The terrible massacre at Virginia Tech had a devastating impact on that campus that has reverberated to colleges across the nation. Cho Seung-Hui, a 23-year-old senior majoring in English at the university, was armed with a 9 mm and a .22-caliber handgun when he shot and killed 32 students and faculty members in two separate attacks on the morning of Monday, April 16.

The first attack occurred in one of the college’s dormitories, and left two students dead. Then, two hours later, the other attack occurred in a classroom building, leaving 31 people dead, including Cho.

Cho committed suicide as the Virginia State police were entering the building.

The tragic event is the deadliest shooting in modern U.S. history, surpassing the previous record that occurred in Killeen, Texas, in 1991, when George Hennard plowed his pickup truck into a Luby’s Cafeteria and shot 23 people to death, then himself.

In addition, the 32nd victim, Cho, who was originally from South Korea, moved to the United States in 1992 and lived in a suburb of Washington, D.C. He held a green card, which legally gave him the right to purchase the handgun.

The receipt was traced back to a small Roanoke gun shop, where store owner John Markell recalled selling Cho the gun more than a month earlier.

Believed to be on anti-depressant medication, Cho was often isolated in the back of his classes, and rarely participated in any on campus activities.

Along with an unsociable attitude, Cho was reported to college authorities for lighting a fire in his dorm room and was accused of stalking several female students.

The change in Cho’s behavior did not go unnoticed. His creative writing professor advised him to meet with the university’s counseling service, after he turned in a disturbing paper that featured bloody fights and plots of murder.
Special Report - Virginia Tech Massacre

Monday, April 23, 2007

Bucks County Community College’s Student Newspaper

THE CENTURION

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Bucks County Community College’s Student Newspaper

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Letters should be limited to 300 words. They will be edited for spelling and malicious or libelous statements, and may be edited for space. Letters must be the original work of the writer and must be signed. For identification purposes, letters must include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number, although the address and telephone numbers will not be published. Students should include their official membership cards with their letters.

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Official Member
2006-2007

Above: An image of Cho Seung-Hui taken from a package sent to NBC. News is calling, what NBC is calling, Cho’s manifesto.

Below: A map marking the location of Virginia Tech in relation to Bucks

Campus Shooting

Continued from Page 1

In the aftermath of the attacks a lot of blame has been thrown at Virginia Tech. Many parents of students are demanding answers regarding why the university failed to promptly shut down the campus and warn students about the first shooting.

“Not saying the second one could’ve been prevented, but students should have had some knowledge as to what was happening,” said Bucks student Elle Tomlinson, 21, nursing major from Levittown.

A memorial service for the fallen victims was held at Virginia Tech on Tuesday April 17. Due to the overwhelming number of attendees, campus officials moved the event from the basketball arena to the college’s 70,000 seat football stadium.

Among the speakers at the service were, Virginia Tech President Charles Steger, Va. Governor Tim Kaine, and President Bush and the first lady, Laura Bush. Steger opened the memorial service and, despite the controversy surrounding his handling of the shooting, was greeted with a 30 second standing ovation from the crowd.

President Bush, who gave a lengthy speech, ended by saying “As you draw closer to your families in the coming days, I ask you to reach out to those who ache for sons and daughters who are never coming home.”

Following the combined hour long speeches, portraits of the victims were raised. Among the faces hanging in the air were staff members Christopher James Bishop, 35, who taught German at Virginia Tech and helped oversee an exchange program with a German university, and Jocelyn Couture-Nowak, a French instructor and head of the horticulture department at Virginia Tech.

As a sign of respect, all classes have been cancelled for the rest of the week, and the buildings in which the shooting took place will be closed for the remainder of the semester.

After attending the services many Virginia Tech students packed up their belongings to head home. Many leave to escape from the media and negative atmosphere that is surrounding the campus.

The effects of shootings have been felt on both national and international levels. Multiple universities including Oklahoma, Texas and UCLA have shut down classes for the week.

