

Jones to skip senior season

Kevin Jones is expected to announce his entry into the 2004 NFL Draft at a press conference today

by **Rajan Nanavati**
Sports Editor

Virginia Tech tailback Kevin Jones will forgo his senior season to enter in the 2004 NFL draft, his father, Thomas Jones, told the Associated Press.

"The chance of being a first-round draft pick is a great honor anywhere," Thomas Jones said to the AP. "When that's on the table with the chance of being injured, you just can't pass that by. It's time to move on."

A three-year contributor in the Tech backfield, Jones will leave the school as the third-ranked rusher in Tech history with 3,322 yards and 34 touchdowns during his career as a Hokie.

The announcement comes just a few days after Jones was named as a finalist for the Doak Walker award, given annually to the nation's top running back. His father said Jones had known since the middle of the season he would leave Tech early.

He rushed for 1,494 yards and 20 touchdowns this season, including a record eight games with more than 100 yards rushing. After coming to Blacksburg as the No. 1 prep prospect in 2001, he burst onto the college football scene with 871 yards rushing



JOCELYN SCHNIEDWIND/SPPS

Kevin Jones rushed for 1,494 and 20 touchdowns in the regular season. He will forgo his senior season at Tech and declare himself eligible for the NFL draft.

and nine touchdowns in just his freshman year.

The athletics department has called a

press conference for 1 p.m. today and it is expected the announcement of Jones' departure will be formalized.

Torgersen to step down at end of month

by **Tiffany Hoffman**
Managing Editor

Virginia Tech Director of Admissions Karen Torgersen is resigning, effective Dec. 31.

"She's done an excellent job and the university hates to see her go, but we understand this is a great opportunity for her," said Clara Cox, director of publications and outreach communication.



Torgersen

Torgersen accepted a job at U21pedagogica Limited, a consortium of 17 research universities in 10 countries. The organization has no affiliation with Tech. Torgersen presided as director of undergraduate admissions for six years. During her time as director of admissions, she worked to make Tech the first university

to offer a completely online application and payment system, Cox said.

"During her leadership, application numbers and the quality of the freshman class steadily increased," Cox said.

Prior to her appointment, she worked for 10 years in the undergraduate admissions office as executive associate director of freshman admissions, associate director of undergraduate admissions and assistant director.

"Though I am very sad to be leaving Virginia Tech and I will always be a Hokie, I am excited at the prospect of being involved with this new educational initiative," Torgersen said.

The university will form a national search committee to find someone to replace Torgersen.

"They'll probably name an interim director to fill the position, but they just started talking about it (Monday)," Cox said.

Driver in fatal crash convicted

by **Jared Turner**
News Assistant

The driver of a sports utility vehicle that overturned last April, killing a Virginia Tech freshman, was convicted Monday of reckless driving.

Jeffrey Stoudt, a sophomore psychology major at Tech, was convicted by substitute District Judge Joseph Tate, who cited sufficient evidence supporting allegations that Stoudt fell asleep at the wheel.

The judge sentenced Stoudt to one year of probation, a \$1,000 fine and 250 hours of community service. His driver's license was also suspended for 90 days.

According to the incident report from State Trooper W.L. Murphy, Stoudt was driving a 1995 Ford Explorer on Interstate-81 at mile marker 121 southbound when he hit the left side of the road, overcorrected and reentered the highway.

The vehicle overturned several times, ejecting four of the six occupants, including Ashley Krueger, 18, who died May 4 from irreversible brain damage. She was comatose and had been on life support since the accident on April 26.

The driver, who was the only occupant wearing a seatbelt, had not been drinking alcohol.

All six occupants were Tech students returning to campus after attending Foxfields, a horseracing event in Charlottesville.

See **DRIVER**, page 2

Christmas trees banned in apartments

Natural cut trees are not allowed in condos or apartments without automatic sprinklers

by **Eric Beidel**
Associate News Editor

A revamped state fire code has local property managers sending notices to residents, and Christmas tree growers and sellers feeling cut down.

The Virginia State Fire Prevention Code now prohibits the use of natural cut trees in apartments and condominiums without automatic sprinklers.

Cut trees are prohibited completely in adult care facilities, nursing homes and college dormitories, according to Section 804 of the state fire prevention code.

Virginia Tech's residence hall policy already prohibits cut trees and live trees, which are not affected by the statewide fire code.

Live trees differ from cut trees because they still contain the roots, usually encased in burlap, according to a fact sheet obtained from the State Fire Marshall's Office.

The new code, which was enacted Oct. 1, will hurt Christmas tree sales throughout the state,



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPPS

Christmas tree stands, like this one on University City Boulevard, are expected to have a drop in sales because of the new fire code.

said Sue Bostic, president of the Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association and owner of a Christmas tree farm 20 miles outside Blacksburg.

"Each year, there are one to two million Virginia-grown trees sold," Bostic said. "That generates 20 to 40 million dollars in wholesale value."

Virginia tree growers and sellers are fearing the worst, said Rick Dungey of the National Christmas Tree Association.

"This has got so many consumers scared to death," he said. "It's

very disturbing."

NCTA is a trade association with 1,600 members who grow and sell Christmas trees. If trees fail to sell, they are destroyed and recycled and money is lost, Bostic said.

The majority of wholesale trees were already cut and shipped before NCTA received word of the change in the fire code, Dungey said.

Natural cut trees are not to blame, Bostic said.

"The tree doesn't start the fire," she said.

"Faulty wires put on the tree or setting them in front of the fireplace does. The tree is not at fault here."

A 1998 study by the National Fire Protection Association reported less than one thousandth of one percent of home fires involved a real, fresh-cut tree.

A study by the same organization a year later found 370 Christmas tree fires in U.S. homes, resulting in five deaths and \$15.7 million in property damage.

"There are many things in a home that can cause a fire," Dungey said. "Every time a curtain catches fire, do they go to the curtain association and ban curtains?"

Any violation of the state fire code can result in up to six months in jail and a \$2,500 fine, said Wayne Garst, who enforces the fire code for the Town of Blacksburg.

