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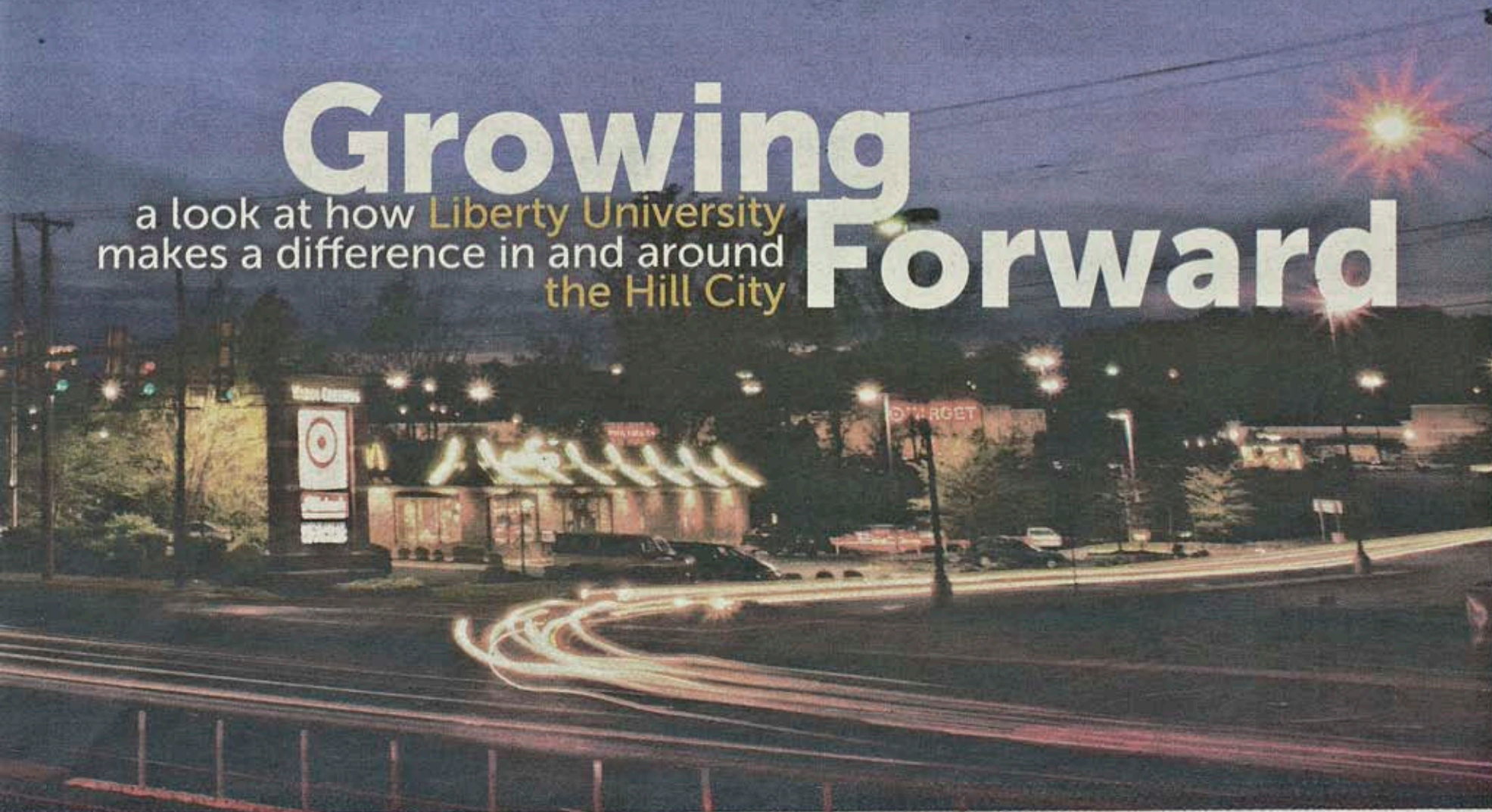
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LIBERTY CHAMPION

special edition • fall 2009

Growing Forward

a look at how Liberty University
makes a difference in and around
the Hill City



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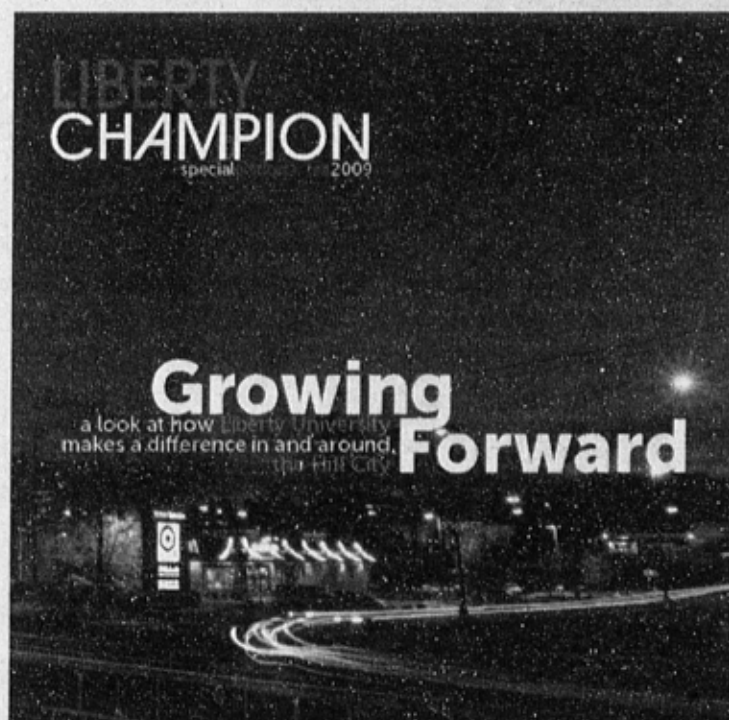


photo by alex towers

ON THE COVER: A time-release photograph at sunset shows the hustle and bustle of the economic heart of the city: the Wards Road corridor.

growing FORWARD *staff*

FACULTY ADVISER
deborahhuff

SPECIAL EDITION
EDITORS
alextowers
amandasullivan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
kerahkemmerer
drewmenard
mittchellmalcheff

CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

timmattingly
jessicacarniol
axelcerney
jordanlosasso
dominiqueccay
amandabaker
aubreyblankenship
brooke McDowell
jake Petersen

EDITOR'S NOTE

This reprint from spring 2008 contains updated content about Liberty's fall 2009 voting initiative, as well as economic information.

The articles in this special edition will examine a few of the ways that Liberty University and Lynchburg have grown and will continue to grow forward together.

Although four other colleges in the area contribute to the economic stability of Lynchburg, Liberty's 11,900 on-campus student population (plus 1,700 in local online enrollment) generates a significant amount of revenue.

We hope you enjoy this look at Liberty's contribution to the community. We would also like to express our gratitude to Lynchburg for allowing us to come and serve, both as members of the city and as stewards of Christ.

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growing FORWARD

timmattingly
Contributing Reporter



And in this economic day and age, any city that refuses to move forward will find its economy to be a hollow shell, destined to become like the dusty remains of dinosaurs, whose days of glory will be confined to the pages of aging history books.

—Tim Mattingly

The land of Lynchburg is economically enriched with the nutrients provided it by the region. Counted among the bolstering benefactors are the many people who inhabit it and, without question, Liberty University. However, this historically happening locale called Lynchburg was already bustling before the birth of Liberty.

In many ways, pre-Liberty Lynchburg bears a resemblance to the prehistoric journey depicted in the "Land Before Time."

The childhood cartoon begins with an earthquake and Lynchburg began with Quakers — the Quaker John Lynch to be exact, for whom the city would eventually be named. While the lovable Littlefoot had to cross a massive gorge, Lynch also made it his business to cross what is now known as the James River.

It was a fairytale and a ferry-tale. Both fictional dinosaur and ferryman had the same goals — to find a way to a better, more prosperous future.

As Littlefoot journeyed forward toward his goal, he was joined by other dinosaurs that eventually formed into a future-seeking unit. Similarly, as time passed, Lynchburg officially became a town on Jan. 10, 1805, according to the History of Lynchburg Web site.

Green grazing lands lay ahead and forward progress was an ever-present issue for Lynchburg, which continued to grow as days gave birth to years. Over time, Lynchburg would thrive like the relationships in the Land Before Time. So rapidly had the region around Lynchburg begun to establish itself, that it even caught the eye of Thomas Jefferson, who would construct a home near its borders, according to the History of Lynchburg Web site.

"Jefferson even predicted once that New York, Philadelphia and New London (a town now part of the Lynchburg area) would be the three largest cities in the United States someday," Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. said. "Well, two out of three is not a bad average but he was right that Lynchburg would enjoy more than its fair share of prosperity."

"Lynchburg is perhaps the most rising place in the United States," Jefferson is quoted as saying.

And rise Lynchburg did.

In order to outrun the sharp-toothed bite of economic downfall, Lynchburg began to develop as a hub for tobacco, shoes, steel and iron, according to the History of Lynchburg Web site. So fast did this city begin to grow that Lynch's little ferry finding was considered to be the "Pittsburgh of the South" in the latter half of the 19th century, according to Localism, a historic Web site that recalls the city's youth.

Because of its early success, 19th century Lynchburg would become one of

the wealthiest cities in the United States, per capita, according to the Absolute Astronomy Historical Encyclopedia Web site. Like Little Foot, Lynchburg had found its economy in the "Great Valley" of lush prosperity.

"Many of the wealthy families in 19th century Lynchburg were actually transplants from the northeastern United States. These northern industrialists and merchants built factories and businesses here because it was a railroad hub and because there was an abundance of cheap labor. The agricultural economy of the Old South was dying and Virginians were leaving their ancestral farms and plantations in droves to find work in industrial cities like Lynchburg," said Falwell. "My father's ancestors left their rural Virginia farms and bought farms near Liberty Mountain in the early and mid-1800s. This allowed them to continue to farm but to also operate businesses that served the Lynchburg community."