South Korea also addressed the matter and, in a released statement to CNN, expressed sympathy for the victim’s families and hopes that the effects of this incident do not carry over into any racial discrimination.
VT Student Shares His Story

CHRIS FRANKLIN
Centurion Staff

Confusion. Heartache. Sorrow. He has felt them all in the days following the shooting spree at Virginia Tech University on April 16th. Why? Well, maybe it is because of the deaths of 33 of his fellow classmates and professors. Maybe it is the panic he sensed while locked down in his dorm, wondering if the “hell-on-earth” would somehow find its way to him. Or maybe it is the thought that he too could have been among the dead. A shy, wary voice echoes over the phone-line, the only thought that seems to be on his mind is, “thank God I’m alive.”

Cody Hunt still has trouble with the realization that he has been amidst the pandemonium of the largest school shooting in the history of the United States. An 18-year-old freshman at Virginia Tech and a graduate of Morrisville High School, Hunt never saw much of major historical events taking place in his presence.

“You don’t see much happening in Morrisville, so the shootings were a big shock to me,” he said.

On that Monday morning, the first initial shots were fired around 7:15 a.m. in West Ambler Johnston building, a co-ed dormitory that houses 895 students. Hunt lived two buildings over in “Slusher Wing” when the first shooting took place that killed two students. He and his roommate were in their dorm room. He heard screams and shouts that reminded him of “something out of a horror movie.” The sirens soon followed. At that point, his only fear was that the gunman would try to come into their residence hall. Hunt was relieved when the news reported that Cho had shot himself and was no longer a threat.

The second shooting took place in Norris Hall, where over 30 were murdered before the shooter, a 23-year-old English major named Cho Seung-hui, took his own life. It took place only a short distance from Hunt and his roommate’s dorm room. He heard screams and shouts that reminded him of “something out of a horror movie.” The sirens soon followed. At that point, his only fear was that the gunman would try to come into their residence hall. Hunt was relieved when the news reported that Cho had shot himself and was no longer a threat.

“I didn’t understand how the death-toll for a domestic disturbance went from a couple kids to 22…that’s when I knew the rumors were true,” he said.

As Hunt and his roommate sat in their room, preparing for the worst, the second round of the killing spree had already gone underway.

The whole experience has brought a heavy dose of reality to Hunt and all college students. The idea that institutions of learning can be the site of mass killings is a concept that doesn’t sit well with all. As for the killer, Hunt had mixed feelings about him. Many reports have been released regarding the mental health of Cho, but all conclude that he was a typical outcast and a loner. Instead of initially lashing out, Hunt offered some advice…

Hunt loves music and took to it early in life. He said that he under- stood how Cho felt and suggested that he should have joined some clubs and made some attempts to meet people like himself.

Had he never met him, but if I had, I would have tried to be a decent person to him… but I don’t think it wouldn’t have made much of a difference because I was told that he never talked- that he was a mute,” Hunt said.

Even though the devastation of the experience has not fully set in for many, Hunt and many of the Virginia Tech students have been gathered to mourn and come together as a college.

“I will never forget this for the rest of my life, but I hope that people don’t always associate this university with tragedy… we’re above and beyond that.”

Centurion Exclusive: Interview with a VT student.

Photo Credit: Tallahassee.com
Struggling to Understand

AMANDA CARDEN
REBECCA FAUCETTE
BLAIR SHUPE
Centurion Staff

As Bucks students and faculty struggled to understand how the massacre at Virginia Tech could have happened, many said they felt unsafe and were outraged by the lack of security on the VT campus.

"It is messed up, security should have been more tight," said John Nussbaum, 19, liberal arts major.

Students were told to stay in their dormitories or classrooms. Students were informed that there was a shooter on campus, but many students didn’t hear about it until after the shootings had already happened. Many college students and faculty from all over the country are reconsidering campus emergency procedures.

Kathy Webb, a professor in the math, science and technology department said, "There is an attitude that can happen anywhere." When asked about a possible emergency plan for Bucks, she said she didn’t think of one. "The biggest problem here is there is no way to get information broadcasted.

There was a suggestion post 9/11 to install a warning siren, but it never went through."

On the other hand, Jean Dolan, the assistant director for public relations, said her initial reaction was shock. "We do have an emergency communication plan for Bucks, she said she didn’t think we have one. "The biggest problem here is there is no way to get information broadcasted.

There was a suggestion post 9/11 to install a warning siren, but it never went through."

When asked about a possible emergency plan for Bucks, she said she didn’t think we have one. "The biggest problem here is there is no way to get information broadcasted.

There was a suggestion post 9/11 to install a warning siren, but it never went through."