Fresh-cut trees dry out and burn rapidly when not taken care of, Garst said.

"It's almost like a bomb," he said.

Garst said he sent e-mails yesterday to all apartment complexes in Blacksburg, notifying them of the change to the fire code.

The change would not be necessary if everyone took proper care of

See **TREES**, page 3

South Main Street properties put on the auction block



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPPS

The Lake Terrace Motel on South Main Street is one of several pieces of property that will be auctioned off next week.

by **Ellen Biltz**
News Assistant

Woltz and Associates will hold an auction at the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center Dec. 11 at 12 p.m.

Associate Broker Jonna McGraw, along with owner Jim Woltz, will be auctioning off 18 buildings in downtown Blacksburg.

"There are several different entities," McGraw said. "Fourteen of the properties are contiguous and are part of Main Street."

While most of the buildings being auctioned are on North or South Main Street, the property for sale continues to Airport Road. The

property to be auctioned is owned by a variety of people, some of whom sold properties through Woltz last year.

There are 25 acres worth of Main Street property being sold.

"Property on College Avenue was auctioned off last year," said Blacksburg Mayor Roger Hedgepeth.

Most of the property is commercial, McGraw said, but some of the buildings are classified as multi-family or office.

"The commercial property is located on South Main Street," Hedgepeth said.

Last year, Woltz brought in a total of 12.5 million dollars on 19 properties, but the company has made no estimation on profits for this

year's auction. McGraw, the auction's coordinator, said it was impossible to say because profit depends on the buyers and how the property gets grouped together when purchased.

Bidding on some of the properties will be absolute, meaning the property will be sold to the highest bidder — no matter the amount — but seven of the buildings have minimum bid values.

The auction will be a public show for anyone who wants to bid on the property.

"At first, we offer tracts individually, and after the first round of bidding, we post them on a board," McGraw said.

"After that, bidders can put

parcels together as long as there is an increase in price."

The bidding process described by McGraw goes on until there are no more bids on the property.

The various owners of the property are auctioning for different reasons, but McGraw said the main reason for most owners to sell is for liquidation purposes.

"Some of the money goes to pay off debts of the corporation who owns the property," Hedgepeth said.

"Legal entanglements can be a reason to sell."

Specific information concerning the individual properties and exact locations can be found at <www.woltz.com>.

News in Brief

Evidence sought in killing of 85-year-old woman

NEWPORT NEWS (AP) — Detectives and forensic evidence technicians looked for clues Tuesday that might identify the killer of an 85-year-old Newport News woman found dead in her home.

Bessie P. Southard, a widow, was found dead on the kitchen floor of her two-story home Monday night.

Police spokesman Lou Thurston said that while the victim showed signs of severe trauma, there was little evidence of a struggle and no sign of forced entry.

The time of her death was not determined. Her body was discovered by a family member who was checking on her because she hadn't answered repeated phone calls, neighbors said.

Investigators are waiting for an autopsy report to determine the cause of death.

Suspect allowed to see lawyer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reversing course, Pentagon officials have decided to allow a U.S.-born terrorism suspect access to a lawyer, the Defense Department announced Tuesday.

The Defense Department will make arrangements over the next few days for a lawyer to visit Yasser Esam Hamdi "subject to appropriate security restrictions," a Pentagon statement said. Hamdi is being held as an "enemy

combatant," a designation the Bush administration says denies him rights to a lawyer or a trial.

Motorist killed in Fla. bus collision

ZEPHYRHILLS, Fla. (AP) — A motorist was killed and 12 elementary school pupils were injured Tuesday when a pickup truck crashed into a school bus, causing it to overturn, authorities said.

The Florida Highway Patrol said a 45-year-old woman driving the pickup truck was killed and a young passenger in her vehicle was gravely injured. Neither victim was identified and the injured person was transported by helicopter to St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa.

Man arrested for threatening judge

ABINGDON (AP) — An Abingdon man threatened to kill a judge and blow up the federal court building by driving into it with a truck full of explosives, authorities said Tuesday.

Paul Raybon Lee, 43, was arrested Monday night after he allegedly left voice mail messages on the cell phones of 4th U.S. Circuit Court Judge H. Emory Widener Jr.'s son and his son's girlfriend.

Ron Donelson, a spokesman for the U.S. Marshals in Roanoke, said the threats did not have to do with any court cases. Lee doesn't know Widener, but he knows his son, Donelson said.

Driver: Student died from injuries from crash

Continued from page 1

The male passengers in the vehicle were Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity members Michael Lawler, a senior geography major, Christopher Gregory, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, and John Parker, a senior mechanical engineering major.

The two girls were Traci Martin, a senior at the time of the crash, and Krueger, a member of Delta Zeta sorority.

Lawler, who was sitting in the front seat next to the driver during the incident, said Stoudt appeared to fall asleep at the wheel.

"From my point of view he had fallen asleep and gone into the median," Lawler said. "When I yelled at him he woke up and overcorrected and our

Ford Explorer flipped several times."

While Stoudt claimed in court that he was awake and alert at the time of the incident, Lawler's assessment of the driver's state supports the judge's decision.

"His eyes were closed," Lawler said.

Lawler said he was the only passenger aware of what happened to cause the vehicle to overturn.

"Everyone else was basically asleep," he said.

Lawler said he agrees with the court's decision to convict Stoudt despite his friendship with the driver.

"You hate to see a friend charged, but someone has to be held accountable," Lawler said. "It's just very unfortunate."

Stoudt could not be reached for comment on the charges.

Eleven injured in Metrobus wreck

by Derrill Holly and Marty Nilan
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — At least 11 people were hurt two seriously in a crash Tuesday involving a Metrobus, a Howard University shuttle bus, an SUV and a pickup truck.

"The two most seriously injured people came out of the SUV," said Alan Etter, spokesman for the District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department.

The crash happened about 3:15 p.m. at the corner of Sherman Avenue and Barry Place in Northwest Washington, about three miles northwest of the U.S. Capitol. The SUV a Ford Bronco was a twisted mess of metal when it came to a stop in front of the Metrobus.

