friends I have made here are the best I have ever made in my entire life.

All these factors contributed to my choice to attend Hollins. And they continue to be a part of why I wish to stay here. Life at Hollins has taught me that I will have to deal with people I don't get along with, or put up with situations that I may not agree with wherever I may be. So don't let a room or hall mate situation hinder your chance at happiness here. I understand that Hollins isn't for everyone. But at least see what you can get out of it.

Don't ditch Hollins. Give it more than one semester

Life's just a joyride

by Rachal Hatton

My car has a willful spirit. She won't listen to me on cold mornings, she lies on her gas gauge and she makes her passenger door hell to shut on the first try. Clara Belle does it her own way, with a modern spirit brought to a classic figure. She's a two-door sedan and she wears it with pride.

We found her in someone's back yard, bought her for \$100 and spent five long, laborious years refurbishing every piece of plastic, every touch of chrome and every imaginable part that she needed to look like new again. My father and I even took to inventing things for her when we couldn't find a part on order from automobile manufacturing companies. We stole from two other parts cars we had on cinder blocks in our pasture. Finally, what was supposed to be my 16th birthday present came into my ownership at my high

school graduation.

She didn't have an air conditioner in the summer and I'd go to Blockbuster at night with the windows rolled down. I'd play music too loud

on anything else. I'll find excuses to take people to Wal-Mart. I show off sometimes -- I rev it at stoplights, I take off fast from stop signs. I speed occasionally.

and let me out to turn. Some of my driving errors are forgiven. I get waves, thumbs up and dopey grins from my interstate comrades. I make instant friends at gas stations

about their first cars or about how much they liked those '63 Comets. They got phenomenal gas mileage, they'd say; the original motor isn't in it, but it gets 21 to a gallon with a '79 straight-six.

There is a general wisdom in cars, especially older models, that makes people smile from nostalgia, even when modern sensibilities recommend safe new cars. My car makes people think of baseball and all-beef hotdogs. It makes them think of "Happy Days" and joyous old movies. I almost have a collective ownership. It's a responsibility; I owe it to people to talk about my car if they ask. I must be friendly and open and garrulous if people wish to speak about it. Too many people try to buy it and I patiently explain my emotional connection to my car and decline their offer. I talk about it as if it were a person. Clara Belle. Clara Belle the Comet.



PHOTO BY RACHAL HATTON

Clara Belle the 1963 Mercury Comet, outside of the author's home in Aiken, South Carolina.

and people would talk to me in stopped traffic. I spend more money on gas than I do

People are nice when you have something rare. People let me merge more

and rest areas. People are willing to listen to my car's birth story. Old men tell me