"Global warming isn’t going to end us. We are going to end ourselves," said Mardy Matarazzo, 19, a Bucks bookstore worker.

"Where was security when they heard a gun shot? We can’t control guns because if people want guns they will find a way to get them anyway. Everyone is going insane, slowly but surely."

In the two hours in between the shootings, Cho mailed a letter to NBC news containing a video explanation for the massacre.

"I think he had too much time to plan what he did," said Nick Keenan, 20, a general education major. "It is too easy for anyone to do what this man did."

For many Bucks students security isn’t the main issue. The fact that someone can be evil enough to kill so many people is what worries them.

Shana Harris, 21, a communications major, said, "I think it is ridiculous. How can a person kill 32 people? I don’t feel any safer here than I would at a major college."

Harris also said that she would like to see stricter gun laws in place.

"Cho Seung-Hui checked into a mental hospital two years prior to the shooting. Why didn’t it show up when he bought the gun? We can’t control guns because if people want guns they will find a way to get them anyway. Everyone is going insane, slowly but surely."

The impact of the shootings was felt throughout the nation, as support from many universities continued to pour in to Virginia Tech.

Buck was among the schools showing support, as students held a memorial service on Thursday in the Quad.

"We might not have been directly impacted by the shootings, but we are still feeling the pain of those who have died and lost loved ones. It feels nice to have an opportunity to reflect and pay our respect to the victims and their families," said Bucks student Taj Carr, 20, liberal arts major from Levittown.

Matt Cipriano, the director of student life, opened the event with a short but heartfelt speech. Cipriano expressed compassion for the VT students, but also urged them to remain strong during what has become one of the deadliest events in US history.

"It’s a tragic event that occurred and all I can hope for is that everything turns out fine for the families and those impacted by this horrific ordeal."

Cipriano also used the time to reassure current Bucks students that their safety was not in jeopardy, but any concerns or improvements they felt could benefit the college should be suggested to the Bucks security office.

Before ending the speech, Cipriano asked the surrounding students and faculty to accompany him in a moment of silence for the victims.

As part of the service, Bucks students received the chance to write heartfelt messages for VT students. These messages were to be mailed to the Virginia Tech university relations department.

Karen Marks, 21, an art major from Newstown, was among the many eager students who seized the opportunity to express their sympathy for the fallen victims and their families.

"It’s such a tragedy what that university has gone through. It might only seem like a small gesture, but sending these messages gives students a chance to do something positive during such a dark time."

The opportunity to pay respect and support for VT was a gift that many attendees did not take lightly. Bucks students used this time to personally reflect on their own situations and lives.

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A Closer Look at Gun Laws

MARK BENNETT
Centurion Staff

The Virginia Tech massacre left many wondering whether tougher gun laws could have prevented such a tragedy.

“Virginia gun laws are some of the weakest state laws in the country,” Josh Horwitz, the executive director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, told The New York Times.

According to www.handguncontrol.org, Virginia currently rates a C on its gun control laws when compared to the other states across the country.

And what may come as a shock to many at students Bucks is that Pennsylvania actually rates a C- on its gun control laws when compared to the other states across the country.

In Pennsylvania, if someone under the age of 18 cannot purchase a firearm in Virginia, there is absolutely no waiting period to cool off and calm down before buying a gun.

In the Virginia Tech massacre, however, both guns used in the shootings were bought weeks prior to the slaughter.

Another loophole in Virginia is that no permit is required to carry a concealed weapon, and no background check is required to sell weapons in private dealings or in gun shows, which are frequently used by hunters and collectors to access slightly used guns at much cheaper prices.

There are no limits on the amount of ammunition that someone can buy in either state.

In Pennsylvania, if someone buys a pistol, assault pistol or assault rifle, they are required to undergo a background check, no matter where the purchase occurs.

Also, each person is run through a state and federal database when the background check is conducted, preventing criminals and others deemed dangerous from owning weapons.

Virginia requires more licensing as to gun ownership than Virginia.

VT held a memorial at the campus football field. A picture shown on the front page of the Collegiate Times, VT’s student newspaper, is of students gathered in a circle holding hands.

This picture shows just a portion of the grief and shock felt around campus for the students and teachers lost.

The chaos has ended, but the videos, pictures and memories of the most horrific school shooting in history will remain forever.