"The Bronco jumped the light at Barry and Sherman, and the shuttle bus hit the Bronco broadside," said Reggie Hales, 47, of Clinton, Md., a Howard University employee who saw the accident. He said the Bronco flipped three times before being struck broadside again by an approaching Metrobus.

The shuttle, operated by International Limousine Service, was contracted to carry Howard University students. Many of the injured were transported to nearby Howard University Hospital.

While the most seriously injured were in the Bronco, several students on the shuttle bus also complained of injuries, as did several passengers on the full-sized Metrobus, which was running on the 68 line.

Sniper suspect wanted to escape 'situation'

■ Lee Boyd Malvo's mother said her son wrote a letter "asking for help to get out of a situation he was in"

by Matthew Barakat
Associated Press

CHESAPEAKE — Sniper suspect Lee Boyd Malvo sought a way out of his "situation" a few months before last year's sniper rampage in the Washington, D.C., area, John Allen Muhammad's first wife testified Tuesday.

Malvo wrote a letter "asking for help to get out of the situation he was in," said Carol Williams of Baton Rouge, La.

Malvo wrote to Williams' niece in the summer of 2002, when Muhammad and Malvo were visiting family in Baton Rouge. Muhammad introduced Malvo to the family as his son.

The letter was not read to the jury, and it was unclear what situation Malvo wanted to escape.

During his opening statement, defense attorney Craig Cooley said, "Lee kind of got a crush on one of John's nieces and wrote out a letter that he was despondent ... He said that his mother had abandoned him, and I have a father who will kill me for a righteous society to prevail."







Defense lawyers contend Muhammad brainwashed Malvo and molded him into a

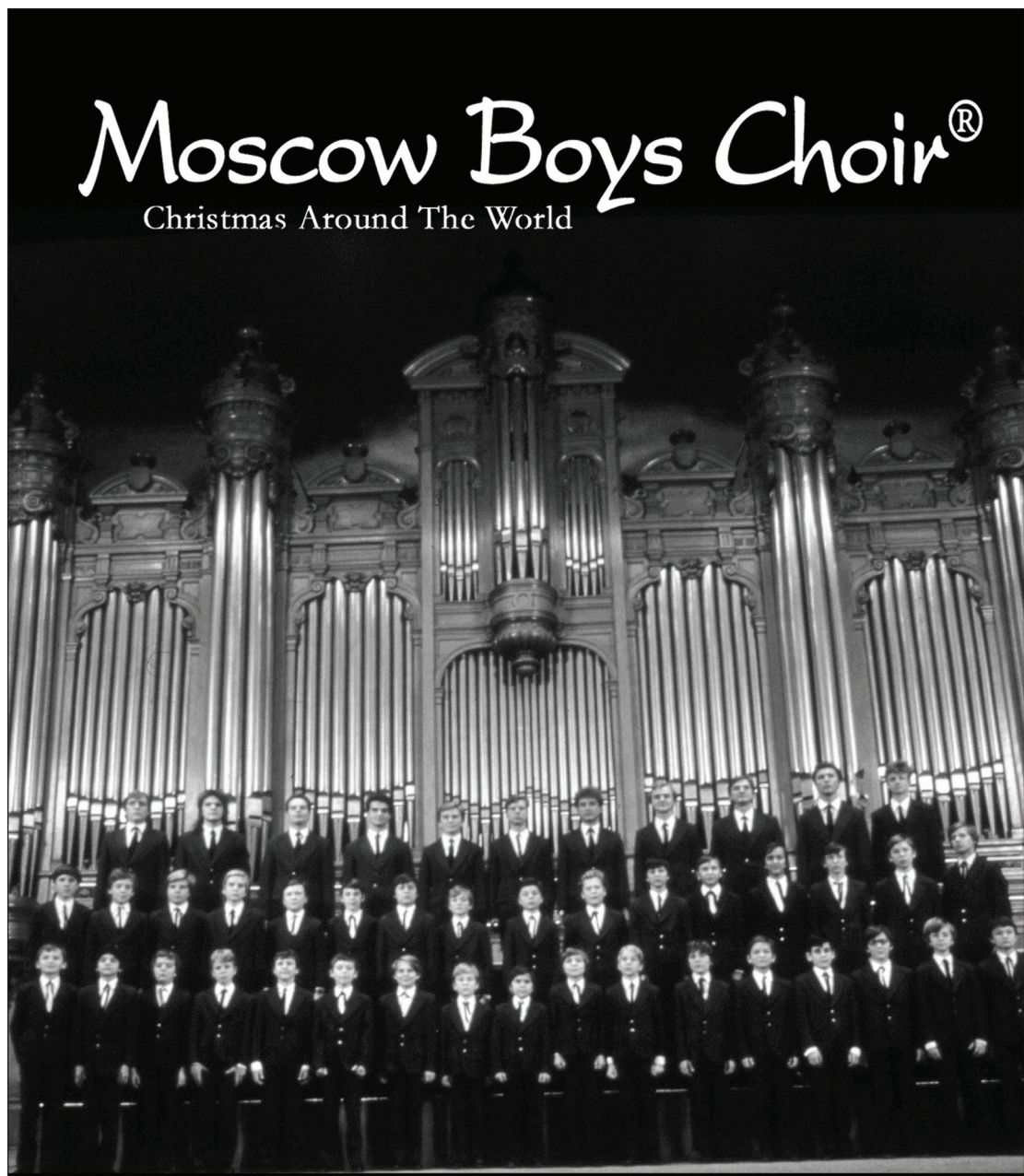
killer to help him carry out the sniper attacks that left 10 dead in and around the nation's capital in October 2002.

After court on Tuesday, Cooley said the letter will be introduced to the jury Wednesday, with the anticipated testimony of the niece, LaToria Williams.

Carol Williams testified she discussed the letter with family members to determine if they could find a way to help Malvo, but by that time Malvo and Muhammad had left Baton Rouge.

On cross-examination, prosecutors asked whether Malvo and the niece, both 17 at the time, might have had a romantic relationship. Williams responded that she believed the two simply liked to spend time together.