There was a major cultural divide between these two groups of people who came to Lynchburg in the 19th century that still exists today. Their backgrounds and traditions were dramatically different but the two groups seemed to peacefully co-exist to some extent, like the Long Necks and Three-horns in Littlefoot's tale.

The 20th century was a good sequel to its predecessor and Lynchburg continued to see growth and progress. In the 1950s the nuclear power company Babcock and Wilcox took root as well as General Electric, both bringing extra income and families to the region, according to a Virginia Tech Library article. All of this happened about the same time as a church on Thomas Road began to grow with its pastor, Jerry Falwell.

Then there was 1971 and then there was Liberty. While some long-time Lynchburg residents tend to have mixed opinions of Falwell's university, the economic benefits of the educational institution are undisputable.

An economic impact study covering the first nine years of Liberty's life show that the "total spending by the university and economic impact on the community increased 300 percent," according to a 1990 study abstract found on the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Additionally in 1990, Liberty employed 1,167 local faculty and staff and 997 local jobs were created due to the school's presence in the region, according to ERIC. Since then, the school has continued to progress and currently employs 3,788, a number reflecting progress.

There is no question that Lynchburg was successful before Jerry Falwell started a church or crafted a university from Virginia's red clay. Lynchburg has its many industries and has been a success story from the start. However, without Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University, it would not be the same Lynchburg it is today. Falwell's actions echo the historic goals and dreams of Lynchburg — the dream of growth and progress.

And, in this economic day and age, any city that refuses to move forward will find its economy to be a hollow shell, destined to become like the dusty remains of dinosaurs, whose days of glory will be confined to the pages of aging history books.



The mission and purpose for Liberty University

"My vision for Liberty University is to continue to remain true to the original goal of training young champions for Christ to go out into every walk of life — pastors, lawyers, businessmen, doctors, nurses, teachers, musicians, artists, engineers, aviators, counselors and every other profession — and make a real difference for Christ. I'm committed to seeing that happen."

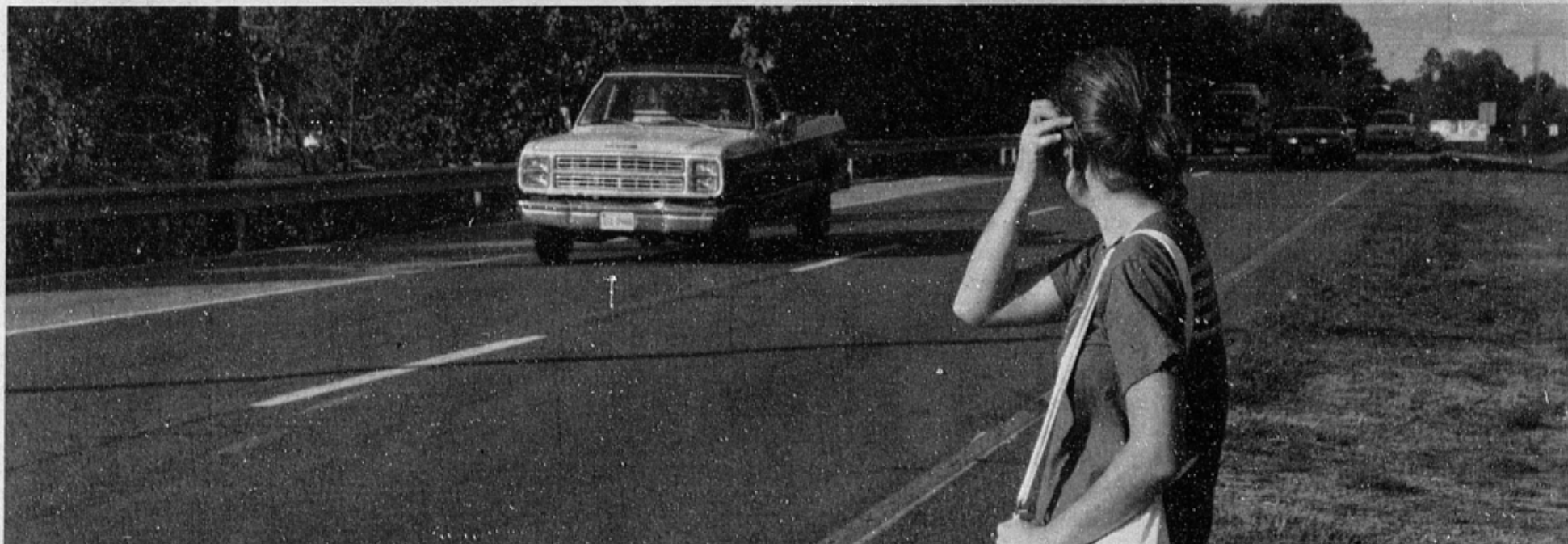
—Jerry Falwell, Jr.
Chancellor and
President

No 3

raise your voice VOTE LOCAL

amandasullivan
Editor

student-driven voting



Yield to Traffic — The lack of a crosswalk forces students to endanger their lives by making a mad dash across Wards Road.

The patriotic colors of red, white and blue were thoroughly emphasized last fall as Liberty University encouraged its students to vote in the presidential election. The colors are once again being promoted but for a slightly different reason.

Liberty is encouraging voter registration among students with a deadline of Oct. 5. However, this time the focus is on a local rather than a national level. The issues and representatives students will vote on will affect tuition rates, food taxes, sales taxes and lodging taxes.

"For years, we focused on national politics," Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. said. "The local political issues have much more of a direct effect on students and their pocket books than any national issues or election but students were not allowed to vote locally."

Throughout the years, Liberty students have been major contributors to the economic success of Lynchburg, according to Falwell. However, despite students' financial support, the city council has opted to spend the majority of the funds it collected from students in downtown Lynchburg and away from Liberty, he said.

"Just last week, The News and Advance printed a story about how the city is going to replace the D-Street bridge, which is an old bridge that is decaying that leads to a very small neighborhood," Falwell said. "I e-mailed the city manager and asked him where the money for

that (project) was coming from. He said the city had set aside \$3 million for the project."

The City of Lynchburg has also funded similar projects like the Fifth Street traffic circle downtown.

"I doubt the traffic circle will help the business on Fifth Street, but it will look pretty so (the council is) willing to spend the money," Falwell said.

By funding these projects, the city has elevated the D-Street bridge and the traffic circle to be a higher priority than building a safe way for pedestrians to cross Wards Road.

"Thousands of people would benefit from Wards Road improvements, not just sidewalks but improvements to the roads," Falwell said. "We don't have money for that, but we have money to repair the D-Street bridge even though you can still get to that neighborhood easily without the bridge. You just have to go a little further down the road."

Although the city council's voting patterns have not benefited Liberty, the students' interest in voting may be turning some heads.

"Since 4,200 students registered to vote last year and almost 1,000 this year, the council finally made some moves to create pedestrian facilities on Wards Road," Falwell said. "They have not funded anything yet, but they did create the plan and had a couple of hearings."

Although the city has approved the Wards Road project,

it is unclear what the funding source will be. The City of Lynchburg's solution seems to be the most recent ordinance passed — the Big-box ordinance.

"The city is scrambling to make it look like it is doing something about the situation on Wards Road," Falwell said. "Unfortunately, their solution seems to focus on forcing Liberty students and big box retailers to pay for the fix. Just last week, they passed a Big-box ordinance designed to give (the city) more power to force big box retailers to pay for public road and pedestrian improvements."

The ordinance was not supported by everyone on council.

"I voted and fought against this ordinance," Councilman Jeff Helgeson said. "This new law takes away rights of property owners. In this tough economic time, we should be encouraging business and investment in Lynchburg, not putting up more onerous government hurdles and regulation."

"It will negatively impact the property owners, and will be another roadblock for new businesses to locate and invest millions of their dollars here in Lynchburg," Helgeson said.

For some councilmen such as Michael Gillete, the ordinance was a must.

"I think that it is important that when we have large developments that have a large impact on the community that we have a mechanism in place for making sure that we get the best quality work that we can get," Gillete said.

"There is nothing in this ordinance that requires developers to do anything," he said. "If they do not want to meet the standards then (opt) for a conditional use permit, and then it could come to council, and it could grant any exemption it feels appropriate."

Of course, the conditional use permit process allows the city to force businesses to do almost anything the city dictates.

"In return for granting Conditional Use Permits to Liberty University over the years, the City has required the university to build expressway on-ramps, tunnels, sidewalks and many other items for the city with student tuition money," Falwell said. "In the past this has created a financial burden for Liberty and, in the future, it is likely to hinder the university's expansion."

The Big-box ordinance and projects such as Wards Road, the D-Street bridge and the Fifth Street traffic circle are just some of the more visible ways students are affected by the city council's votes. Students are also affected every time they go out to eat, shop at Wal-Mart or invite their parents to visit for Homecoming through the high tax rates.

"(Students) realize that every time they go to McDonalds they have to add 11.5 percent for a local food tax, and then to add insult to injury the money is being spent on downtown pet projects," Helgeson said. "Or (their tuition is increased because of the) extra permit fees the (school pays) every time the university needs to build."

Falwell and others like Helgeson are encouraging students to register to vote and show up at the polls.

"With 11,900 students on campus, if only half of them vote, they could easily affect the outcome of local council elections," Helgeson said. "They could elect council members that realize that Liberty University and its students are of vital importance to this community."

Conversely, there are other individuals such as Gillete who are in opposition to students voting.