That’s not the case in Virginia.

There a 12-year-old child can walk into a gun shop, purchase a shotgun, rifle or assault rifle without a parent being present, and without a background check or a waiting period.

Virginia is popular for hunting, and the legal hunting age is 12.

Many parents find that hunting with their children is a great way to bond with them, but should a child of grammar school age be able to purchase a gun?

But guns are not always bought legally.

And once someone is determined enough to kill, there may be very little that can be done to stop them.
Mourners Turn to Internet

In the aftermath of tragedy, students turn to websites such as Myspace and Facebook to say their farewells.

LAURA IRWIN
Centurion Staff

The massacre at Virginia Tech prompted students, and millions of other myspace and facebook site subscribers, to log on and alert one another, spread information, and share reactions.

The immediate response system during the tragedy wasn’t campus officials, but internet jockeys — logged on, blogging and emailing.

The use of cell phones and computers to share information quickly surpassed any other method of bonding for those in search for answers. Since the massacre at VT, more than 500 groups have appeared on facebook to support and counsel grieving and shocked peers. Many myspace and facebook profile pictures have been changed to black ribbons with the letters “VT” in the school’s colors.

On the profile of victim Maxine Turner, comments were posted in pictures have been changed to myspace and facebook profile pictures have been changed to black ribbons with the letters “VT” in the school’s colors. My prayers are with each and every person affected yesterday. It’s hard to believe someone could do this. I look at my life and when times are hard they still aren’t bad enough to do that. I have no relation to anyone affected in this tragedy, other than the fact that I am a college student. I went to a High School that had gun threats frequently and was on lock down. My prayers are with each and every person affected yesterday. And —

“My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you. My friend goes to VT and at a request of a new found VT friend, please show your support by wearing Orange and Maroon today. No matter where you live or what school you go to let’s come together and show our support. Thank you. And —

“I am deeply saddened by these careless inhumane acts of atrocity and my thoughts and prayers rest with all the families affected by this awful, awful time. I only wish that someday peace can be found in restless minds, not resulting in violence. I pray for peace on Earth, especially within the minds of troubled people, that such an act never happen again.

Since this was a college shooting, the fact that myspace and facebook were immediate points of interest was not surprising. These sites specifically target college-aged students, so who better to break the news of a nightmare on campus than those who are witnessing it? And where better to print the information than the sites used by those witnesses?

“My baby cousin… I LOVE you with ALL MY HEART… I MISS YOU… you will always be my little man” and my “first baby”…..watch over all of us……xoxoxoxoxo I promise I’ll take care of your sister and mom. xoxo.”

Max, Christine just called me and said you were one of the people who got hurt real bad. Please call me and let me know you are okay. "

And —

“Max, I hope you’re feeling better today, up there in Heaven or wherever you are. I don’t know what to say, but I’ll miss you, and I just hope that you knew how important you were to all of us. Everybody loved you; I know they did. I love you and still can’t believe you’re gone. You were a real success. Just 2 weeks from graduation — you did so well for yourself. I’m so proud of you, and I’m sorry this had to happen to you.”

Similar messages appeared on the profile of 20-year-old victim, Ross Alameddine.

“If only you were here to read this Ross…You’d know what an imaginative, intelligent, compassionate and most of all a hysterical funny human being you were, and how appreciative I am to have spent last summer working with such a great kid. My every thought is with you and your family.”

—

“Ross man you will be missed forever by me and everyone who knew you, and want to let you know my heart is with you and your family.”

And —

“Ross man you will be missed by me and everyone who knew you, and want to let you know my heart is with you and your family man, Love you.”

And —

“My baby cousin…..I LOVE you with ALL MY HEART… I MISS YOU… you will always be “my little man” and my “first baby”…..watch over all of us……xoxoxoxoxo I promise I’ll take care of your sister and mom. xoxo.”

“I only wish that someday peace can be found in restless minds, not resulting in violence. I pray for peace on Earth, especially within the minds of troubled people, that such an act never happen again.”

Above: Students use the Internet to seek each other out.
Right: Some of the many postings made on internet blog sites regarding the Virginia Tech shooting.
Bucks officials said they were reevaluating campus security plans in the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre, but added there's only so much the college can do to prevent such a tragedy.

According to Bucks President Dr. James Linksz, the campus is difficult to entirely control at any given moment.

"Students are everywhere at all times, which makes it difficult to inform all individuals. There are lots of ways to get on campus, which poses a great challenge with monitoring oncomers," he said.

In response to the horrendous event at VT, Linksz expressed condolences to all individuals affected by the tragedy. He believes that because of the random nature of the shootings, they probably could not have been prevented.

"If students were closed-in, different individuals may have been killed, but it most likely would still have happened."

On Friday a statement from Linksz was sent to Bucks faculty. In it he said security will be re-evaluated.

"The Deans’ Council, president’s staff, and various offices on campus have begun a bottom–up review of our policies, procedures, handbooks, and processes to determine how best to sharpen our edge. This review is focusing in two major areas. First we are reviewing our emergency plan and procedures, as well as the attendant communications plan and protocols. Second, we are reviewing our procedures for dealing with students who demonstrate unsettling characteristics," the statement read in part.

Linksz affirmed that this is a continuous process, and never something that can be set in stone.

"We’ve been very fortunate," Conn said. "Aside from a few break-ins, we’ve been quite lucky."

Conn and Linksz both said the VT tragedy has prompted a review of things like patrolling, lighting, and other components that can contribute to a safer college.

Already in place are survival kits on campus, 24-hour security, and ongoing committee meetings to improve safety.

Temple University is requiring each student to have an ID in order to enter any building including dorms, classrooms, and the cafeteria.

West Chester also requests ID cards from students to get into all dorms and resident halls. Like other schools, Bucks has had a campus emergency plan in place since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but does not require student identification to come on campus. Why not?

"Because there are so many ways to get on campus, a gate-keeper system would not be effective. People can enter our campus by foot through Tyler State Park," Linksz said.

On a positive note, the fact that Bucks does not have dorms allows students other outlets for problems they may face. No one, besides security, is here 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chris Lloyd, head of security at Bucks, said no drastic changes have taken place since the VT shootings, but that he does consider the college’s emergency plan to be up-to-date and effective.

Lloyd urged students to report anything anything suspicious on campus. The standard protocol at Bucks, if ever in a similar situation as VT, is to call the Newtown police and assess the situation.

Lloyd also thinks that a campus-wide intercom system would be a great improvement to the college’s security plan. He said, “It would be a quick and easy way to get the word out.”

Although many agree that Bucks’ open-campus makes it virtually impossible to be a gated community, it is also agreed that improvements can always be made to ensure a safer place.
Don’t Use Video Games as Scapegoats

LAURA IRWIN
Centurion Staff

Along with everyone else glued to the TV screen, websites and newspapers awaiting more information on the murderous rampage at Virginia Tech, I am aghast at the scenario that played out on an other wise everyday location. It can happen anywhere, it can happen to anyone.

Sometimes the predisposition to commit horrific acts is blamed on many aspects of our generation’s lifestyle. For example, video games, movies and media. But I, for one, do not think that a marathon of “Halo 2” will lead to undeniable urges to purchase a handgun. I do not think owning “Reservoir Dogs” means you have any tendencies toward going on a killing spree. Right, like me, putting the news out there for all to see, are not responsible for creating copy-cats.

The killer is insane. The killer is unable to handle a normal and healthy lifestyle that the rest of us can handle. The killer has seen images of death and violence as much as the rest of us, but there is something inside a killer that makes him a killer; it is based internally. We live in a world where the idea of one’s rights is constantly questioned.

Will limiting the creation of violence-based movies and video games stop the violence? Will preventing that human beings do not hold the potential for carnage stop the violence? I don’t think so.

The rampaging bloodbaths that cover our front pages and litter plot lines stem from reality, not fiction. What puts the ideas of hate and anger into video games and movies are the very real human emotions of hate and anger. Some people deal with it, and unfortunately, some cannot. Ban ning people from playing “Counter Strike” or from watching “The Departed” will not control humanity’s potential to create violence. The insane don’t know they are insane.

It is the responsibility of the sane to do something when the potential for violence is evident within someone. Again, it can happen anywhere, it can happen to anyone.

More security and less privilege will not stop someone with an out-of-control inclination to violence from fulfilling their need to hurt. The history of murder and hate and violence began thousands of years before Playstation.