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DJIA	9853.64 ▼ -45.41	TODAY  Partly cloudy Highs: 34° - 39°	TONIGHT  Cloudy Lows: 25° - 30°	THURSDAY  Cloudy; chance of freezing rain Highs: 30° - 35°	THURSDAY NIGHT  Cloudy; chance of rain Lows: 32° - 47°	FRIDAY  Cloudy; chance of rain 30°/40°	SATURDAY  Mostly cloudy; chance of snow 30°/40°	
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Trees: Tech bans trees in dorm rooms

Continued from page 1

Christmas trees, said Adam Thiel, executive director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

"Whenever you can eliminate fire risk in multi-family dwellings, it saves lives and property," he said.

"Unfortunately, not everyone takes care of their trees."

Natural cut trees will now be prohibited in Sturbridge Square Apartments because they do not have automatic sprinklers, said Carl Douglas, resident manager.

A newsletter will be sent to residents informing them of the change, though Douglas does not think many residents will be

affected.

"I haven't seen anything other than those little artificial trees you get at Wal-Mart," Douglas said.

Emily Gaddy, marketing coordinator for Chase Management Group, said a notice will be sent to all residents under its jurisdiction as well. CMG has 12 properties in Blacksburg, including Oak Bridge and Tech Terrace.

Of the 12, Gaddy could only report that the newly constructed apartments at Knollwood have automatic sprinklers.

Several other Blacksburg complexes were contacted, but only Terrace View could report that its apartments did not have automatic sprinklers.

N.D. student kidnapping suspect in custody

by Dave Kolpack
Associated Press

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — The arrest of a convicted rapist in the disappearance of a college student produced no immediate breakthrough in the search for the young woman Tuesday, but the police chief vowed: "Dru, we will find you."

Alfonso Rodriguez Jr., 50, was arrested Monday night in nearby Crookston, Minn., and charged with kidnapping University of North Dakota student Dru Sjodin, 22.

Sjodin has been missing since Nov. 22, when she left her job at the Victoria's Secret at a mall in Grand Forks.

Her fate was not immediately known.

"This investigation has only reached the 50-yard line," Grand Forks Police Chief John Packett said. "We will not be satisfied or comforted until such time as we find Dru."

Prosecutor Peter Welte said police believe Rodriguez was in the mall parking lot the night Sjodin disappeared.

Authorities would not say exactly how they connected Rodriguez to the case, though they said it is routine to look at sex offenders in the area when investigating such crimes.

Rodriguez has convictions for rape, attempted kidnapping and aggravated assault, and has used a weapon in at least one assault, according to a Minnesota Corrections Department.

Because of his record, Rodriguez was required to register as a predatory offender — the classification for those who are believed to pose the greatest risk of committing another sex crime.

Rodriguez was released from prison in May after serving 23 years for an attempted abduction in Crookston in 1979.

Wayne Swanson, the prosecutor in that case, said Rodriguez tried to abduct a woman off the street, and stabbed her when she fought back.

The woman got away, and Rodriguez was later arrested with the help of a sketch the woman made.

In the Sjodin case, authorities released photographs of the suspect's car, a four-

door, red 2002 Mercury Sable, and asked that anyone who may have spotted the car around the time of Sjodin's disappearance to call police.

"Our entire focus on this is in finding Dru," Welte said.

"This is by no means the end. This is a marathon and not a sprint."

Volunteers were to resume their search on Wednesday. A similar search drew 1,300 volunteers for one day last week.

"Honey, we will find you," said Sjodin's father, Allan.

Her brother, Sven, added: "I know we are just around the corner from you right now. We love you. Keep strong."

He fought tears as he backed away from news microphones, and his father put his arm around him and squeezed his shoulder.

Neighbors said Rodriguez lived with his mother, Dolores.

No one answered the door at his home Tuesday.

"This investigation has only reached the 50-yard line. We will not be satisfied or comforted until such time as we find Dru."

John Packett
Grand Forks police chief

Ohio highway shootings linked

Police said four of the shootings were by the same gun

by Anita Chang
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Authorities have linked 12 shootings along a five-mile stretch of interstate around Columbus, including one that killed a woman and another that broke a window at an elementary school.

Four of the shootings — three at vehicles and one at the school last month — were from the same gun, Franklin County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Steve Martin said Tuesday.

Although ballistics tests could not link the rest of the shootings along Interstate 270, investigators said they "are comfortable" saying all 12 are connected, he said. He would not elaborate.

Authorities have received

more than 500 tips, but would not speculate about who the shooter might be and would not release the type of weapon.

"Collectively, we think it's not good for us to put that information out," Martin said.

The shootings began in May along Interstate 270, the freeway that circles Columbus. Many were not reported until after Nov. 25, when 62-year-old Gail Knisley was killed by a bullet that pierced the side of a car driven by a friend.

The latest shooting linked to the spree was a Nov. 11 shooting at Hamilton Central Elementary in Obetz, about two miles from the freeway.

Superintendent Bill Wittman said he believes the shooting was not meant to harm anyone because it happened overnight, but nervous parents expressed concern.

Tiffany Ellis, 32, said her son's second-grade classroom faces the front of the school, where the bul-

let struck.

"It makes me angry to be honest with you, that I have to drive down the road worrying about getting shot," Ellis said Tuesday.

She said she plans to call Wednesday to see what precautions the district is taking, and may avoid her own living room, which also faces the two-lane road.

"That's kind of scary to think someone could shoot through your window like that," Ellis said.

Greg Mellon said his 8-year-old son "ducked down in the car" on the way to his recreation league basketball practice at the school Tuesday night.

"Of course he's thinking about it," Mellon said.

A house was shot at Tuesday near the freeway, but Martin said investigators have not linked it to the other shootings.

Local businesses have established a \$10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.



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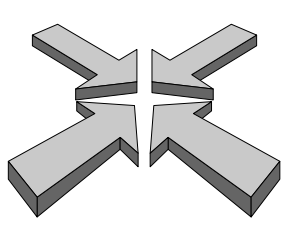
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U.S. denies capturing top Saddam aide

by **Mariam Fam**
Associated Press

KIRKUK, Iraq — U.S. troops conducted a big raid near the northern city of Kirkuk on Tuesday, but a military spokesman denied that a top former deputy of Saddam Hussein was captured during the operation.