"I think that everyone should vote, but I think that that people need to vote in the community that they declare home," Gillete said. "I think that if there are Liberty students who live in Lynchburg and intend to stay here permanently they absolutely

Restaurant Tax Chart

University	City	State	Restaurant Food
<i>University of Alaska</i>	Anchorage	AK	EXEMPT
<i>Loyola Marymount University</i>	Los Angeles	CA	9.75%
<i>University of Delaware</i>	Newark	DE	EXEMPT
<i>Pensacola Christian College</i>	Pensacola	FL	7.50%
<i>Florida Southern College</i>	Lakeland	FL	7.00%
<i>Robert Morris College</i>	Chicago	IL	6.25%
<i>Harvard University</i>	Cambridge	MA	6.25%
<i>Fisher College</i>	Boston	MA	6.25%
<i>Calvin College</i>	Grand Rapids	MI	6.00%
<i>Princeton University</i>	Princeton	NJ	7.00%
<i>Binghamton University</i>	Binghamton	NY	8.00%
<i>Cleveland State University</i>	Cleveland	OH	7.75%
<i>Messiah College</i>	Grantham	PA	6.00%
<i>Dallas Christian College</i>	Dallas	TX	8.25%
<i>University of Houston</i>	Houston	TX	8.25%
<i>Liberty University</i>	Lynchburg	VA	11.50%
<i>Seattle University</i>	Seattle	WA	10.00%

should vote in local elections. I think that if you are declared as a tax deduction in your parent's community somewhere else then that is your residence, and you should vote there."

Despite Gillete's opinions, the law does allow students to vote where they attend college.

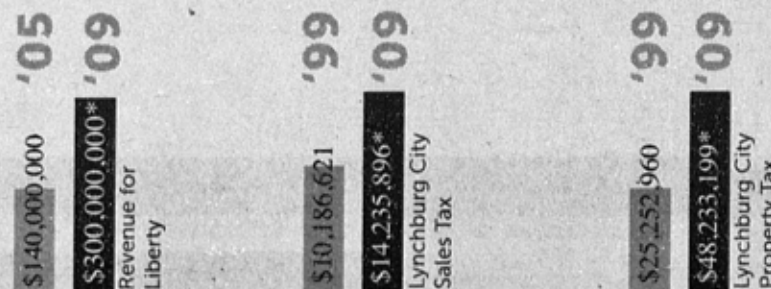
"Liberty students have the responsibility to step up to the plate and make sure Liberty is treated fairly," Falwell said. "(Then) we can work towards making Liberty University a

world class university – so students can display their diplomas with pride for generations to come."

buy the NUMBERS\$

drewmenard
Contributing Writer

analyzing Lynchburg's economic engine



Liberty University has been a driving economic force in Lynchburg's community since it was founded in 1971. The school's substantial growth over the last decade has made it a dynamic influencer on the local economy.

Dr. Jerry Falwell Sr.'s tenacious pursuit of his dream to create a haven of institutional excellence in the evangelical community built the firm foundation that Liberty has grown upon to become a vital part of Lynchburg's economy. Be it real estate, sales, restaurants or hotels, the university directly influences the health of the local economy.

on local sales

"The real value of Liberty University to the City ... is the students and their parents when they shop, eat and stay in the City."
— Donna Witt, Lynchburg Director of Financial Services

Of Lynchburg's revenue, 85.6 percent of all non-dedicated income (income at the city's discretion) and 70 percent of the General Fund come from local taxes, according to the City of Lynchburg (the City's) annual operating budget for 2009.

Liberty's impact on this figure can easily be traced to the bottom line – that is the line which runs along the bottom of Liberty Mountain. Ward's Road defines Liberty's western border, at the foot of the mountain. The four-lane road is teeming with economic life as numerous local businesses feed off of the heavy vehicle and foot-traffic. Ward's Road is also an economic engine that powers other sectors of the economy, as these businesses create satellite residential land developments and property taxes.

"When I look at Ward's Road and when I look at both the commercial and the residential development, it is undeniably the chief driving force in Lynchburg," Rex Hammond, president and CEO of the Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, said.

With 11,900 students only steps away, Ward's Road business owners rely heavily on the neighboring school's business.

"Liberty's designed outreach into the community puts Liberty students in contact with thousands of people in the community," Hammond said.

Lynchburg's income from sales tax has steadily increased over the past 10 years (since 1999), according to the 2009 operating budget. Only 2003 saw a decline in sales tax revenue, when it dropped by 7.4 percent, but in 2004 the figure increased by 4.5 percent, and boomed ahead, increasing by over six percent in each of the years leading up to 2009, which has been budgeted at an eight percent loss due to

the struggling economy.

However, in the midst of a growing national economic crisis in 2008, the City's sales tax revenue soared to 6.9 percent above the previous year. Last year, Lynchburg generated just under \$15.5 million in sales tax versus 2007's \$14.5 million.

In 2006, Liberty's population increased by nine percent, as did Lynchburg's sales tax revenue. The City's sales spike was the second-highest increase in the 10 year period outlined in the 2009 operating budget.

"The real value of Liberty University to the City ... is the students and their parents when they shop, eat and stay in the City. The City collects meals and lodging taxes plus the state collects sales tax from these activities – that directly benefits the City," said Lynchburg Director of Financial Services and Liberty alumna (1984) Donna Witt.

Local sales tax accounts for 11.1 percent of all non-dedicated revenues, according to the operating budget. Non-dedicated revenue is all of the funds that are used at the City's discretion.

"We have more restaurants and we have more businesses because of Liberty's presence in this community," Hammond said.

Meals tax in Lynchburg is still expected to grow this year, though at a less extreme rate than in years past. The City's operating budget showed that annual meals tax revenue has doubled in less than 10 years from just under \$5.5 million in 1999 to \$10.1 million in 2008. The City expects an increase of nearly two percent in 2009.

Liberty hosts a plethora of events which bring in thousands of people to Lynchburg each year. According to Liberty Enrollment Office employee Luke Enns, Liberty will welcome more than 25,000 guests this year. (See related story on page 6). These visitors affect three major areas of City revenue: meals tax, sales tax and lodge tax.

These events have been possible due to Liberty's aggressive recruitment, which has led to a surge in growth at the school in the past decade, bringing more visitors and parents to

Lynchburg in return.

In 1999, the City's income from lodge tax was \$963,921. In 2008, that number was over \$1.6 million, a 40 percent increase in just nine years.

To put this hike in perspective, Liberty's residential student population increased by 53 percent during the same period.

Though Liberty's direct impact on sales in the City cannot be calculated in dollars and cents, there is no denying the correlation with the university's growth and that of Lynchburg's economy.

Liberty has 4,937 commuter students this year, according to a report provided by Susan Misjuns, the director for research/institutional reports. There are an additional 1,700 students

on local real estate

"There are times when I wonder if education is a secondary vocation and real estate is a primary vocation, because (Liberty) is involved in so many transactions."

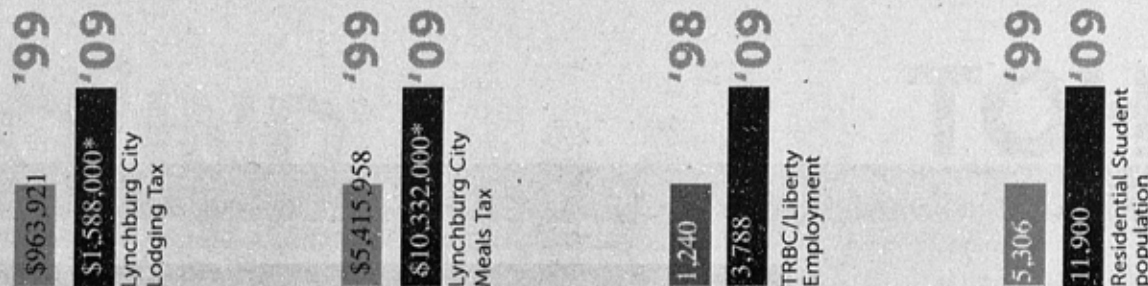
— Rex Hammond, Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

living locally who are enrolled in Liberty's online program, according to Liberty Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. These students, in addition to the staff and alumni who reside locally, are a chief contributor to one of the greatest financial revenues the City has – real estate.

Real property tax, or taxes collected from real estate and land development, generates 37.7 percent of Lynchburg's non-dedicated operating budget, based on projections for 2009, in which the City has anticipated a 3.6 percent increase from last year's \$46.5 million.

Currently Liberty's property value is just under \$109 million, according to Witt, of which \$14.5 million is taxable, paying the City over \$150,000 in taxes.

"The total assessed value of real property in the City is estimated to be over \$4.5 billion as of July 1, 2008," according to the 2009 operating budget.



* Proposed for 2009



photo by eli overbey

In other words, Liberty owns approximately 2.4 percent of all assessed real property value in the City.

"There are times when I wonder if education is a secondary vocation and real estate is a primary vocation, because (Liberty) is involved in so many transactions," Hammond said.

The City's revenue from real property increased by 46 percent between 1999 and 2008, according to the City's 2009 operating budget. During that time, revenue increased each year, with four years bringing in more than a 10 percent increase from the previous year. In 2008 for example, Lynchburg notched a 15.6 percent gain in real property – Liberty's residential student population increased by 7.5 percent in that same year. Of those students, 43 percent were living off-campus, according to Misjuns.

In each of the other years that the City's real property revenue was up over 10 percent, Liberty's population grew by a minimum of 7.5 percent, the highest of which was 14.5 percent in 2002, when the City had a 10.7 percent increase in

real property gains. Also, the percentage of commuter students during each of those years was never lower than 37 percent.

"I would be interested to see if it wasn't for Liberty and other educational institutions how stagnant the growth here in Lynchburg would be," Liberty alumnus (1979) Tom DeWitt, owner of Dewitt Real Estate and Auctions and Liberty alumnus, said.

