



MEREDITH HERALD

Volume XXVIII, Issue 12

Educating Women to Excel

April 25, 2007

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WEATHER

TODAY: Partly Cloudy.
Low 64, high 84.

Thursday: Mostly Cloudy. Low 66, high 86.

Friday: Scattered T-storms. Low 64, high 84.

Saturday: Isolated T-storms. Low 58, high 81.

Sunday: Isolated T-storms. Low 57, high 80.

Monday: Scattered T-storms. Low 60, high 82.

Tuesday: Partly Cloudy. Low 61, high 84.

Wednesday: Scattered T-storms. Low 59, high 82.

Source: www.weather.com

Candlelight Vigil and Supporting Virginia Tech

By: Maria Santore
Contributing Writer

On Mon., April 16th when I found out about the shootings at Virginia Tech, like all of us, my heart sank. I immediately started calling my friends in Blacksburg, VA to check on their safety. Although several have close connections to the shootings, I am thankful to say nobody I know directly was injured or killed. For the first 72 hours, like many others on Meredith's campus, I lived off of hearsay. Rumors started flying about people from my high school. People I hadn't talked to in years were calling to say so-and-so had been shot in the back and leg. The next phone call said she was in surgery. Then they said she died. I felt numb. Whom to believe? It was not until Wednesday that I would learn those rumors were false and that nobody from my high school was injured.

After the initial shock of the events on Monday, I realized I wanted to go home to my friends and family in Virginia. I wanted to hug my friends from Tech and tell them I love them. Yet, with so much to finish before graduation, not to mention my shaky emotional state, I knew I would have to find a way to deal with my feelings here.

Early last week, I had two people from Virginia whom I had never

met, approach me looking for the same thing I needed most: support. Cassie Drake, Sarah Beeler, and I became instant friends. We spent hours together, sharing stories, laughing, crying, and comforting one another.

I'm glad that Meredith's administrators have responded to this incident with a candlelight vigil and offers of counseling support. It was healing for Dr. Jackson and Ms. Meir to listen to me and to have Sam Carothers ask for my thoughts about the events. I told him that the best sign of support would be lots of people at the vigil. And when I walked out of the chapel after the choir concert, it brought tears to my eyes to see sixty plus people standing there. In my four years at Meredith, I have never been so moved.

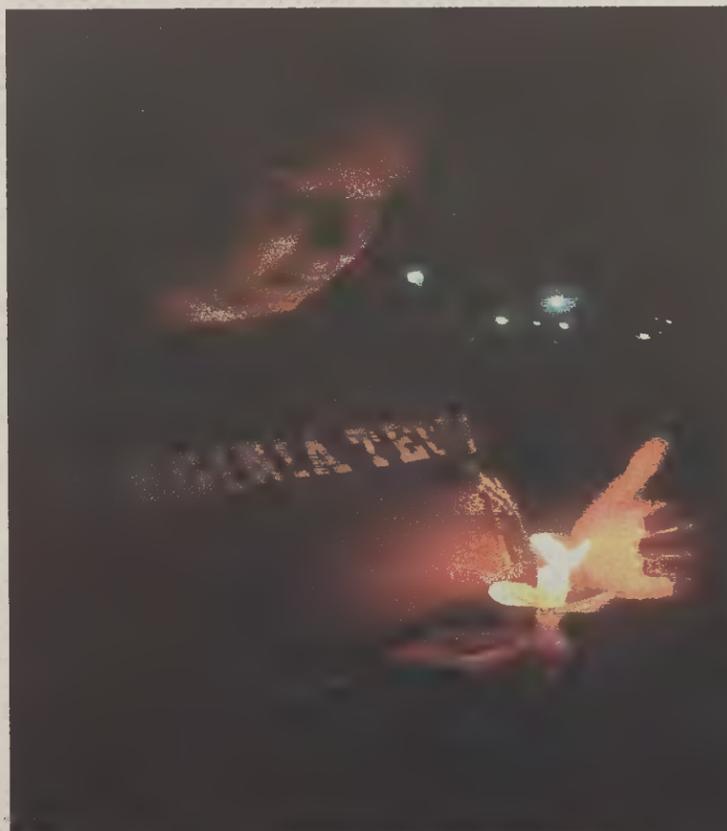
As I said to the group, our small, private college has united in support of a public, large university. My new friend Cassie also said something that night that has stuck in my head. She stated, "Despite the hurt that evil brings, good overcomes evil." A parent of a student spoke of a fire many years back at Yellowstone National Park and how, throughout all the burnt trees, today, new trees stand tall. I think both of them were saying that although we have been struck by such tragedy, through the support of one another, Virginia Tech and the rest of the world will rise above this evil act.

Yes, I still feel the urge to go home and be with my friends and family, but I have made a make-shift family here at Meredith. I have made new friends while being

comforted and comforting others. My long-time friends have also offered support through hugs, cards, phone calls, facebook messages, and e-mails. To see Laura Wagner with her legs painted orange brought a smile to my face. Stacy Cabeen and Rebecca Thompson, both student teachers who wake up before the roosters, made the effort to be there. Megan Hembree, Kelly Thompson, and Lauren Thie, seniors and campus leaders with lots of work to complete, all made it a point to attend. Caroline Peterson, who spent part of the weekend in the hospital with tonsillitis, dragged herself out of bed to show her support. To see those young women and so many more Meredith students, faculty, and staff, pause for a moment to remember, reflect, and, most importantly, unify was uplifting.

As for my friends at Tech, I still feel for my best friend who had classes with the shooter, that same best friend whose roommate's sister lost her closest pal, and another buddy who lost her classmate. I feel for not only them, but everyone in Blacksburg. I feel, through them, that I have been

Vigil Cont. on pg. 3



On left: Maria Santore at Meredith's Candlelight Vigil