A member of Iraq's Governing Council said Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri the top Iraqi fugitive after Saddam was the target of the raid.

"We get our information from the 173rd (Airborne Brigade), and the 173rd is saying they don't have him," said Sgt. Robert Cargie, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division.

The Americans have pointed to al-Douri as a coordinator of the insurgency against U.S. forces, and last week offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to his arrest.

The U.S. raid took place in Hawija, 30 miles west of Kirkuk, and witnesses said American soldiers had arrested dozens of

In other violence Tuesday, a U.S. soldier from the 4th Infantry Division was killed near Samarra, the site of weekend fighting between American troops and guerrillas, the military said.

Mowaffak al-Rubaie, a member of the U.S.-picked Iraqi Governing Council, told the Arabic television station Al-Jazeera that those killed or captured in the Kirkuk operation included a "big fish."

A senior Kurdish official in Kirkuk said, speaking on condition of anonymity, said earlier Tuesday that he heard al-Douri had been "killed or captured," citing sources in his political party.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in Belgium and White House spokesman Scott McClellan both said they could not confirm the reports on al-Douri. Later, Cargie, in Iraq, denied al-Douri had been netted.

For months, U.S. officials have pointed to al-Douri as a coordinator of incessant attacks on American forces in Iraq and that he could be working with the al-Qaida-linked militant group Ansar al-Islam.

U.S. commanders claimed that up to 54 guerrillas were killed in the clash in Samarra on Sunday, but this has been disputed by residents and hospital officials who say less than 10 people died.

U.S. forces said Samarra attacks demonstrated a greater level of coordination in the Iraqi insurgency, although U.S. forces said they had anticipated the attacks and blunted them with superior firepower.

In Tuesday's attack outside Samarra, an Associated Press photographer who arrived at the scene Tuesday saw American soldiers using a stretcher to carry a body covered in plastic to a military truck.

"We get our information from the 173rd (Airborne Brigade) and the 173rd is saying they don't have him."

Sgt. Robert Cargie
spokesman, U.S. Army's 4th
Infantry Division

Pentagon delays plans for refueling tankers

by **Ken Guggenheim**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will delay plans to acquire 100 air refueling tankers from Boeing in light of a scandal at the aerospace giant that has led to the dismissal of two executives and the resignation of Chairman and CEO Phil Condit.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said the Pentagon's internal auditor will examine whether the conduct of the two executives had any negative impact on the contract to lease 20 tankers and buy another 80.

The Air Force initially proposed leasing all 100 tankers in an attempt to quickly update its aging fleet. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and other lawmakers had criticized the proposal as wasteful and lawmakers worked out the compromise to lease only 20 planes and buy the rest. The change was expected to save billions from the original plan, estimated around \$21 billion.

In a letter Monday to leaders of the House and Senate Armed

Services committees, Wolfowitz described the delay as "a pause." He said the Pentagon "remains committed to the recapitalization of our aerial tanker fleet and is appreciative of the compromise that will allow this arrangement to move forward."

"Nonetheless, I believe that it is prudent to reassess this matter before proceeding," he said.

Boeing spokeswoman Deborah Bosick declined comment on the decision.


Boeing announced Nov. 24 it had fired its chief financial officer, Mike Sears, and a vice president, Darleen Druyun, a former Air Force official. A Boeing investigation found that Sears approached Druyun about joining the company while Druyun was overseeing Boeing contracts for the Air Force.

Boeing said Sears and Druyun were fired for violating company policies on hiring and they tried to cover up the misconduct.

Condit resigned unexpectedly Monday, saying "the controversies and distractions of the past year were obscuring the great accomplishments and performance of this company."

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Editorial

NATIONAL ISSUE

School must tighten dress code

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Monday that a judge erred in allowing a middle school to enforce its dress code on a student wearing a National Rifle Association shirt.

John Jouett Middle School in Albemarle County forced Alan Newsom, 13, to turn his shirt inside out because administrators feared it may incite violence. The shirt pictures silhouettes of gunmen and the words "NRA Sports Shooting Camp."

Finding the school's dress code too broad, the courts said the policy could be construed to prohibit the Virginia State Seal because it depicts a woman with a spear.

The school's clothing policy bars clothing depicting drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, vulgarity and religious or ethnic insults.

A middle school must define its policies clearly so as to circumvent ambiguities that can arise in situations such as this. The court is justified in its verdict however; a shirt of this nature should not be tolerated in a school environment. Schools should target specifics in their policy and include weapons in the list as prohibited when used in an offensive or controversial manner.

Context is everything in images on clothing, and many exceptions to a policy can be found. But to promote a safe and focused learning environment, a line must be drawn. A shirt promoting the sport of archery is not the same as a shirt promoting a NRA sports camp. Both represent a sport with a weapon, but only one sparks a large emotional response. Excepting those who hate Robin Hood, an administrator would be hard pressed to find that sort of emotion or controversy with archery.

In attending a public school for the goal of scholarly activity, a student defers certain rights in favor of promoting an inoffensive atmosphere.

The TV program "The Simpsons" parodies the controlling public school system and portrays an extreme reaction, which should also not be condoned. Bart Simpson wears a shirt emblazoned with the message "Down with Homework," prompting school officials at Springfield Elementary School to impose uniforms on the students.

Extreme knee-jerk reactions by administrators like Principal Skinner on "The Simpsons" are not the answer, but a line must be drawn. Clothing with controversial images, slogans or connotations that would offend fellow students should be prohibited.

While controversy sparks important discussions, these should be controlled in a forum mediated by teachers or authority figures. Students wishing to have discussions dealing with highly charged issues such as the NRA or abortion should appeal to teachers, and school officials should foster this intellectual curiosity.

Solar Haus residents not to blame

Christopher Drake

I'd like to express my concern regarding the article "Charges filed in deadly fall" (CT, Nov. 21). I think the actions of the Town of Blacksburg are inconsistent, blatantly injurious to the individuals of the Solar Haus and completely irresponsible.