Liberty University and its related entities (Thomas Road Baptist Church and Lynchburg Christian Academy) are the second largest employer in Lynchburg with 3,788 workers, employing 10.5 percent of the City's workforce. Only Centra Health Inc. employs more people in the City than Liberty University, according to the City's 2009 proposed budget. Nine years earlier Liberty was No. 6, employing over four percent of the City's workforce.

However, Liberty's direct impact on the job market can hardly be assessed based merely on those figures, as employees who service the school are not included in this total. For example, employees of Sodexo and the Barnes & Noble campus bookstore are excluded.

As the school continues to grow, more and more service jobs, such as those at Sodexo, will be made available to members of the community.

"There are a lot of front line administrative positions that are

filled by local people (at Liberty)," Hammond said. "We've seen substantial growth from Liberty both in terms of enrollment and supporting workers to facilitate those educational needs."

Not only does Liberty provide jobs to the community, it provides a substantial amount of the workforce as well.

"You can't go into a restaurant without being serviced by a Liberty student," Hammond said.

Hammond also explained that though the City cannot provide jobs for every graduate, Liberty grads fill many of the community's needs in the workforce.

"Nursing ... education ... business and law – those are degrees that any community can use and certainly those graduates have an opportunity to fill positions that are available in Lynchburg," Hammond said. "Liberty's curriculum is very practical for our community's needs and the needs of our region."

Even in the midst of an economic crisis, Lynchburg continues to press forward, thanks largely in part to its "diversified economy," according to Hammond.

"I see Liberty's and (TRBC)'s presence in Lynchburg as very symbiotic, we benefit each other," he said. "Without question Liberty has been one of the leading growth components of our community in the past five years."

Liberty's curriculum is very practical for our community's needs and the needs of our region.

— Rex Hammond, Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

economic BOOSTER SHOT

a look at how liberty university boosts the local economy

Jessica Carniol
Contributing Reporter

Whether it's Parent's Weekend, College for a Weekend (CFAW), Commencement or just one of numerous yearly conferences, the local economy gets a big shot in the arm each time crowds pour into Lynchburg for Liberty's latest event.

"The constant flow of visitors for recruiting, sporting and academic events is a major source of revenue for the hotel and restaurant business. This year, the DeMoss Grand Lobby Visitor Center will welcome between 25,000 and 30,000 guests," Enrollment Office employee Luke Enns said.

Some of the highest revenue-generating events hosted by Liberty University include Commencement, Winterfest, CFAW and Friendly Fridays. This past year, CFAW brought in 5,914 visitors to the Lynchburg area. Winterfest generated 5,250 visitors, and Friendly Fridays have brought 1,061 people to the Lynchburg area.

"The total recruitment guests will reach 13,000 this year," Enns said.

According to the STAR Report from Smith Travel Research, Lynchburg-area hotels generally have just a 52 percent occupancy rate, a 4.7 percent decrease from last year, which the STAR Report blames on the bad economy. That 52 percent occupancy rate skyrockets, though, on certain weekends.

"When special events are held at Liberty University, the demand for hotel rooms increases dramatically. Some of the primary drivers for occupancy are Commencement, students returning back to school, College for a Weekend, WinterFest,

Homecoming and Parent's Weekend," Wingate and Days Inn Hotel Regional Manager Brian Knopp said.

During these events, hotels can expect to run between 90 and 100 percent occupancy.

The Days Inn at River Ridge Mall has 131 rooms. Wingate features 131 rooms, and the Super 8 Motel has 58 rooms. Because of the influx of visitors during these events, the rates for hotel rooms typically increase from \$20 to \$30 per night.

"The busiest months for the hotel business in Lynchburg are May, August and October. You will notice a correlation with these dates and events held at colleges," Knopp said.

Not only are hotels impacted by the amount of visitors, restaurants also welcome visitors and their accompanying appetites.

Due to the increase of Liberty students and visitors, restaurant owners have been putting new restaurants near the university, concentrating primarily on Wards Road and Candler's Mountain Road.

According to the Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce, Wards Road is the area that generates the majority of the city's sales tax revenue. Wards Road hosts a variety of restaurants and shopping centers greatly impacted by Liberty events.

"During Liberty University events such as Commencement, College for a Weekend and Winterfest, our restaurant stays packed. There are usually wait times up to an hour long to get a table," Logan's Roadhouse waitress Wynne Miller said.

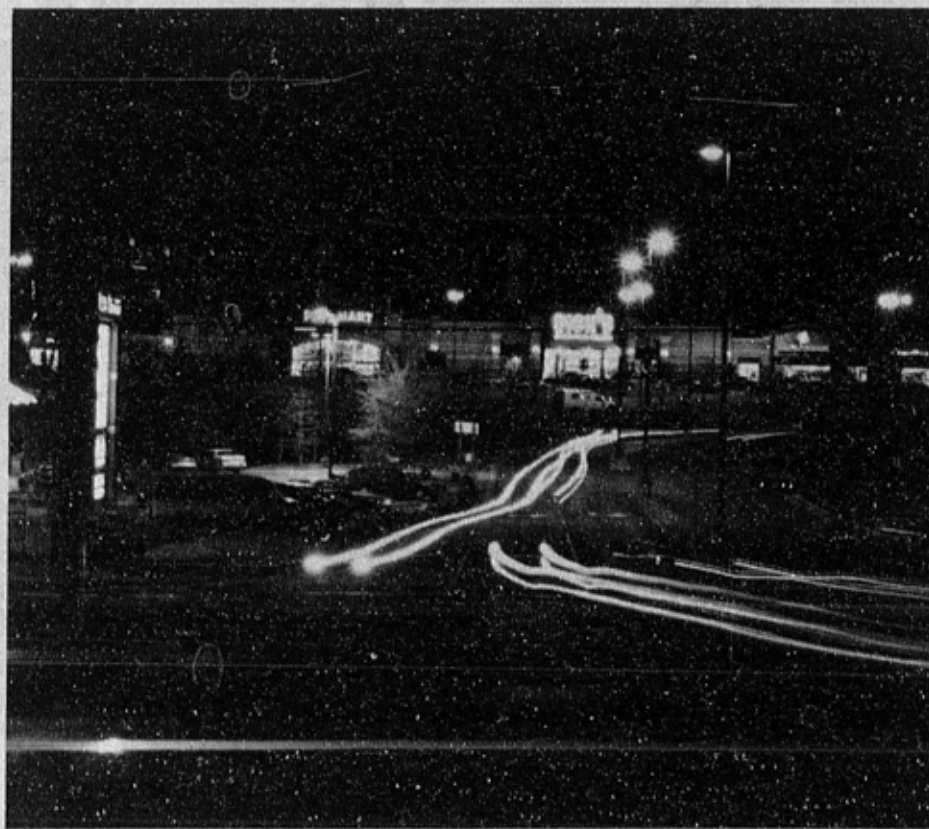


photo by alex tovers

VALUE OF BRICK AND MORTAR

Post Office at Campus North, Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Liberty OneCard Office Relocation, WiMAX, new bridge to Campus East, road improvements across from Lynchburg Regional Airport, Perimeter road, new parking lots, extensive campus road repaving, sidewalk repair and construction, antenna system replacement, Towns/Alumni smart classroom, School of Engineering labs and classrooms, School of Law upgrades, new classrooms at Campus North, DeMoss Third Floor, Molecular Biology Labs, design of performing arts theater, Reber-Thomas expansion, Doc's Diner, Campus North food court, Sub Connection expansion, Hangar renovation, Dorm 7 repair, Liberty Inn renovations, renovations of all residence hall bathrooms and rooms, Campus East dorm purchase, Indoor soccer arena, Vines Center seat replacement, Tolsma Track and baseball field lighting, Snowflex, trail system, painthall course, ice rink renovations, equestrian pastures, Ivy Lake upgrades, etc.

Lee Beaumont, head of Auxiliary Services, said the amount spent on these and various other improvements around campus has totaled more than **\$70 million**.

getting AROUND

buses move more than students thanks to joint venture



photo by alex towers

amandasullivan
Editor

Click. Click. Click. Liberty University students 2012, 2013 and 2014 climbed aboard the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) bus, which is labeled with a bright yellow "EXPRESS" sign adhered to the front window. The transit system on Liberty's campus was implemented just over two years ago to help ease traffic congestion on the roads.

With Liberty's expansive growth in recent years, the school now comprises more than

half of the GLTC's ridership, according to GLTC Assistant General Manager Scott Willis. The school's growth will soon cause the transit program to reach 2 million riders within the first two years of its existence.

"As of January 2009, for the fiscal year 2009, LU ridership is 69.1 percent of our total ridership - traditional city route plus LU on-campus routes," Willis said. "Of our city-only ridership, 9.8 percent of the trips have been paid for

by an LU ID (student, faculty or staff)."

The total GLTC ridership for fixed routes for the 2009 fiscal year is nearly 1.9 million, with Liberty on-campus passengers making up 1.2 million of the number. The city routes have bussed 648,737 passengers, of which 63,649 riders used a Liberty ID to utilize the LU Universal pass, according to Willis.

Liberty's partnership with the GLTC has affected more than the number of patrons who board the bus each year. In fact, the joint venture has created a need for more employees within the GLTC walls, which is a welcomed reality with the current economic crisis.

"We hired about 25 additional operators — most (of whom are) full time," Willis said. "We also had to hire two more supervisors."

Although Liberty has impacted GLTC ridership and Lynchburg residents via employment, the university also increases the company's cash flow, because of increased government funding.

"Liberty pays about \$1.6 million per year for the bus service. The City of Lynchburg pays \$1.1 million for the city service," Willis said. "The Commonwealth and the federal government pay in about \$2.4 million. The rest comes from some other partners (such as) Amherst County and Lynchburg Sheltered Industries and cash fares."

