

The Rotunda

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

McCroskey Sentenced to Life in Prison

Corey Morris
News Editor

FARMVILLE, Va.—The man accused of killing four people a year ago in Farmville pleaded guilty Sept. 20 in Prince Edward County Circuit Court. Richard Samuel Alden McCroskey III, 21, pleaded guilty to two counts of capital murder and two counts of first-degree murder in the bludgeoning deaths of his girlfriend, Emma Niederbrock, 16, her mother and former Longwood University professor of criminal justice, Debra S. Kelley, 53; Kelley's estranged husband, Pastor Mark Niederbrock, 50; and Emma's friend, Melanie Wells, 18, of West Virginia.

The court was under the impression that a motion for a change of venue would be requested from the defense. Instead, McCroskey surprised the court by pleading guilty to two counts of first-degree murder of Kelley Emma Niederbrock and two counts of capital murder of Melanie Wells and Mark Niederbrock. McCroskey said he understood the charges and was able to make the decision under his own power.

Judge Richard S. Blanton sentenced McCroskey to life in prison for the counts of first-degree murder and life in prison without the possibility of parole for the two counts of capital murder. He could have received the death penalty.

McCroskey was silent after the sentencing was read to the court filled with family members of the victims as well as police investigators who have worked the case. When he exited court Monday, he only showed a slight smirk.

Cindy Sams, director of victim assistance program for Prince Edward County, released a statement from Kelley's parents, Thomas and Margaret Kelley, as well as family members of Niederbrock and Wells, after the hearing. The statement reads, "We are thankful that the trial of these cases is over and that we may now have some degree of closure. While we will never forget our loved ones or the circumstances of their deaths, we hope to move forward and begin the healing process." They went on to thank the Farmville Police Department and the Virginia State Police for their efforts.

Defense attorney Cary B. Bowen said his primary objective was to minimize McCroskey's sentence and "serve our client's interest the best we could." Bowen said McCroskey expressed remorse and understood the severity of what he did. The attorney described his client's mood as "solemn" on Monday. "He said how bad he felt about it," said Bowen. "He's left families without their loved ones. We have four people dead here. He's not proud of that."

SEE 'MURDER' PG. 8



McCroskey leaves Prince Edward County Circuit Court after a guilty plea.

Photo Courtesy: Mark Gormus, Richmond Times-Dispatch

SGA Votes to Not Support Three 6 Mafia On Campus

Nicole Dales
Editor-in-Chief

Concerns have been voiced about bring the music group Three 6 Mafia to the campus for Oktoberfest. There is question as to whether the group should be brought to campus or not. During the Tues., Sept. 21 meeting of the Student Government Association (SGA), the Director of the Student Union and Mortar Board adviser Susan Sullivan came to speak about the issues at hand.

"I have met with Chief Beach numerous times about the concerns," Sullivan told the SGA. She explained they have heard concerns out in the community. She said the music group's agents are willing to do whatever they need to in order to make the situation safer. Longwood's Chief of Police Bob Beach also vowed to make the event as safe as he can.

"I can promise you this, if you decide to have it I can guarantee you ... at the event itself we will do everything we can to make sure its safe and I think we can be pretty confident we can do it," Beach said. He went on to add that he couldn't promise the same thing before and after the event.

There is concern about the group of people Three 6 Mafia will attract to campus if they play. Beach pointed out he cannot control what happens when the sun goes down and students move to place like Buffalo St. to gather and socialize.

The Black Student Association (BSA) representative for the SGA, Savannah Ducre, said her organization did not feel like it was the appropriate time to bring this group in. She added that maybe next year,



Three 6 Mafia

when things calm down a bit, it might be something to consider.

Sullivan said there is a possibility the music group will be removed from the line up. Student representatives from SGA and Mortar Board, as well as administrators including Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Tim Pierson, Chief Beach, and Sullivan will meet to put together everyone concerns and figure out where to go from here. They will meet this afternoon (Wed., Sept. 22) to make a decision.