It seems the decision to charge the residents of the Solar Haus with a misdemeanor permit infraction is an attempt to make an example of them and spread awareness of an ordinance fraternities and private residences continue to ignore.

These charges are inconsistent because of the large numbers of other events charging admission fees (for alcohol rather than for compensation of traveling bands), are in residential areas and also include dancing.

The vast majority of under-21 college students attend these parties, often hosted by fraternities (in residential areas), as opposed to the legal downtown venues for dancing and alcohol consumption.

However, no charges are brought against the many fraternities and private residences hosting these events, while they are in violation of not only the dancing ordinance, but of providing alcohol to minors.

I have attended many shows at the Solar Haus; occasionally the police have come by, and at one time

they actually entered and left the Haus without mention of a dancing ordinance. Why all of a sudden is there enforcement after an incident?

It seems the policy would be more effective if those types of ordinances are brought to the attention of the "perpetrators" before an incident can occur. Charging residents after the fact is behavior that makes the town look irresponsible.

They seem to be trying to assign blame when they had more than ample opportunity to enforce the ordinance prior to the incident.

I would like to address one comment made by the town spokesperson regarding the "legal" venues for dancing. The primary draw for Solar Haus shows is not dancing, but independent-label traveling rock bands. The shows are meant as a promotion and presentation of music that people are otherwise unexposed to.

Much of the music in Blacksburg is that of DJ's, frat rock and assorted popular music, whereas the purpose for dancing seems to be for intoxicated people to grope each other.

These types of music and dancing are all fine and have their places, but the Solar Haus hosted other types of music (indie rock, punk, hardcore, metal and others) and a different type of dancing (on the occasions that dancing actually took place). These types of music are rarely represented at local, "legal" venues.

The Solar Haus and other show houses (708 and The Brickhouse)

emerged following a need for venues willing to host these rock shows affordably in a comfortable social setting, which no other "legal" venue can/is willing to offer.

These charges are also injurious to the residents of the Solar Haus. The attitude portrayed by the town spokesperson seems to be completely ignorant of the fact that a person died in the incident.

The residents obviously feel terrible that an event, just like hundreds they have attended, ended in such a tragic accident.

They had a hard time coping with this terrible incident, and a comment like "the maximum penalty fee of \$500 is not enough for incidents like the one at the Solar Haus concert" is completely insensitive to their situation.

The incident occurred because of the unique structure of the Solar Haus, and it should not be seen as extreme criminal behavior on behalf of residents, as the spokesperson seems to imply. It was an unfortunate, tragic accident that should not be blamed on any of the residents.

Not only do the residents have to live in a place where Daniel Martin lost his life, but they can no longer host the rock shows they love. Charging the residents with this absurd violation is simply adding insult to injury.

Christopher Drake is a senior philosophy major.

Homosexuals do not deserve marriage

Chris Berge

Homosexuality is not a lifestyle deserving of the responsibility and honor of marriage. It is a disorder deserving proper attention and treatment. Why should the U.S. government reward gay marriage?

From a strictly secular standpoint, government control of marriage ensures a moral way to propagate a society, therefore ensuring a nation will continue to thrive, in number at least. Without marriage, all that is left is what is quickly becoming a not so uncommon sight today: illegitimate children.

Homosexuals will plead, beg, lie and trick common non-thinking citizens into believing they have a right to marriage, but the fact is they have as much right to marriage as I do to marrying my bowling ball, because they do not further the advancement of our society.

A great book devoting a chapter to the topic of homosexuality is "Bringing Up Boys," by James Dobson. Here are a few small excerpts from the chapter, entitled "Origins of Homosexuality."

- "What do we know about this disorder? Well first it is a disorder, despite the denials of the American Psychiatric Association. Great political pressure was exerted on this professional organization by gays and lesbians (some of whom are psychiatrists) to declare homosexuality to be 'normal.'"
- "The debate went on for years.

Finally a decision was made in 1973 to remove this condition from their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. It was made not on the basis of science but was strongly influenced by a poll of APA members, which was initiated and financed by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force."

• "The vote was 5,834 to 3,810. The APA soon followed suit. Today, psychologists and psychiatrists who disagree with this politically correct interpretation, or even those who try to help homosexuals change, are subjected to continual harassment and accusations of malpractice."

Homosexuals have crept into our politically correct society and made it appear that homosexuality is a normal genetic thing, but this could not be any more incorrect.

"There is no evidence to indicate that homosexuality is inherited, despite everything you may have heard or read to the contrary.

There are no respected geneticists in the world today who claim to have found a so-called 'gay gene' or other indicators of genetic transmission."

To further this argument, the book shares this example. We know that identical twins share the same DNA; therefore, if one twin is "born homosexual" then one would logically think the other would also be, but this is not true. It is shown the other is only 50 percent more likely to have the same disorder.

"Homosexuals have crept into our politically correct society and made it appear that homosexuality is a normal genetic thing, but this could not be any more incorrect."

"If homosexuality were genetically transmitted, it would be inevitable, immutable, irresistible and untreatable. Fortunately it's not. Prevention is effective. Change is possible. Hope is available ... There are 800 former known gay and lesbian individuals today who have escaped from the homosexual lifestyle and found wholeness in their newfound heterosexuality."

Except for in rare cases, I realize people do not choose to have this disorder (who would choose to go through the agony of being alienated among the heterosexual world).

Homosexuality is nothing but a sin homosexuals are trying to legitimize.

Darwin wouldn't endorse it if he was alive (a society of gays wouldn't last a generation), and God abhors it (Gen 19, 1Cor 6:9).

Love the sinner, hate the sin.

Chris Berge is an alumnus of the class of 2002.

Letter to the Editor

Homosexuality hurts no one, should be allowed

I've seen countless articles, editorials and letters to the editor detailing the comparison between homosexuality and other alternate lifestyles such as pedophilia and polygamy. I've been hesitant to write because I was sure someone would express what seemed so clear to me.

There is a vast difference between homosexuality and these other sexual behaviors: homosexuality is non-abusive. Neither partner in a homosexual relationship is hurt by this relationship; it is completely consensual.