Despite the large intake of money, GLTC does not retain the funds.

"Keep in mind we are non-profit so we are not 'making money' off anything. Liberty pays for the service it receives — nothing more, nothing less. Because of Liberty, we will be eligible for more federal and state funding," Willis said. "This will reduce the amount Liberty has to pay. However, I believe the University intends to expand service instead of reduce the Liberty internal

transit budget to GLTC."

The GLTC has also added more busses to accommodate the expansion caused by Liberty's ridership. The company recently replaced six of the 14 busses Liberty uses for transit purposes.

In addition, Liberty also brings a younger ridership to the transportation company. In recent years, the GLTC's ridership has consisted of the economically disadvantaged, the elderly or the disabled, according to Willis.

"With Liberty and other college students riding our busses, we're able to project an image of coolness that goes with riding the bus," Willis said. "This is just picking up steam. We're hoping to keep building it."

Because of Liberty's contribution of more youthful riders, the GLTC has been able to more fully develop routes that were previously lacking a quick pace.

"One direct benefit to our regular city ridership has been the addition of a 4F bus (route) funded by Liberty," Willis said. "This provides 30-minute service down Fort Avenue to the River Ridge Mall and Liberty. Without Liberty's contribution, this would be a 60-minute service."

Liberty's input will expand to encompass future routes that will assist both commuter students and Lynchburg residents, according to Willis.

"As of right now, Liberty plans on funding additional service on other city routes to the benefit of Liberty commuter students and all bus riders," Willis said. "More generally, Liberty is a major player in the community. It is very beneficial to be partnered with such an influential organization."

a look at the EVENTS

more than just academics

Snowflex, plays, graduation, sporting events, concerts, and CFAW attract thousands to the Liberty campus each year.

Whether it's the great outdoors, sports, music, or theatre, visitors and students alike can find it in, on, or around the Mountain.



photo by les schofer



photo by alex towers



photo by joel coleman

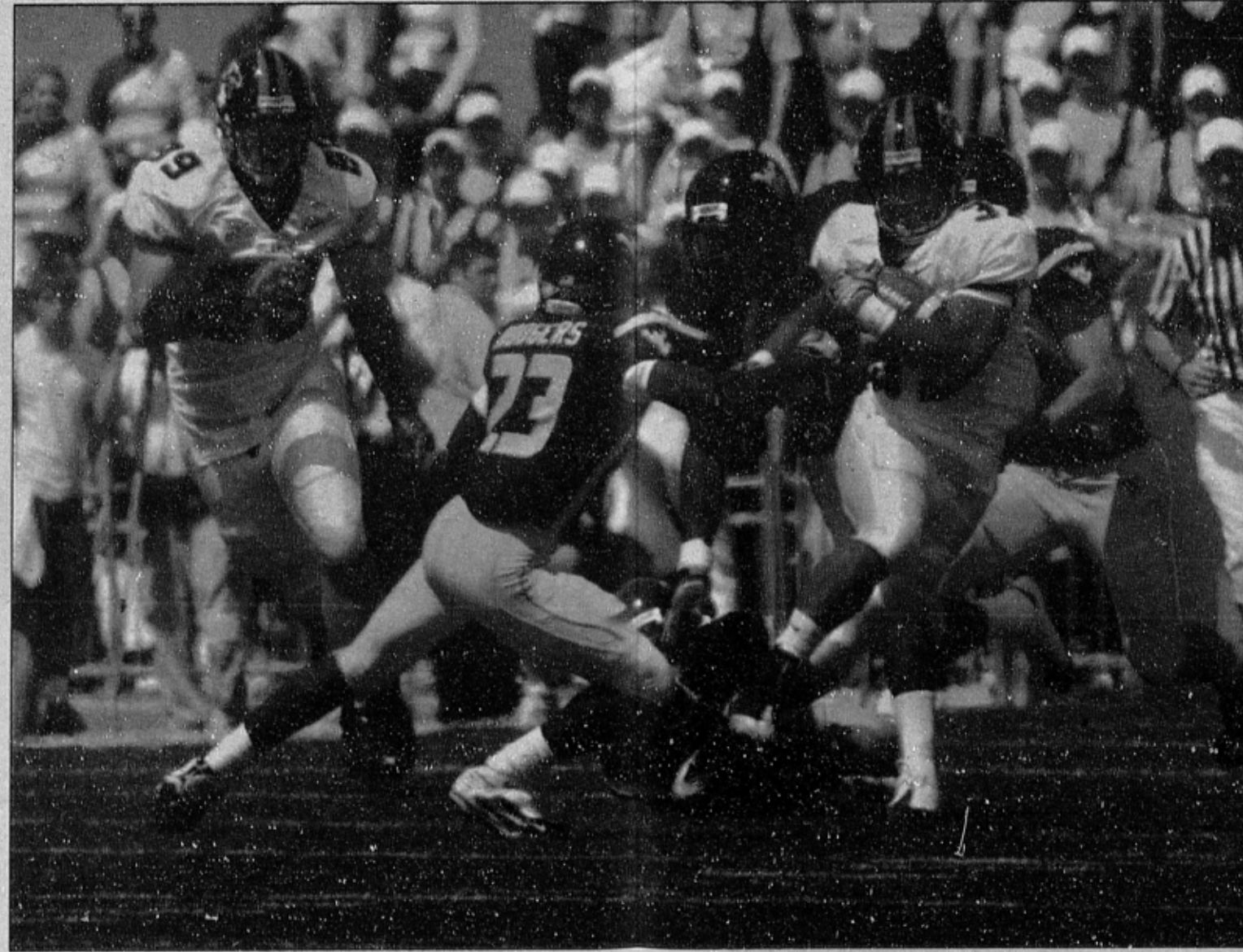


photo by alex towers



photo by alex towers



photo by eli overbey



photo by alex towers

fanningtheeconomic FLAMES

the liberty flames bring in the community for sporting events

axelcerny

Contributing Reporter

One of the most prominent ways that the Liberty University effect can be felt on the surrounding area is through the vehicle of NCAA Division I athletics. Student athletes at Liberty play at the highest possible level of collegiate competition in America. In fact, almost every American athlete that competes professionally had previous experience in Division I athletics, and the Flames are becoming more successful each year.

In the college sport that draws the most fans per game, football, Liberty's program has soared since Coach Danny Rocco took over in 2006 following a 1-10 season. The 2008 season saw the Flames' football team roll to a 10-2 record and a Big South Conference Championship for the second consecutive year.

For the surrounding area, this has meant more and more customers in town, especially on Saturday afternoons. In 2005, football games at Liberty averaged 4,500 people in attendance. In the 2008 season, Williams Stadium saw an average of 13,200 people at each Flames home game, so those planning on getting a hotel room for a game next season might want to make a call now. In fact, local hotels, such as the Wingate and Super 8, have had to put up no vacancy signs often on Friday and Saturday nights when the Flames are at home, according to Director of Athletics Jeff Barber.

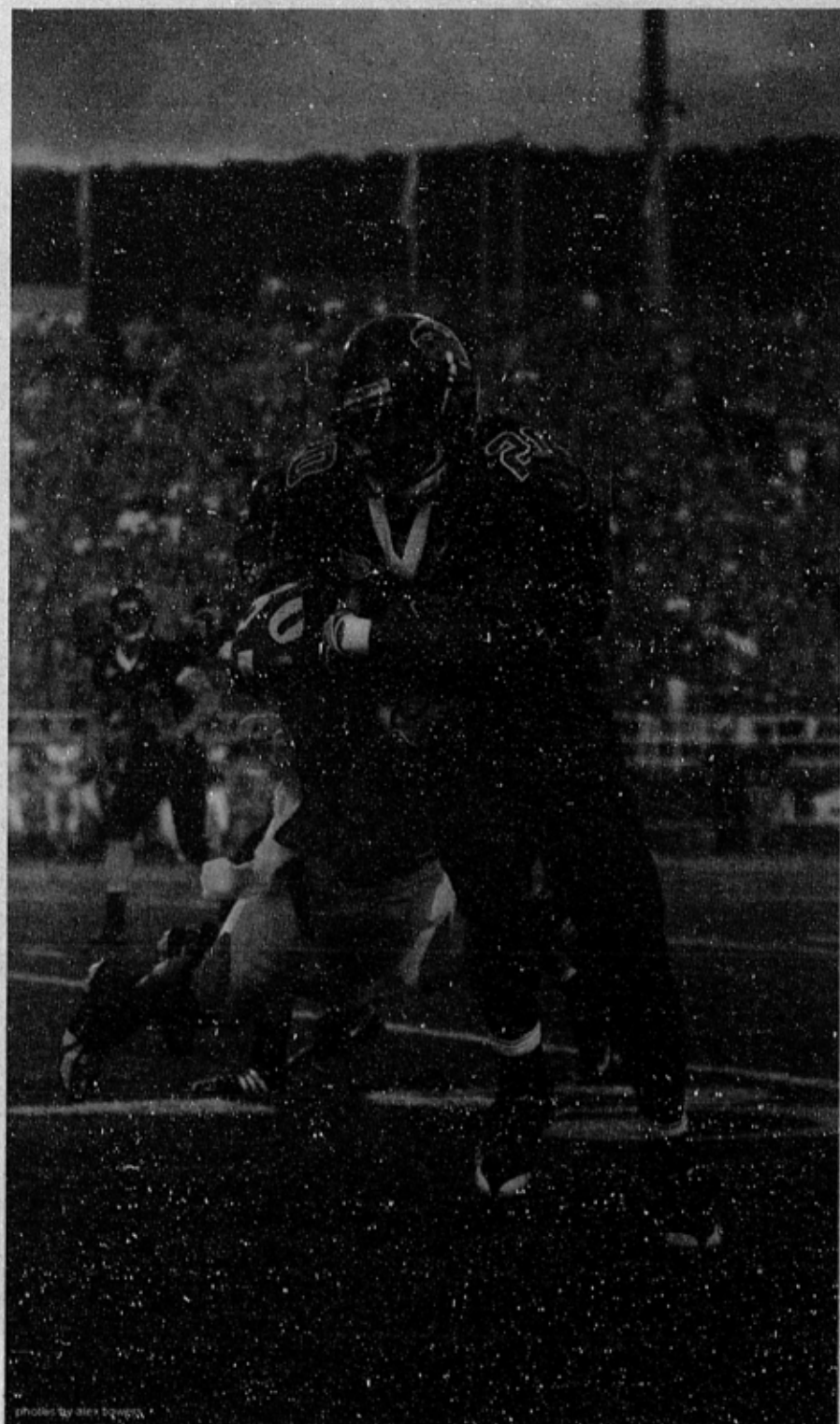
When Barber reflects on how much the athletic program's influence has grown in the past few years, he can't help but smile.

