Editorial:
Fall semester off to a good start

The class of 2009 got off easily. They didn’t have to witness the year of blocked roads, floodlights as blinding nightmares, the eyepieces that were the two infant construction sites, the fences that ran amok through the campus like unruly children, the lack of grassy romping grounds in the residential quad, and, most insufferably, the never-fail eight a.m. wake-up call of construction noises. Instead, these lucky freshmen moved in while a pristine new building towered over the residence quad and, though the tail end of construction still lingers, they never got to see what Rider University looks like with mounds of dirt lazing about where a volleyball net and picnic tables now reside.

The addition of a new residence hall, the renovations of some older ones and the almost completed construction of the Student Recreation Center (SRC) were the only changes that greeted both new and returning students earlier this month, though. The lobby of the Bart Luedeke Center (BLC) got a facelift. Zieglet was on the receiving end of some snazzy new furniture, the first floor of the Fine Arts building is undergoing major improvements and the Cranberry Café is now proudly serving Starbucks coffee. Less visible changes include extended hours at Daly’s, 50 more Bronc Bucks to make going to Daly’s less necessary and the acquisition of a new antenna that helps WRRC’s signal reach far-away places, like Princeton’s Nassau Street and the exit for Six Flags. And Poyda.

But, for all the positive changes on campus, some of the things we didn’t miss about Rider this summer are still lingering annoyances. WRRC’s signal still can’t seem to reach the Westminster campus. A staggering number of students are still clamoring about how they’re already dissatisfied with the way Rider has handled their financial aid matters. The parking lots are feeling a little tighter and we’re all definitely getting a little too cozy in Daly’s as well, since some Greeks no longer have chefs working directly in the houses and this year’s freshman class is bigger than the last three. There’s still construction going on that wakes up those residents whose rooms face the SRC construction site. While it is rather miraculous that the SRC is under construction at all, it was originally slated to be a functioning facility by the time this semester began. The completion date has been pushed back at least twice and, after hearing so much about this wondrous state-of-the-art gym, we’re all getting a little anxious to see if the SRC measures up to our excited expectations.

All in all, the fall semester was off to a visually impressive start that wowed the majority of students, as we left a partially-constructed mess in May and returned in September to find that we were all rewarded for making it through last year’s aesthetic nightmare. If we could wait over a year to see the completion of a residence hall in which most of us wouldn’t spend a whole lot of time, we can wait another month to descend upon a new fitness facility to work off all the food we’ve either packed away during our extra time in Daly’s or gobbled up with our abundance of Bronc Bucks.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.

Life Lessons:
A little fun can lead to big tragedy

Many of you will be celebrating the new school year, looking to have a good time between classes and unwinding. For some of you, that good time will involve alcohol. And for some of you, it may involve driving after you’ve gotten a little buzz on. Consider this my gift to anyone, whether over the weekend or on any given day, who thinks they’re “fine” to drive after having had a few drinks. I wrote this letter so that you wouldn’t have to if you’re ever mistaken about being “fine” enough to drive. So don’t worry about anything. Feel free to send this letter to the parent of the child you might kill if you drive under the influence of alcohol or any other drug. I thought you might find it too difficult to write it yourself.

To whom it may concern,

I really don’t know where to start. I don’t know if there is anything I could say that would make a difference at this point. I guess I just wanted you to know that it was an accident. I swear it was an accident. We were just out to have a good time. We weren’t trying to hurt anyone. It sort of just happened. When I left the bar, I felt fine. I know I felt fine. We didn’t talk about having a designated driver because it’s never been a problem.

We always find a way to get home. Whoever’s had the least to drink gets the keys. I was that person last time and I swear on my mother that I felt fine. I knew I was OK to drive. That curve just came out of nowhere and then your son’s car and then... I tried to swerve out of the way. I turned the wheel as hard as I could, but it was too late. All I remember after that is waking up over the steering wheel and the horn wouldn’t stop blaring. It just wouldn’t stop. I looked around and saw that everyone in the car seemed to be OK. Then I looked out and saw your son on the ground. I tried to get out of my seatbelt but my ribs hurt so much. By the time I got out and made it over to him he wasn’t breathing. I gave him CPR until the ambulance came. Even though he wasn’t breathing, I wouldn’t stop. I couldn’t stop.

If I could turn back time, if I could trade spaces, if I could make this a bad nightmare so I could wake up, I would. I would give anything to change what happened that night. And I don’t know why I was OK and he didn’t make it. I know it’s not fair and that it should have been prevented.

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See ‘Letter’ page 12

Quote of the Week

“If you have a college degree, you can be absolutely sure of one thing... you have a college degree.”

— Author Unknown

The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the Rider community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author for verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail, or hand deliver to the Ridge House. All letters must be received by midnight on the Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.