When adults use children or animals for sexual purposes, it is hurtful and they don't have a choice. Polygamous relationships generally involve several women being exploited by a single man, with little of the love or attention needed in a healthy relationship.

While I recognize this argument does not address religious concerns, those concerns have no place in our government and therefore no place in our laws.

In the column "Society must re-evaluate its moral code before giving rights" (CT, Dec. 2), the author wrote, "We're going to have to decide on where to draw the line someday."

For me, this line is already clearly drawn. No relationship should be allowed to continue in which one or more of the members is being abused in any way.

I will always argue for the right of consenting adults to have any relationship they choose and against any person who feels he or she can use sexuality to take advantage of another person.

Molly Tinius
sophomore, chemical engineering and theatre arts

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A is for abstinence



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPPS

Theta Nu Xi held "Safe Sex Family Feud" in Squires last night to warn against the harms of unprotected sexual intercourse.

Collegiate Cooking and Dining: Cut cholesterol, have a heart

Emily Olson

Cholesterol. It's a word that has most likely been discussed by your parents and is a common buzzword around the water cooler at the office.

Why? Because 50 percent of middle age adults are trying to correct the bad habits they have developed throughout their lives. Unfortunately, cholesterol is not a common buzzword among most college students — but it should be.

According to the American Heart Association, a healthy cholesterol level should remain below 200mg/dL, and sadly, 105 million Americans are at or above the 200 mark — including individuals from our age group.

To set the record straight, cholesterol isn't some awful substance we need to rid our bodies of. Cholesterol is actually necessary for certain functions in our body, such as producing cell membranes and hormones. But as with most things, moderation is key. When too much of the waxy substance builds up in the blood, it can lead to coronary heart disease, which could ultimately result in a heart attack. The risk of heart failure tends to increase with

age and is one worth eliminating.

The obvious first step is getting tested, which can be done easily by scheduling an appointment with your physician, and the results should be available within a couple of weeks. There are two types of cholesterol reported: the good kind, HDL, which carries cholesterol away from your arteries, and the bad kind, LDL, that can block the arteries.

It's pretty simple. Just keep the HDL numbers as high as possible and keep the LDL numbers below 200mg/dL.

Unfortunately, there is an overabundance of products Americans consume that increase their LDL cholesterol intake. Simple dietary changes can significantly reduce LDL levels, and this starts with reading the labels.

However, this is trickier to do than one might think. According to the American Heart Association, trans-fats (which have been causing a stir recently), saturated fats and hydrogenated fats can actually raise blood cholesterol levels just like dietary cholesterol. Foods you should avoid or eat sparingly include French fries, doughnuts, most crackers, commercially baked and fried foods and things containing

whole milk like cheeses and ice cream.

It may seem like a daunting task to give up the weekly bag of Krispy Kreme doughnuts or the large order of fries at Burger King, but there are plenty of other options to fill hungry bellies.

Here are some guidelines for choosing heart-healthy food options: When eating meat, opt for fish, poultry or lean cuts of meat. Give up the whole milk and enjoy fat-free or 1 percent. Eat more fiber (this helps lower cholesterol). Substitute saturated foods like butter with a healthier option such as margarine.

Most baked goods will cook flawlessly if you substitute two egg whites for every one egg the recipe calls for.

Boiling, broiling, baking, roasting, poaching, steaming, sautéing, stir-frying or micro-waving are all healthy cooking options requiring little or no fat.

So remember the basics, check your levels and check your labels. Your heart will thank you and you'll save yourself from a daily dose of the cholesterol-reducing drug Lipitor or even worse — an unexpected heart attack.

recipe

No-Cholesterol Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

- » 1/2 cup canola oil
- » 1/2 cup honey
- » 1 cup packed brown sugar
- » 2 egg whites
- » 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- » 1 tablespoon water
- » 1 1/2 cups whole-wheat flour
- » 1 cup all-purpose flour
- » 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- » 1/2 teaspoon salt
- » 1 1/4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets.
2. In a medium bowl, combine canola oil, honey, sugar, egg whites, vanilla and water. Mix well.
3. In a separate bowl combine the whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, baking powder and salt.
4. Gradually add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients. Mix well.
5. Mix the chocolate chips into the batter.
6. Drop cookies by rounded teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets. Flatten with a fork dipped in flour.
7. Bake for 8 to 9 minutes in the preheated oven.
8. Remove from the oven and cool.

*These cake-like cookies are cholesterol-free and are a much healthier version of this traditional favorite.

Emily Olson's food column runs every other Wednesday in the Collegiate Times.



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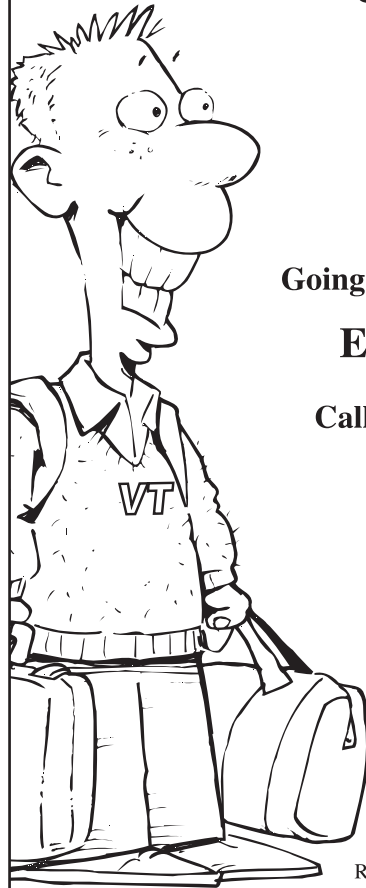
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NFL extends Green's suspension

▪ Browns' running back William Green was due to return Monday after serving a four-game suspension

by Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The NFL extended its suspension for troubled Cleveland Browns running back William Green on Tuesday, making it unlikely he will play again this season. Green was expected to rejoin the Browns on Monday from a four-game suspension for violating the league's substance-abuse policy. But the league said it has lengthened its ban on the second-year back for

"treatment purposes." Commissioner Paul Tagliabue will decide when Green can return to the Browns after consulting with medical experts in the substance program, the league said in a statement.