"We have been fortunate to have a very positive effect in the surrounding community," he said. "And the continued success of all of our athletic teams is only going to lead to bigger and better things."

The Flames Club is one of the outlets that Barber is proud to point to when he explains just how the university is impacting the area. Obviously, there are many sponsors for games who put their signs on scoreboards or on the outfield wall at baseball

games or court-side at basketball games, but members of the Flames Club are men and women from the community (many parents) who give generally or toward specific sports of the athletics program. In 2005, the 90 members of the Flames Club raised \$50,000. In 2008, the group grew to 1,500 members, and raised over \$1 million.

So when football game day traffic has drivers banging their heads against the steering wheel, think of how thankful the businesses in the area are for the extra sales. Much of the nation is experiencing rough financial waters these days, but it is clear here in central Virginia, Liberty athletics is doing its part to stem the tide and provide some fiscal stability for the surrounding community.



athletes give back... CAMP FLAMES

summer camps provide learning opportunities for youth

Camps at **LU**

SPORTS CAMPS

Baseball	140
Laker Basketball	900
Carey Green Basketball	175
Rocco Football	340
Jesse Castro Wrestling	200
Jeff Alder Soccer	250
Womens Soccer	65
Maximum Performance Volleyball	800
Hockey	80

YOUTH CAMPS

Boys State	900
Go Tell Ministries	500
Teen Pact Leadership	30
Extreme Impact	500
Drama	145
Tim Lee - Youth Alive Conference	1,500
George N. Parks Drum Major Academy	50
Impact Marching Conference	12
Student Life	2,000
Summit Ministries	150
Debate	100
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	250

CONFERENCES

Summit Ministries Pastors Conference	110
Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia	1,000
Grace Church - War Cry	500
Total projected for Summer 2009	10,000

jordanlosasso
Contributing Reporter

The hustle and flow might slow during the summer for Liberty University, but it never stops. Liberty athletics put on 17 different athletic camps this past summer designed to develop athletic talent and skills, and to allow high school athletes to see a glimpse of life at Liberty.

Over 10,000 people were slated to attend summer camps and conferences at Liberty this year and 2,000 of those are students participating in athletic camps.

"Any time there is an opportunity for the community to see the university, and have a better appreciation for the school and (women's basketball), it's a good thing," Carey Green, Basketball Camp Director and head coach of the women's basketball team, and Assistant Coach Heather Stephens said.

Liberty's women's basketball program holds three camps for different ages and skill levels throughout the summer. Individual Camp is for all high school girls, Elite Camp is for girls at the varsity level and Flames Day camp reaches girls in grades five through eight.

The camps allow the participants to build relationships with fellow campers, the coaches and most of all the Lady Flames.

"My favorite thing about the camps is the relationships," Coach Carey Green said.

One camper suffered an unfortunate knee injury prior to camp, but she was able to seek guidance from Moriah Frazee, a Lady Flame who went through a similar injury and surgery.

Frazee and the camper exchanged e-mail addresses and communicated back and forth about the struggles of knee injuries. Frazee encouraged the girl through the healing process.

"The campers don't come to see me or Coach Green. They come to see the players," Stephens said.

The Lady Flames are able to form a unique

bond with the campers that the coaches cannot.

"They view coaches as adults with a separate status level. They form relationships with players and get to see the Lady Flames as people. The Lady Flames are role models for the campers," Stephens said.

"I may not be involved with every drill but these girls don't come for... me. These 8-year-old girls look up to players like Megan Frazee," Green said.

The campers get to test their basketball abilities against the Lady Flames, who are an instrumental part of the camps every year. Every one of the players has been involved, according to Green.

The camps offer an avenue for the girls to play against elite competition and even WNBA talent. It is that competition that allows Carey Green Basketball Camps to be successful in its purpose for developing the player's skills. The three-day camps provide the attendees the tools to continue to improve beyond the summer.

"We give them exposure to drills so they can work on them at home. To give them the tools to take home and develop is our goal," Stephens said. "(The goal) is to help campers develop better fundamentals and provide an opportunity to apply them in game situations."

Green made it clear that "Our mission is to reach people for Christ and basketball is a tool. Jerry Falwell knew that when he said we reach youth with two major things—sports and music."

exercising our CIVIC DUTY

students have an active voice in local government

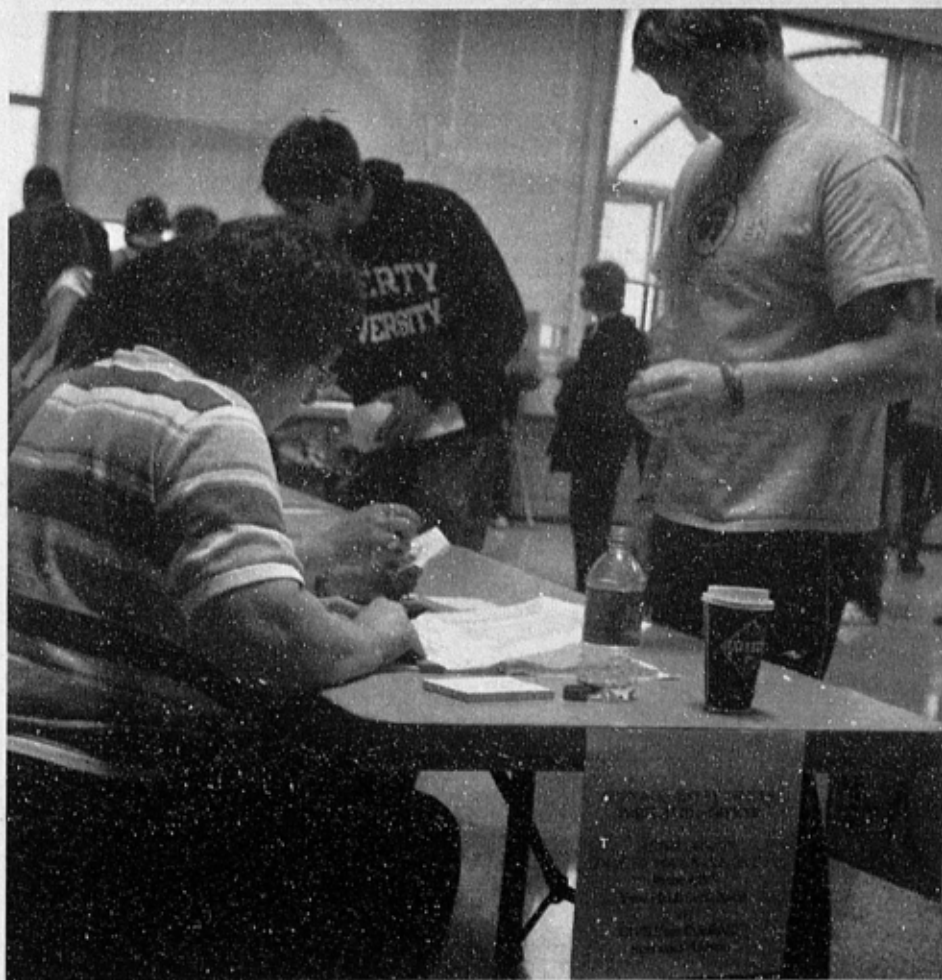


photo by alex towers

danielmartinez
Contributing Reporter

On Tuesday, Nov. 4, students at Liberty University woke up with an important task on the day's agenda. There were no classes, labs or seminars, but nearly half the on-campus population woke up that morning with their civic duty on the brain: they had to go vote.

Students from Florida, Maryland, Texas, Delaware, Ohio and nearly every other state in the Union were able to forego the tedious use of absentee ballots in the weeks prior thanks to a voter registration drive that had allowed them to name their dorms as their current places of residence. Thus, more than 4,000 Liberty

students voted in the city of Lynchburg on Nov. 4.

"Liberty University is distinctively different from many schools," said Wendell Walker, a 1984 graduate of Liberty University and current Vice Chairman of the Lynchburg Republican City Committee. "One of the big reasons is the University's push for students to have an active voice in government."

While other schools have had similar voter registration campaigns, Larry Provost, the director of commuter affairs at Liberty, believes this drive garnered much more attention because of the Christian voice it

sounds. The mission to actively sound that voice began with the school's founder, the late Dr. Jerry Falwell.

"He always encouraged people to get involved," Walker said of the late Dr. Falwell.

And Liberty students did get involved, to the point that the 4,200 students who registered to vote in Lynchburg became a part of a glaring figure: in the presidential election of 2008, Senator John McCain received 17,638 votes in Lynchburg, Va. Barack Obama received 16,269 votes, just over a thousand fewer.

Walker described sites in Lynchburg where people waited in line for hours to vote, some of them leaving without casting their votes because of the sheer length of the lines. He attributed this to the volume of students participating, a significant new factor in the city's voter turnout.