Sullivan explained what would happen if the group is canceled. Since the group has already been contracted, Mortar Board will still have to pay the over \$11,000 fee to Three 6 Mafia, even if they do not come. Sullivan also said canceling Three 6 Mafia would end the show around 8:30 p.m. on Saturday night.

In order to avoid the show ending early, Sullivan said they would like to fill that spot with another group. She said they would need the support of the SGA because Mortar Board had already spent their budget for the bands. She said a headliner group would be around \$10,000, while other groups cost about \$5,000.

At press time, the issue had not been brought to Mortar Board as a whole. "We are going to have to make the best decision with the best interest in the safety and security of our students," said Sullivan.

The SGA voted as to whether or not they wanted to support bringing the group to campus.

SEE 'SUPPORT' PG. 6

Open Forum on Campus & Community Safety

Forum held in Blackwell Hall enlightens concerns about streetlights, text messaging, and others

Laura Beth Stricker
Copy Editor

On Mon., Sept. 20, a large number of students, faculty and staff gathered in Blackwell Hall for an Open Forum on Campus & Community Safety. The forum was organized in large part due to the recent spike in robberies and assaults on campus and throughout the Town of Farmville. There was a panel of six representatives that covered both the campus and the community: Student Government Association (SGA) President Ben Brittain, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Tim Pierson, Longwood President Patrick Finnegan, the Town of Farmville Manager Gerry Spates, Longwood Chief of Police Bob Beach, and Farmville Chief of Police Doug Mooney. These gentlemen all gave opening remarks, facilitated the panel and responded to all questions that were posed by those in attendance.

Each of the six representatives gave a short introduction or briefing to the audience. Finnegan said it was "both an individual and group responsibility to stay safe." Spates said, "I've been the Town Manager here since 1975. We've moved from

1,600 female students to over 4,200 students. Please raise any questions that you may have."

Beach reiterated he feels very strongly that Longwood is "the safest campus in the Commonwealth," but times have changed and we have entered a new era. He gave a short briefing to the crowd, beginning with an update on the assault on the male student outside of the Cunninghams Residence Hall on Sun., Aug. 29. One arrest has been made, with the person having been charged with assault by mob, which is a Class III felony. The police department has also interviewed one juvenile who has admitted to being involved in this incident.

Mooney echoed Beach's statements, as well as gave a short briefing. He assured the audience that "work is being done" to solve these cases. Mooney said, "After 22-plus years in Chesterfield County, you have a safe community here." He gave an update on Richard Samuel Alden McCroskey III, who entered a guilty plea agreement Monday afternoon in Farmville. He received four life sentences, two of which do not have the possibility of parole. McCroskey was convicted of two counts

of first-degree murder in the cases of Melanie Wells and Dr. Debra Kelley, and two counts of capital murder in the cases of Emma and Mark Niederbrock.

Mooney also gave the audience an update on the more recent crimes that have occurred throughout the month of September. Charges have been filed in the robbery at gunpoint case on Park Avenue, which occurred on Wed., Sept. 1. Three men were apprehended following the Thurs., Sept. 9 incident involving the robbery of a Papa John's pizza deliveryman. In the most recent case, the Sun., Sept. 12 incident on Grove St. where a Longwood student was assaulted, there is a strong lead. Mooney emphasized for people to "keep your eyes open" and "walk in pairs or groups."

Brittain went to the podium and said he believes these recent incidents have "increased student awareness," but he wanted to stress that people "should not act on emotions." Brittain said, "Don't destroy the brotherhood and sisterhood at Longwood ... and community trust. Call the police for the right reasons" and "Let's come together as a campus community."

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R.A.D Program Is Back at Longwood

Rape Aggression Defense classes will be offered on campus in an effort to teach women self-dependency.

Brooke Brennan
Features Editor

The R.A.D program is taught at schools all over the country, including Longwood, through courses offered for women only. The official R.A.D. website said, "It is a program of realistic self-defense tactics and techniques for women" who are faced in rape or abduction related cases. It also stated that the class instructors teach "awareness, prevention, risk reduction and risk avoidance" and women eventually learn "the basics of hands-on defense training."

On Tues., Sept. 28, R.A.D. instructors will hold an interest meeting at 7 p.m. in the Lankford Student Union Ballroom for female students. Acting Sergeant with the LU Police Department, Ray Ostrander, and Jennifer Huddleston, apartment manager and LU alumna will be two of the five R.A.D. program instructors at the meeting. Both strongly encouraged all females to go.

According to Huddleston, the program teaches you how to successfully defeat a perpetrator in an abduction or rape scenario and how to avoid these situations in general. She said the key elements involved are learning "using your voice properly by yelling instead of screaming at a perpetrator and learning to be extremely aware of your surroundings," but that other basic knowledge and techniques will be taught in the beginning of the program.

The R.A.D. program will consist of three different phases: lecture, tactics, and simulation. Huddleston explained that the lecture portion will re-enforce essential tips to staying safe that are often times ignored: shutting blinds, closing curtains, locking doors and windows, walking in groups and well-lit areas, and many more. She said the simulation portion allows participants to ap-

ply the basic knowledge and techniques learned from the previous phases, in realistic replications of dangerous encounters.

During the simulation classes, Ostrander and Huddleston said students will dress in provided outfits, use bags for blocking techniques, practice knee-lift kicks, and will have to go through different scenarios played out by themselves and the instructors.

Ostrander said, "It's an adrenaline rush because it makes you feel like you're actually in the situation, and that's what it's meant to do. A lot of people realize they're stronger than they think." The simulation meetings will be held in the basement of French, where Ostrander said they have "wrestling mats on the floor and padded walls."

He added, "Students who have gone through simulation said that it's been their best experience," and the program can really help anyone. Although rape is not a widely reported topic, Ostrander encouraged women who have previously dealt with rape-related issues to "come forward." He said the program includes counseling services for those who need or want the confidential support.

One aspect about the program that most will find encouraging and helpful is the flexibility between all five instructors. Although the assigned courses are recommended, Huddleston and Ostrander stressed their willingness to create private lessons for different groups, separate from the designated courses.

Both Huddleston and Ostrander said, "If you don't feel comfortable attending a class with people you don't know, then get a group of girlfriends together and contact us. We'll arrange convenient class times for your group." Whether it's a group of your sorority sisters, an office department, members of a club, a mix of friends, or you and your hall-mates, the R.A.D team will make sure you receive the separate lessons. Ostrander said, "With five instructors, we can help everyone."

Ostrander noted, "This year I want to encourage more female faculty staff members to take this class because we have some [faculty and staff members] who are here at all hours, late at night, and we want to encourage them to get together and take these classes."

After being through the program as an undergraduate, and taking lessons to become an instructor, Huddleston said, "I think every woman should take it. I know that the empowerment you get is amazing. It's very beneficial."

Huddleston and Ostrander are expecting the R.A.D program to be a 12-hour course, and encourage participants to attend all lessons. However, Huddleston said, "At anytime if someone decides it's not for them, they definitely don't have to do it." They both said the program will most likely consist of a class once a week for four consecutive weeks, and that each class will be three hours long.

The instructors are aiming to host the course from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., or 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., however these times are not set in stone. Huddleston said the program is offered in November, February, and March, but that more times could be added depending on the amount of interest shown at the meeting. The instructors want an even number of people in order to properly conduct the lessons.

There will be posters hanging around campus this week, instructors at the police department, as well as information on LU Police's Facebook page and on their homepage. Interested students can also contact Ostrander and Huddleston directly at ostrander@longwood.edu or huddlestonjm@longwood.edu. Ostrander said there has been a lot of interest so far, and those who participated in the program last year "can come back anytime."

Yellow Ribbon Campaign Awareness

Jamie Clift
Asst. Features Editor

The small yellow card read, "3.7 percent of adults in the U.S. had serious thoughts, 2.3 million made a plan, and 1.1 million actually attempted suicide in the past year." These cards were handed out in the name of the Yellow Ribbon Campaign, an organization that supported its fourteenth National Suicide Prevention Week from Sept. 5-11.

Yellow ribbons, which could be seen pinned to several book bags and shirts around campus, were attached to cards and given to students. The cards also provided the numbers for Campus Police and the LU Counseling Center for those who might be contemplating suicide or felt that someone they knew was in danger of doing so.

The Student Health and Wellness Center sponsored the campaign. The office provided the cards and posted more information about the subject on its website in addition to the information that was posted in the Stall News as of Wed., Sept. 15. The site urges Longwood students to remember that they are not alone and to get help for themselves or their friends.

The site also provides shocking statistics about suicide and college students from the American College Health Association, "1 in 10 has seriously considered suicide." Almost half have reported "feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function." The brief Stall News article provided similar information, in addition signs that a friend might be suicidal, including substance abuse, anxiety, withdrawal, and anger.

One of the people most responsible for making

The Yellow Ribbon Campaign possible at LU is Longwood's Wellness Coordinator Sasha Gregory, who graduated from Longwood in 2005. Despite a very limited budget, and with the help of a few concerned students, Gregory was able to bring suicide prevention week to the attention of many Longwood students. She has encouraged the campus to wear their ribbons all month.

"Suicide prevention is important and needed in the community," said Gregory. "It has recently been an issue... and it is important to address it and show our support."

Despite the amount of help provided by Gregory, who actually donated the ribbons, as well the Health and Wellness Center, which was the source of all of the ink and yellow paper that went into this project, it was the students who really made it happen. The Wellness Center is largely focused on student wants and concerns. It was because students cared about this issue that the campaign was possible.

"We need student support and leadership for these causes," Gregory urged. With so many important causes out there that deserve our attention, she and the rest of the staff at the Wellness Center can surely not do it all.

Five-Star Taxi: A Look Inside The One-man Duty

Rebecca Lundberg
Asst. Copy Editor

The bus may be free for Longwood students, but are the stresses of catching it on time and never knowing when you'll arrive at your destination worth it? If not, there's another affordable option that's a bit more reliable than the Farmville Area Bus (FAB) and much safer than hitchhiking.

PeeWee Baldwin's Five-Star Taxi began running in October 2009 and has been transporting Longwood students and locals all around the Farmville area ever since. The number five is a running theme in Baldwin's business; for just that many dollars, he will drive anyone anywhere in the entire town of Farmville. Where else can you find private, air-conditioned convenience for the same price as a Subway five-dollar foot-long?

Baldwin lived in Farmville throughout his childhood and never felt the desire to leave. "I love living in such a tight-knit community," Baldwin said, "But it's both a blessing and a curse. Everybody knows everybody. While I like walking down the street and recognizing most of the people I see, word gets around fast. There isn't a lot of privacy."

The Longwood University Post Office, where Baldwin has been working since 2002, is the perfect escape from the small-town atmosphere. "I love working with students," Baldwin said. "It really keeps me young." His taxi helps him develop an even better relationship with the students. He loves helping them get around town because he feels that they are to thank for his success. "Without Longwood, I wouldn't be in existence," he admitted, "I

am so grateful for the loyalty of the students."

But operating the Five-Star Taxi in addition to putting in hours at the post office isn't without its frustrations. Baldwin noted, "I love driving the taxi, but it's basically a one-man job." He said, "My fiancée [Ellen Masters] helps with the business side of things, which really helps. But weekends are busy and I know that I will have to expand my business in the future." Baldwin hopes to eventually buy another taxi and hire another driver.

Baldwin's busy schedule does have its benefits when it comes to time management. "Time is more special when I have so little of it," Baldwin said. "Ellen and I are always happy to see each other." Baldwin and Masters plan to wed next month at Winterham Plantation in Amelia, Va.

"We were looking for a place to hold the wedding and kind of found it by accident," he revealed. Baldwin said, "We called the owners and set up a tour, and as soon as it was over, we knew it was where we wanted to get married." The couple's friends from the local restaurant The Dutch Rabbit are catering the event. He said, "I feel so lucky to have such great people involved in my wedding." His coworkers and close friends from the post office have prime spots on the guest list.

The Five-Star Taxi runs from 5 p.m. to 12 a.m. Monday through Thursday, and 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. on weekends. Baldwin can always be reached at 434-547-3355. More information can be found on Five-Star Taxi's official Facebook page.

Recruitment: A Different Story for Fraternities and Sororities

Kevin Green
Rotunda Reporter

"Go Greek!" is a phrase that students see over and over again throughout their college career. The Greeks have become an ever-growing part of this campus. But, the question remains: How does one "Go Greek?"

The process actually varies for both fraternities and sororities. For example, most fraternities do not contain a quota. According to senior and Sigma Nu brother Tony Riley, it really does not matter. They are not really aiming for a number.

For fraternities it is a bit informal. Some chapters will host open houses, while others will use social functions. There is no one set way fraternities go about their business. Sophomore and Sigma Nu brother Aaron Taylor said, "We really like to get guys out and just hang out with us." It is up to the fraternities to recruit new members in the fall. This is largely due to the fact that freshmen cannot pledge until spring semester. Then the campus steps in and it is much more structured.

The numbers for all fraternity's fall recruitment were a bit down. For example, in Sigma Nu, they have only 17 participants this fall compared to the 25 they had

in the spring of 2007. Some of it may be due to the lack of recruitment-related events in the fall. The one event held called "First Friday Back," showed little attendance. According to Riley, "No one came really. It was just [fraternity] brothers." It certainly was not a much-publicized event.

Despite this, Riley thinks it is getting better. He said, "You have to have better grades [to pledge]." Indeed, the GPA requirements for Sigma Nu have spiked a bit. It used to be a 2.25 and it is now a 2.5. Even still, both Riley and Taylor agree that there is more that can be done in the fall.

On the flip side, it is a completely different story for the girls. The College Panhellenic Council's (CPC) formal recruitment for girls is in the spring. In the fall, the whole process is structured even before everyone arrives for school. The VP of Recruitment for each CPC chapter meets with Associate Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Kathryn Planow, during the spring semester to schedule open houses.

Alpha Sigma Alpha President Samantha Steuber said, "They're set so far in advance to make sure that everyone knows there's enough time to advertise." Each chapter gets their own day and time slot so that

girls have the opportunity to see everything. Due to this, Steuber said it is recommended that the girls keep an open mind.

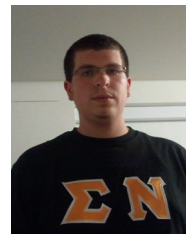
As far as numbers, Planow stated that, "Total on this campus is 55." This means that the maximum number of girls a CPC sorority can reach is 55 in the fall. In the spring, they can exceed 55 only if it is by quota. Quota is a completely different thing. It is the total number of girls who finish the formal recruitment process divided by the number of CPC sororities (which is eight). If quota is met in the spring, then the total number of girls can exceed 55.

In the spring, recruitment takes place during one weekend. Planow describes the weekend as, "A process of mutual selection." Once again the girls visit all of the chapters and make a list of their "favorites." That list gets cut down until the end of the weekend. It is one big matching game. In the end, it is all about trying to get matched up. It is possible that girls receive one match or none at all. By contrast, girls can receive as many bids as possible in the fall.

SPEAK OUT

Question: What is your favorite athletic sport to watch on campus?

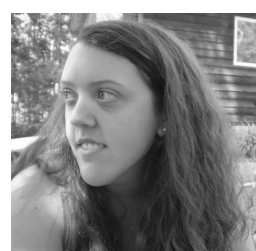
Jordan Maupin, junior: "Definitely basketball. A lot of students go to the games and get into them. You can really feel the energy from them."



Daniel Pennesi, sophomore: "Probably rugby."



Meghan Greene, junior: "Baseball! I grew up watching my brothers play ball and I understand the sport."



Emma Coombs, junior: "Basketball, because I just enjoy watching it in general. I feel like more people here at school go to basketball games so they're a lot more fun."

This segment features a Longwood-pertinent question answered by a random sample of students. Send suggestions to therotunda-online@gmail.com.