Green, 23, was suspended by the NFL for four games on Nov. 8 after being arrested on charges of driving under the influence and marijuana possession. He has a pretrial hearing scheduled for Wednesday.

While serving his suspension, Green's fiancée was accused of stabbing him in the back with a steak knife. Asia Gray was charged with felonious assault and domestic violence.

Green, who was twice suspended for marijuana use while at Boston College, hasn't played in a game since Oct. 19. Cleveland's leading rusher missed the Browns' Oct. 26

game at New England with a separated shoulder, and the next day police arrested him on the DUI and drug charges.

Green's whereabouts remain unknown. He recently surrendered his home to Gray, who is living there with the couple's two young daughters. She is under court order not to be within 500 feet of Green.

A phone message seeking comment on the suspension was left Tuesday with Green's agent, Tom Condon.

The Browns have been frustrated with their inability to interact with Green during his suspension because of league rules. On Tuesday, team president Carmen Policy said the club will continue to abide by the league's guidelines. "Our primary goal, as it has always been, is for William to take the necessary steps to resolving his personal matters. He continues to have our support," Policy said in a statement. "He continues to have our support."

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Carmen Policy
president, Cleveland Browns

Mississippi St. hires Croom as head coach

▪ The longtime NFL assistant becomes the first black head coach in Southeastern Conference history

by Ralph D. Russo
Associated Press

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Mississippi State athletic director Larry Templeton hired Sylvester Croom because he believes the longtime NFL assistant can lead the troubled Bulldogs out of the Southeastern Conference cellar.

In the process, Mississippi State made SEC history.

Croom became the first black head football coach in the Southeastern Conference on Monday when he accepted an offer to take over the Bulldogs.

"The issue of opportunities for minority coaches to become head football coaches is an issue for everybody, all the conferences in the country," SEC commissioner Mike Slive said. "The fact that the SEC has now provided that opportunity makes it a historic day for the conference and for Mississippi State."

Croom informed Templeton

that he would take the job less than 24 hours after Templeton said he had offered it. A news conference will be held Tuesday to introduce the Bulldogs' new coach.

"We went after the best football coach and we're confident we found that individual in Sylvester Croom," Templeton said.

Croom, 49, has never been a head coach, but has been an NFL assistant with five teams since 1987 and worked for Bear Bryant and Ray Perkins at Alabama from 1977-86. He has been running backs coach with the Green Bay Packers since 2001.

The SEC's hiring came under increased scrutiny earlier this year when Croom was passed over for the top job at his alma mater, Alabama, in favor of Mike Shula, another former Crimson Tide player, who is white.

Every other BCs conference has had at least one black head coach, but a lack

of diversity among major college football head coaches is not exclusive to the SEC.

There were only four black head football coaches among 117 Division I-A football schools this season.

Alabama was criticized by some, including civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, for not hiring Croom, who had more experience than Shula.

Jackson said Croom's hiring is a positive step for the SEC, but the league still lags in minority hirings at high-profile positions such as athletic director and university president.

"So while this is a breakthrough, we're really way behind our potential," Jackson said. "But I think Mississippi State, its president and its athletic director deserve congratulations and I extend that to them."

Templeton said he hoped Croom would be cleared by the Packers to assume his new position immediately.

"What we know — and we don't know everything — but what we do know, he's going to be juggling both, which is not going to be easy," Packers full-back Nick Luchey said.

Croom replaces retiring coach Jackie Sherrill and inherits a program that has been in a free fall for three years.

The Bulldogs are 8-27 since 2001 with just three SEC victories. They completed a 2-10 season last week, the school's worst since 1988.

"What will help him is he's a guy who's definitely a good disciplinarian and he's very basic in what he wants from his players," Packers running back Ahman Green said. "And if you do what he asks of his players, you do exactly what he wants, you'll be OK."

Mississippi State is awaiting the results of an NCAA investigation into possible rules violations by the football program from 1998-2002.

Templeton said Croom will be given a four-year contract, but didn't disclose financial terms. Sherrill made about \$750,000 annually with perks and incentives.

Croom played offensive line at Alabama in the early '70s. He still has family in his native Tuscaloosa and a daughter and granddaughter living in Mobile, Ala.

Messages left at Croom's home and office were not immediately returned.

"The issues of opportunities for minority coaches to become head football coaches is an issue for everybody, all the conferences in the country"

Mike Slive
SEC commissioner

Blazer forward Zach Randolph arrested

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Trail Blazer forward Zach Randolph was arrested and charged Tuesday with driving under the influence of intoxicants, authorities said.

Randolph was released a few hours later. Police wouldn't say what substance he is accused of using.

The misdemeanor charge is punishable by up to one year in prison and a fine between \$1,000 and \$5,000, according to Multnomah County sheriff's Lt. Mike Shults. Randolph's first

court appearance is Dec. 30.

A team spokesman did not return a call seeking comment.

Randolph, who became a starter this season, leads the team with an average of 20.7 points and 11.2 rebounds a game.

The Blazers have been plagued by a series of arrests and infighting the past few seasons. Bonzi Wells was stripped of his co-captaincy and suspended for two games after cursing at coach Maurice Cheeks. And Damon Stoudamire is facing drug charges.

Armstrong's battery charges dismissed

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A judge dismissed battery charges Tuesday against New Orleans Hornets guard Darrell Armstrong, who was on trial for striking an officer as she tried to escort him off the street.

Judge Bob Wattles said there was no way a prosecutor could prove Armstrong intended to strike the officer when he pushed her hand away.

The dismissal came on the trial's second day. Armstrong's attorney had argued the NBA player accidentally hit Officer

Teresa Joyce, swinging his arm in reaction to her touching him.

Joyce testified Monday that Armstrong "reacted very violently" when she tried to remove him from the street outside a nightclub on July 7.

Armstrong, who played nine seasons with the Orlando Magic before signing with the Hornets over the offseason, had been charged with felony battery on an officer and misdemeanor resisting arrest without violence.

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