"Young people are beginning to get involved in government because they see how it affects them," he said.

While there has been much talk about Liberty University's impact on the city of Lynchburg in the 2008 presidential election, the work is far from over. There will be other elections before the 2012 presidential election, elections for city council, governor, mayor and judge. The laws these politicians pass and decisions they make will affect students at Liberty whether they realize it or not. The 2008 election has shown that Liberty student votes can and will have an impact, and politicians need to seize the favor of the student voters in order for that impact to be in their favor.

"It sends a clear message that all candidates for public office need to be mindful of these tenets," City Council member T. Scott Garrett said.

"Politicians pay attention to that sort of thing," Lee Beaumont, Liberty's director of auxiliary services, said. "We (members of the Liberty community) have a lot of sway."

While many young people associate elections with the office of president, there is

much more to be voted on.

"The city typically tends to go Democrat," Walker said.

Patricia Bower of the Lynchburg City General Registrar pointed out Democratic candidates for governor won the city vote in 2001 and 2005 by margins of 1,200 and 600 votes, respectively.

Even beyond titles such as president, governor, or mayor, Liberty students have the ability to vote on issues that directly impact them. Beaumont pointed to meal taxes, bed taxes, and property taxes, which are nearly double in the city what they are in the rest of the county that all affect students, as well as laws that require certain projects around the campus, thereby snagging the school's money before it can be spent on academics or things that would make time on campus more enjoyable for students.

Ultimately, the money that students pay in tuition, fees, and funds can often be traced back to requirements imposed by City council to build certain roads, traffic signals, turning lanes, crosswalks, and even parking spaces, some of which are questionable needs. When money must be spent on such projects, it comes from tuition paid by students themselves.

"Liberty students deserve the same level of service as any other citizen ... the facts are that 72.54 percent of the city's sales tax revenue comes from sales taxes paid in Ward III by Liberty University staff and students and other citizens while shopping and dining in the Wards Road area," Roy Jones, director of development for Liberty University, said.

"Make no mistake about it, the 11,900 students, the (nearly) 4,000 Liberty employees and all citizens who shop, dine out and do their shopping on Wards Road are the ones who pay the vast majority of all sales tax collected for the city," Jones, a 1981 graduate of Liberty, said. "For the most part the city then turns around and spends the majority amount of tax dollars collected in other areas of the city, rather than

reinvesting those funds into Wards Road area."

Jones said that Liberty leaders had more than just the presidential election in mind when encouraging students to vote last fall.

"A lot of people mistakenly thought the Chancellor was just trying to help the Republican Party in 2008, but the fact is Mr. Falwell is trying to empower students and the Liberty employees and faculty to start standing up for our rights and responsibilities in this community. Wards Road improvements must be vastly expanded to support the university's continued growth," he said.

"You have to get approval by the city to do anything," Beaumont said. "For building projects, you need building permits, zoning licenses; when you disturb land, you have both city and state permits you need to pull, and when you submit a plan for these projects, there's a Technical Review Committee (TRC) that you have to pay so they review your plan and see if they'll let you do something or other."

Tuition rises as the cost of running the university rises, and the city's decisions about what the school does and does not need is what bumps up that cost of running the university.

According to Beaumont, Liberty is required to have a certain amount of parking spaces on campus, though there are regularly 1,000 empty spaces around the school each day. The campus was required to have a turning lane on the road by Doc's Diner, to build the perimeter road, and to add certain sidewalks. Liberty is even required to plant a certain amount of trees and shrubs around the campus.

Even the new Barnes & Noble bookstore that opened on Saturday, April 18, has restrictions. "We need a roundabout in front of it," Beaumont said, "a traffic circle, in other words. It will take a few months to build."

"City council voted to keep property tax rates the same. They could have lowered them. If it went down, it would give us more money to do other things. I'd rather spend \$100,000 on something that would benefit the students rather than on a traffic study (about Ward's Road)," Beaumont said.

The 2008 presidential election is in the past, but those 4,200 Lynchburg city votes aren't going to evaporate. There are many issues to which those voters can lend their attention, and people will listen, because, as Beaumont

said, Liberty is the largest "employer, tourism engine, and economic engine" in the city.

"The local registrar is considering giving Liberty its own (voting) precinct," Walker said. A voting precinct, he said, holds about 4,000 votes, but that number was already surpassed by the results of the voter drive in the 2008 election, and, given the current state of the school's growth, Walker said it is almost guaranteed that a new precinct will be created. With its own precinct, Liberty would have more power to vote people and values into office that could alter the city and the state.

"There's a lot of people there (at Liberty) who can affect the city and the world," Walker said.

Provost said part of the intention of the voter registration drive was to get students voting so that their Christian values would stand up. He called it "becoming a complete citizen for the Kingdom."

"Liberty voters were the reason the city has now shifted to Republican hands," Jeff Helgeson, a councilman and 1988 Liberty graduate, said.

"It is important for those running for political

office to recognize that you must listen to and represent the values and views of the Liberty voter," Helgeson, said.

"Many on council and state government had a free pass for far too long due to a bloc of more liberal voters. I am so delighted to see this shift as I have represented these same conservative views for my five years on council," Helgeson said. Helgeson is running in the June 9 Republican primary for the House of Delegates.

"Some state legislators even believe that the Lynchburg House of Delegates race this Fall could decide whether the Virginia House of Delegates is controlled by the Republicans or the Democrats in 2010, the year that the House will re-draw all the boundaries of all the election districts in the state," said Chancellor and President Jerry Falwell Jr. "The party in control in 2010 will draw those boundaries to give itself a clear advantage in all elections over the next 10 years. Liberty students are uniquely positioned to decide the winner of that race in the fall and, indirectly, the direction of Virginia politics over the next decade."



a place to grow JUBILEE CENTER

providing local youth with positive role models

dominiquemckay
Contributing Reporter

On college campuses around the U.S., students are constantly juggling schoolwork, part time jobs and social activities, but on the campus of Liberty University, some students willingly add one more item to the long lists of daily activities in the form of community service.

Each day after classes, a group of Liberty students participate in tutoring and supervising recreational activities with children from the Lynchburg community at the Jubilee Family Development Center located on Florida Avenue.

"Liberty University has been our main source of volunteers, and we would not be able to operate without them," Sterling Wilder, executive director of the Jubilee Family Development Center said.

The center was founded in 1999 to help with the local community's need for a program that targets at-risk youth. Now celebrating 10 years of service, the center has worked to meet its goal of leading children away from lives of crime and instead offers them programs and services that will help develop their academic and social skills. They have five major programs including the tutorial program, Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) program, occupational outreach program, internship program and college preparation program.

Each year, members from the center attend Liberty's volunteer open house hoping to sign up new volunteers who are eager to help. Volunteers come from a variety of majors including sports management, family and consumer sciences and education.

"Every semester we get quite a few Liberty University students that are either doing their practicum or internships and many come to do their Christian service hours," Ghana Ramey, director of Educational Programs said. "We also have had a couple students this semester and last semester come in and do job shadowing."

Kody Kreis, a junior sports management major, began volunteering at the Jubilee in February for his sports management practicum.

"When the Jubilee was described, it sounded like a place where kids needed

role models," Kreis said. "I had a friend who worked at the Jubilee for a work study program. She told me a lot about the kids and how some come from difficult families or environments. Right when I heard it, I felt as if I should do this as my practicum."

Student volunteers from Liberty's History Honors Club threw the children at the center an Easter party and egg hunt. In the past, they have also put together Halloween parties. Ramey said she has students who come back every semester to do their community service because they get connected to the children who they help out.

"I really like playing basketball with the kids," Kreis said. "It's fun getting to know them through sports. I think kids usually open up more to people when they share something in common. At the Jubilee, a lot of the kids love basketball."

"We are really grateful and we really depend on Liberty students that come down every semester. We don't have a large staff here at Jubilee because we are a non-profit organization so everything is solely dependent upon support and contributions," Ramey said.



photos by cat hewitt

making dreams COME TRUE

liberty university athletes give back to the special olympics

jakepetersen
Contributing Reporter

Over the past year, members of the Flames athletic teams have partnered with Special Olympians from across the state of Virginia in an effort to give back to the Lynchburg community. Liberty Athletics has taken local Special Olympics teams from the Piedmont Region, under its wing – mainly in the form of the Liberty University Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

The SAAC is an organization solely for Liberty University athletes, and it works to raise money for a specific cause. Last year, it was the Make-A-Wish Foundation. This year, they chose the Special Olympics of Virginia (SOVA), and the athletes, under the leadership of advisor Meredith Eaker, have embraced the mission whole-heartedly, dedicating countless hours of precious time to everything from fundraising to clinics to just befriending these special group of athletes who enjoy sports just as much as they do.

"We had players from (Liberty's) volleyball team come to some of our volleyball games and players on their basketball team come to some of the men's games as well," Eaker said. "They actually got to run out of the tunnel that the Liberty basketball players run out of with the smoke and everything."

"My favorite event this year was simply sitting with all the Special Olympians at one of the basketball games. I had so much fun getting to know them" SAAC President and women's soccer player Rachel Wisheart said. "Working with Special Olympics of Virginia and Make-A-Wish Foundation has been a truly humbling experience and giving back to others is something that I plan on continuing even after graduating from Liberty."

Josh Walker, who serves as director of the Piedmont Region, had nothing but praise for the relationship that Liberty and the Special Olympics of Virginia have formed over the past year. Walker said Liberty played a huge role in SOVA actually founding an office in the Lynchburg area.

"We actually put an office in Lynchburg in large part because of Liberty and because Liberty and the Special

Olympics are very similar in our ideas and what we believe in," Walker said. "One thing that stood out was earlier this year at a volleyball game (when) we had a bunch of athletes come to the game, which Liberty actually lost. Instead of just staying in the locker room, the volleyball team came out and signed autographs and hung out with our athletes. They still talk about that to this day."

One of the primary focuses of the SAAC is to raise money through various fundraisers for the organizations they sponsor. This year, one of the SOVA's biggest fundraisers was the Polar Plunge, which took place on February 28 and was held just a few miles away from campus at Camp Hydaway, where 15 plungers braved the chilly waters and raised over \$2,400 for the Lynchburg Special Olympics sector.

On Saturday, April 18, Olympians and Liberty athletes met for what Walker called "A Day with the Flames" where athletes took part in Spring Game festivities as well as basketball and soccer clinics prior to the game.

"It's so cool to see them smiling all the time. That really amazes me and makes me realize that my joy can't be circumstantial and that just like they make others smile by smiling, I should do the same," SAAC member and men's soccer midfielder Juan Guzman said. "I think the greatest time I have had was at the Polar Plunge. Getting in that water with some of the athletes was awesome."

As the school year comes to a close, Liberty's involvement with the Special Olympics of Virginia will not. Eaker said she hopes Liberty can continue its relationship with SOVA, while Walker hopes to recruit volunteers for community service and internships next year.

In a time and culture which Guzman described as all about "me, me, me" this unique, simple and most importantly "special" way of athletes joining together to give back in a huge way fully exemplifies the late Rev. Jerry Falwell's vision of training Champions for Christ.



photos by alex towers

campus SERVE

liberty students get their hands dirty and hearts renewed

aubreyblankenship & brookemcdowell
Contributing Reporters

Each Saturday morning while most students are still sleeping off a full week of classes, a group of about 200 students make their way to room 1114 in DeMoss Hall. After a time of praise and prayer they split off into 12 groups, drive off campus and disperse into the Lynchburg community. Meet CampusSERVE, a student-led ministry.

"Liberty University is not just some private college on the mountain. We care about others, we care about the city of Lynchburg, we love the Lord and we're willing to serve in any way possible," sophomore Hannah Eason said.

"This ministry offers students the opportunity to help others in the community. '(The students) get a chance to look at people different from them and say, 'I want to use my life to reach out to them,'" CampusSERVE Supervisor Kevin Mahan said.

CampusSERVE spreads to 12 different sites — eight urban, two elderly care, one evangelism and one service project called Helps — in order to minister to community members ranging from inner-city children to the elderly. Like Eason, who serves at the College Hill site in downtown Lynchburg, most of the students spend time with children each weekend.

"We go around the neighborhood and pick up any kids whose parents grant permission and then take them to the community center and park a few blocks away," Eason said. "I have left CampusSERVE feeling on top of the world because a little kid said he had fun and his parent smiled when we returned him."

Others spend time talking, reading and singing with the elderly at senior living communities.

"Most of the residents do not have constant visitors or

there consistently," Mahan said.

Regardless of the site, all students involved in CampusSERVE hope to show the people of Lynchburg that they care and point them to the love of Christ.

"The goal of Helps is to evangelize and disciple people in the local community through building relationships by way of meeting practical needs first," sophomore Wesley Winebarger said. Winebarger is the site leader for the service project branch. "We have been able to repair homes, yards and have

a chance to meet some students from Liberty. They enlightened me and gave me a positive view of Liberty. The best ambassadors to the community are you young people."

Although they return to the same sites each week, students seek creative ways to minister, like a pair of weekly student-led Bible studies that have sprung up through Helps ministry in area homes.

"It has been incredible to witness the changes in lives that have already come through the Bible study," Winebarger said.



photos by Justin Kintzel

on serving the community

"Anytime you build a relationship with someone
their life is changed."

— Kevin Mahan

companionship, and they begin to lose their hope and faith," junior Brianna Crockett, site leader for The Summit, said. "The relationships that we form with them are some of the most honest and loving relationships that we have. Many of them will ask each week if the students are getting paid."

One major part of the ministry is that the students show up every week, not just once in a while. "People are more receptive because we are

even begun to repair broken lives."

Students feel privileged to receive back from the people they serve.

"Some (residents of Lynchburg) have offered us help in return (through) food or drink, delightful conversations and any number of other things," Winebarger said. "The best thing that they have offered is their friendship. One of my best friends is Martel, a 20-year-old guy in downtown Lynchburg."

CampusSERVE's consistent ministry draws thanks from the community. The Helps group knocked on the door of Jenny West's house in downtown Lynchburg and helped her with yard work.

"They were all delightful. They had pleasant and wonderful personalities," West said. "I'm glad I had

In order to relate to more people at The Summit, students have developed new ways to reach the residents.

"We used to only visit the rehabilitation and permanent residents where we walk around and make conversation, read passages from the Bible and pray," Crockett said. "But now God has given us the ability to expand and do a church service for the assisted living residents."

"The philosophy of CampusSERVE is about having an impact on others' lives through developing personal relationships.

"Any time you build a relationship with someone their life is changed," Mahan said.

Their ultimate goal, however, is to point people toward Jesus and have them transformed by a personal relationship with him.



providing care NURSING

nursing majors find a local marketplace for their well-honed skills

amandabaker
Contributing Reporter

Liberty University has long prided itself on a competitive nursing program that raises the bar for potential nursing students. This high standard not only challenges the students to become exceptional nurses, but it also encourages them to apply their extensive knowledge in the "real world."

By working with full-time nurses at local hospitals, nursing students are given the opportunity to minister to patients both physically and spiritually. Britney Jones and Christy Homer, who are in the process of completing their junior year, are exceptional examples of student nurses who represent Liberty in the Lynchburg medical community.

In order to graduate, Jones and Homer are required to complete clinicals at Virginia Baptist Hospital and Lynchburg General Hospital. Clinicals are the equivalent of an internship for other majors. They are given a list of patients to take care of for a certain period of time, then are required to write profiles on each individual to chronicle their condition, treatment and background information. Full-time nurses work closely with students the entire time to ensure accuracy and give encouragement.

"We have all of the Liberty nursing students coming to Lynchburg General and Virginia Baptist at some point during their curriculum. We have... about 330 students... We are their primary source for clinical rotations in Lynchburg, (and) they do rotate through all specialty areas," Centra Health Director of Professional Development Endorsing Research Roberta Vick said.

Jones and Homer both agree that their time spent in Lynchburg's hospitals has been extremely beneficial, and the staff has been helpful throughout the process.

"I have been at Virginia Baptist Hospital this semester on the Medical Surgical floor. My relationship with (the staff) there is so far really good. We work alongside the

nurses and (they) have all been so nice and helpful. They treat us students like we are actual nurses," Homer said.

"For the most part the staff is great ... when you are placed with a nurse who is willing to teach you and let you learn, it makes all the difference in how your clinical experience goes," Jones said.

However, working in a hospital simply for the sake of working is not all that Jones and Homer focus on when they serve their patients. The spiritual side of service is also on the forefront of their minds, in conjunction with the nursing program's purpose.

"The purpose of the Liberty University Department of Nursing is to prepare baccalaureate level nurses who are committed to Christian ethical standards and view nursing as a ministry of caring based on the Benner theoretical framework," according to the Liberty nursing home page.

With this in mind, Jones and Homer look for opportunities during clinicals to minister more than just physically. Jones had the chance to encourage a particular family after they found out a family member had cancer.

"I came in contact with a sweet woman who had just found out her brother had cancer and it was so far spread that they didn't think they could do anything for him. He wasn't my patient, but ... the day before ... this woman had been in the hall crying, so I went over to her and we just hugged and I began crying with her," Jones said. "I went back and wrote the family a letter and took it to them and we all got in a circle and I prayed for them. It was a touching experience because that side of nursing is what really impacts others. I definitely left clinical that day more touched than I could imagine."

Jones' favorite part of nursing is interacting with her patients and learning from the nurses who are on staff. She appreciates the knowledge that her time at Virginia Baptist

Hospital has given her.

"I have learned a lot from working in Lynchburg hospitals. Our clinical teachers try their best to give us experiences that will further our knowledge. I also have been able to put a lot of the skills to practice in the hospital that I have learned from our classes in school," Jones said.

While not every Liberty nursing student is considering staying in Lynchburg for their career, Homer is confident that she would consider working as a nurse locally once she received her resident nurse licensure.

"I want to work at Lynchburg General this summer as a certified nursing assistant because I feel like I would get a lot of experience for my future and get more acclimated to the hospitals I will be doing my clinicals for," Homer said.

Lynchburg General Hospital appreciates Liberty nursing students and sees them in a generally positive light. Homer experienced this when she called to inquire about a summer job a few weeks ago.

The Lynchburg medical field is inundated with Liberty students who are eager to join the workforce and improve the quality of healthcare that is offered to local residents. The attitude of Liberty's nursing students, including Jones and Homer, can be summed up in a paragraph found on Homer's Facebook page.

"Being a nurse isn't about grades. It's about being who we are. No book can teach you how to cry with a patient. No class can teach you how to tell a family that their loved one is dying

or has died. No professor can teach you how to find dignity in giving someone a bed bath. A nurse is not about the pills, the IV or the charting. It's about being able to love people when they are at their weakest moments and being able to forgive them for all their wrongs and make a difference in their lives today.

**No one can make you a nurse.
You just are."**



photos by alex towers

Growing Forward

a look at how Liberty University
makes a difference in and around
the Hill City

"Liberty is a major player in the community. It is very beneficial to be partnered with such an influential organization."

— Scott Willis,
GLTC Assistant General Manager

"I'm glad I had a chance to meet some students from Liberty. They enlightened me and gave me a positive view of Liberty. The best ambassadors to the community are you young people!"

— Jenny West, local resident

"Without question Liberty has been one of the leading growth components of our community in the past five years."

— Rex Hammond,
Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce

