

ORBIS



ALL

SPIN

**and no
substance**

**Palin gives tea party
keynote, page 10**

Vol. 9/No. 6/February/2010

V-Day performance gets a makeover, pages 6-7

a note from the editor

During production weekend, the Orbis staff had a lot of fun discussing the tea party convention that invaded nearby Opryland Hotel during the first weekend of February. Putting aside the Revolutionary-era costumes and inane one-liners from Sarah Palin's keynote address ("Do you love your freedom"? Really, Sarah?), the question that we kept asking ourselves is what the tea party movement actually stood for.

The first thing we recognized is that the "movement" is splintered and fraught by in-fighting, so calling it a fully-formed party or set group of people is premature. In fact, we had trouble articulating any tangible policies that the tea parties advocate, mostly because it seems that the teabaggers themselves don't know. Is loving freedom and hating Obama's "socialist" policies enough to keep a movement afloat? We hope not. Managing editor Sam Abney dissects Palin's keynote to the Nashville convention on page 10.

What's clear is that these people are upset and they blame the current administration for setting back our country. It's undeniable that we're facing rough economic times, but the facts don't bear out the tea party followers' fear mongering claims that our country's fundamental identity is under attack.

Luckily at Vanderbilt, we're not in the midst of any culture wars, real or imagined. Instead, we see a continued rise in progressive activism as students advocate for LGBT rights (p. 3), search for alternatives to our state's capital punishment policies (p. 5), and look for new ways to raise awareness in the fight against gender-based violence (p. 6-7). We're proud to cover these events as we amplify Vanderbilt's progressive voices. If you want to join the Orbis staff, stop by our next staff meeting on March 3 at 6 p.m. in Buttrick 312.

-Erika Hyde

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Amplifying Vanderbilt's Progressive Voices

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Please recycle.

S

03. Spotlight: Vanderbilt Lambda

By Erika Hyde

t

04. Program reaches out to local students

By John Chen

n

05. Conference questions death penalty

By Aimee Sobhani

Remembering Howard Zinn

By Ben Wibking

e

06. Women's center revamps V-Day

By Stephanie Mann

t

08. Niche media face bleak future

By Allie Diffendal

n

09. ONE campaign raises awareness

By Steve Harrison

O

10. Palin talk steeped in empty rhetoric

By Sam Abney

11. Orbis highlights campus events

By Jon Christian

O

12. Students react to tea party message

By the Orbis staff

4376

number of American military deaths in
 Iraq since March 2003

Cover design: Allie Diffendal and Sam Abney

What is Orbis?

Orbis aspires to change the atmosphere on Vanderbilt's campus and provides a voice for liberal, multicultural and minority viewpoints. This publication strives to inform the public about issues that these groups face as well as to promote diversity and unity within our community. It is a forum for discussion of social, political and religious commentary relevant to Vanderbilt, the nation and the world. Orbis was founded by a coalition of students seeking to raise consciousness about diverse ideas, cultures and backgrounds in our society. We hope to challenge the existing social atmosphere at Vanderbilt and promote a rebirth of acceptance.

Lambda promotes LGBT awareness

By Erika Hyde
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Vanderbilt Lambda Association is hard at work preparing for next month's Rainbow ReVU, its flagship program for raising campus awareness about sexual orientation, gender identity and policy issues. This year's highlights include a keynote speech by political activist Staceyann Chin and the annual Pride Banquet.

Vanderbilt's long-standing LGBT group hosts the ReVU each year, showcasing different educational and social topics to attract a wide audience of community members sympathetic to the LGBT cause. The weeklong event will take place March 22-26.

Although the awareness week is over a month away, Lambda president and senior Reanne Zheng

Asian and lesbian, woman and a New Yorker, not to mention her involvement with the spoken word movement. I think a lot of people will be interested in what she has to say."

Another highlight of the week is a documentary screening of "Fish Out of Water" on Monday, March 22 at 7 p.m. The film, which was produced by Vanderbilt alumna Ky Dickens, focuses on the interplay of religion and sexual orientation.

Membership Vice President Clive Liu is looking forward to the screening. "It's really well done. I know the topic of homosexuality in the Bible has been talked about before, but usually people bring up the Old Testament passages. [Dickens] actually brings up verses from the New Testament," he said.

Other plans include an educational lecture on the status of LGBT rights in countries like Uganda, where a controversial bill threatens to punish same sex relationships with imprisonment or even death.

Zheng reports that ReVU, now in its third year, is drawing attention from organizations across campus. "We've received a lot of interest from outside groups- the Deans of Students, the Commons, the Women's Center. Lots of people could identify" with the events Lambda is scheduled to host,

Lambda hosts the Rainbow ReVU each year to educate the community about LGBT acceptance and celebration

sex partnership data in the U.S. Census for the first time.

Lambda also regular cosponsors the Chrismahanukwanzaa party during the holidays with Hillel and the African Student Union.

Beyond cultural organizations, Lambda has also made strides to bridge the gap between LGBT life and the Greek houses on campus. Zheng noted that many people assume animosity exists between LGBT students and members of Greek chapters, but explained that it's a stereotype that's fading. "People seem to think that it's more divided than it really is. Most people in the LGBT community aren't anti-Greek by nature and being Greek doesn't make you homophobic. The Greek organizations were very supportive of last year's ReVU, and we're looking forward to an even better reception this year."

Last year, several Greek houses in addition to academic and administrative departments across campus hung rainbow flags from their buildings in symbolic support of ReVU week.

Rainbow ReVU's events are open to Vanderbilt as well as the greater Nashville community. Lambda publicizes many of its events to Nashville to help quell the myth that Vanderbilt is unwelcoming of alternative lifestyles. "There was that kind of reputation that [LGBT issues] weren't welcome here, which isn't fair...we try to promote our events to the outside community. The more people you reach, the more that stereotype goes away," said Zheng.

Lambda has an 8 person executive board and collaborates with fellow undergraduate LGBT group HRC Vanderbilt as well as the Office of LGBTQI Life at the K.C. Potter. Zheng said the general body meetings regularly attract 15 to 20 people, with many more attending the major events they host throughout the year.

**Lambda's third annual
Rainbow ReVU
March 22- March 26**



Lambda leaders Clive Liu, Erica Santiago, and Reanne Zheng discuss campus events.

Image: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS

explained that a lot of planning is required to host a series of events that will interest different target audiences. "The purpose [of ReVU] is general education that covers a variety of topics to reach out to different groups. For example, our talk last year on the biological basis of homosexuality appealed to people like the Med. School GSA."

Staceyann Chin, an openly lesbian poet and LGBT advocate, will present ReVU's keynote speech on Tuesday, March 23 at 8 p.m. Lambda's Programming Vice President Erica Santiago believes that Chin represents a diverse cross-section of Vanderbilt that will appeal to many groups on campus.

"She herself identifies as Caribbean and Black,

she explained.

Lambda is no stranger to collaborating with other student groups. Although ReVU will be Lambda's biggest focus of the semester, they regularly work with cultural organizations to co-host new events.

For example, they are partnering with the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic Students and the Black Student Association to teach students about the intricacies of the upcoming census. "It's hard enough figuring out the census when you're a straight white male," said Zheng. Their "Census 101" event on Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. in Buttrick 112 will educate students about guidelines and new policies, including the decision to include same

Vanderbilt reaches out to talented youth

The School for Science and Math makes learning interactive

By John Chen
FEATURES EDITOR

A unique educational program at Vanderbilt has allowed the university to give back to the Nashville community by opening up new opportunities for some of the area's brightest public high school students. Through the School for Science and Math at Vanderbilt (SSMV), many of the students' projects have qualified them for finalist status at national and state level science competitions.

Every week, a select group of Nashville high school students attends SSMV. These students miss high school classes every Wednesday to participate for free in a unique, four-year, interdisciplinary science learning experience.

Now in its third year, the School accepts up to 25 students from Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools each year. Last year, around 150 students applied, 40 received interviews, and 25 were accepted.

In a 2008 article in *Lens*, a Vanderbilt Medical Center publication, SSMV director Virginia Shepherd explained that Vanderbilt's Outreach Center seeks to connect university scientists and K-12 education. The school offers various interdisciplinary science courses taught by Vanderbilt faculty or guest speakers via video conferencing. These courses have titles like "What if ice sank instead of floated?" and "Searching for life in the universe."

"It's a different approach to learning science," said Ryan Driscoll, a sophomore at Martin Luther King magnet school who aspires to become a doctor of pathology. "In high school, the learning is textbook-oriented, but this program really opens up science to be interactive."

Students take field trips to the Nashville Zoo and to Saint Louis to learn about botanical research. During the summers, students work in teams on research projects and complete independent internships.

The SSMV sophomore class toured the Bordenstein lab in Medical Research Building III at

Vanderbilt in late January. Graduate students and post-doctoral students in Seth Bordenstein's lab gave an educational presentation and set up six different stations to teach the visiting students about model organisms, dissections, cell culture, and cell imaging.

After SSMV students finish their junior year of high school, they are placed in research laboratories throughout the university to pursue independent projects. Students are required to submit their research to national science competitions. The program culminates with a poster symposium where students present their work. In the program's inaugural class, Uyen Pham worked in the lab of Dr. Daniela Drummon-Barbosa and eventually became a semifinalist for the Siemens Competition. Since

then, several more SSMV students have become Siemens semifinalists and Tennessee Junior Academy of Science Conference awardees.

SSMV instructors are impressed by the school's well-rounded students. "These students aren't just scientists," said Dr. Jonathan Creamer, an instructor for the program and a chemist by trade. "They play sports and play instruments in the band, too." Creamer first became involved with the school as a guest speaker and then became an instructor over a year

ago, joining molecular biologist Angela Eeds and earth science expert Christ Vanags. The School is still looking to recruit a fourth instructor.



SSMV students Laura Moribe, Catherine Caffey, and Emily Alsentzer are introduced to insect stocks at the Bordenstein lab at Vanderbilt.

Photo: SSMV faculty Jonathan Creamer

Pham, who returned to work in the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach during the summer, eventually enrolled at Vanderbilt. Several other graduates of the school have done the same. But Pham maintains that her decision to attend Vanderbilt was motivated by factors other than her involvement in SSMV. Despite her scientific achievements, Pham is majoring in economics because of the diverse career choices it offers.

The School is sponsored by the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach and the Vanderbilt Medical Center, and funded by grants from the Nashville Alliance for Public Education and the National Institutes of Health.

A fresh batch of Nashville high school students just submitted their SSMV applications this month. One can only speculate how SSMV will grow in the future and what new creative opportunities it may provide for local youth.

*"In high school,
the learning is textbook-
oriented, but this program
really opens up science to
be interactive."*

— Ryan Driscoll,
SSMV participant

**Find out more about
SSMV by visiting
their website at
theschool.vanderbilt.edu**

Anti-death penalty conference educates students

By Aimee Sobhani
STAFF WRITER

Since the reinstatement of the death penalty in Tennessee in 2000, two individuals serving on death row have been exonerated. In the country as a whole, 135 people on death row have been released because of wrongful conviction since 1973, a figure that boils down to roughly one exoneration for every nine executions performed. The Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (TADP) sponsored a conference aimed at raising awareness about the problems with our country's capital punishment policies on Saturday, February 6, at the MTSU campus.

The 125 attendees, including six students from Vanderbilt, heard arguments that the death penalty was ineffective because it is unfair, expensive, and sometimes inaccurate.

The six-hour conference started off with the screening of "The Empty Chair," a one-hour documentary depicting the families of four murder victims and their views on the death penalty. After the screening, participants had the option to attend one of three workshops dealing with various aspects of the death penalty.

The Death Penalty 101 workshop provided basic facts about the death penalty and argued about the ineffective and unjust nature of the punishment.

"The death penalty is not reserved for the worst of the worst...it's [for] the least of the least," said Stacy Rector, Executive Director of the TADP, in reference to the fact that almost all of the individuals sitting on death row were too poor to afford their own legal counsel.

The workshop also featured Michael McCormick, who was released from prison in 2007 after serving more than twenty years on Tennessee's death row for a crime he did

not commit.

"Mine is a typical horror story," McCormick said. The state has yet to compensate him for his time spent on death row.

Dixie Gamble, a writer and filmmaker, led a second workshop that explored the issue of mental illness and how it relates to the death penalty. Gamble has won several awards for her film about Robert Glenn Coe, the first person executed in Tennessee in the modern era and a man believed to be suffering from severe mental illness.

"It never occurred to me that the state would execute someone so sick," Gamble said.

The third workshop featured Shane Truett, an attorney who shared his feelings about the murder of his brother and the death penalty. Truett spoke at Vanderbilt last fall for Amnesty International's Death Penalty Awareness Week.

High school student Thomas Koen found the workshops informative and enjoyable.

"I really like it," he said. "It's good to know that people are interested [in this issue]."

Vanderbilt junior Sarah Brand, a member of Amnesty International, echoed Koen's sentiment.

"The conference reminded me why I oppose the death penalty. The statistics are pretty difficult to ignore. Working against the death penalty isn't an ideological thing, it's just being responsible," she said.

"The death penalty is not reserved for the worst of the worst...it's [for] the least of the least."

– Stacy Rector,
TADP Executive Director

Following the workshop, conference participants watched a presentation by Jared Feuer, the Southern Regional Director of Amnesty International USA. Feuer focused on the case of Troy Davis, an African-American man convicted of killing a white police officer in Georgia in 1989. Davis is believed by many to be innocent, and his case has become the focus of letter-writing campaigns

for Amnesty International. Feuer expressed his belief that concerned individuals, not laws, will eventually end the death penalty. "Change does not happen when it's top down," he said.

The last segment of the conference taught students to apply all the facts they had learned about the death penalty to lobbying politicians for change. On March 23, 2010, TADP will hold its annual "Justice Day on the

Hill," during which it will lobby legislators at the Capitol to support a repeal of the death penalty.

Conference attendees also had the chance to write letters against the death penalty in a campaign sponsored by the University of Tennessee chapter of Amnesty International.

TADP is associated with the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP). The organization has chapters located in Tennessee's five largest cities and boasts a membership of over 5,000. It was formerly known as the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing.

For more information, visit www.tcask.org.

"A People's History" author gave students a new perspective

Influential liberal thinker Howard Zinn passed away in late January. Here, an Orbis writer reflects on Zinn's impact on his own views.

By Ben Wibking
STAFF WRITER

Howard Zinn's work as a leftist thinker and best-selling author profoundly affected the way America looked at its past and provided a first glimpse of "revisionist" history. His history is biased, and he admits as much in the opening pages of his "A People's History of the United States":

"My viewpoint, in telling the history of the United States, is different... Nations are not communities and never have been. The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest... between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominator and dominated in race and sex. And in such as world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people... not to be on the side of the executioners."

The idea of an "alternate" history is shocking to some people. The fact that his work is so widespread

and divisive speaks to his importance in American dialogue. In my time at Vanderbilt, I have encountered his fans in unexpected places. Some are friends I have known since I arrived on campus, to whom I had never previously talked about politics. I even found a fellow Zinn fan in my RA down the hall.

Vanderbilt math professor Eric Schechter spoke positively over a listserv message about Zinn's insights on history. "Somebody once asked Zinn if his books were... biased. I don't remember his precise reply, but roughly, it was, yes, all history books are biased. It took me a while to understand that, since my own training is in mathematics, where something very much like objectivity is not only possible but quite ordinary and taken for granted... Howard Zinn knew what his bias was [and] didn't try to hide it."

Howard Zinn is largely responsible for my political views today. "A People's History" made me reconsider my ideological beliefs, especially through the chapters that dealt with the recent past.

My history teachers from elementary to high school would try to explain to their students that

the European treatment of Native Americans was "wrong," to varying degrees. What was remarkable to me when I first read Zinn was that his treatment of the current American empire is just as harsh as his views on the American empire of the 1890s, and harsher than his treatment of the British empire in North America of the eighteenth century. It is rare to condemn policies of the present so frankly.

Slowly, I came to identify not as a "Democrat," but as a "leftist." Zinn helped me to realize what I really believed, and exposed the hidden biases of mainstream "liberal" culture which have run throughout this country's history.

His was a history of the oppression, but it was certainly not without hope. A revisionist historian can also be a revisionist futurist. To millions of readers, he tried to impart his belief "that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare." As long as alternate visions of history like his survive, hope for the future will live on.

V-Day performance has new approach, same message

By Stephanie Mann
STAFF WRITER

Vanderbilt's 12th annual V-Day event featured a talented group of students and staff who brought a new performance to the stage, and with it a fresh message of awareness about sexual violence. Instead of the familiar Vagina Monologues production, the organizers presented a new play called *A Memory*, a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer, a program with a more subdued title that still stayed true to the V-Day message about serious issues such as spousal abuse, child abuse, rape as a tool of war and human trafficking.

The Feb. 12-14 performance continued a tradition of female empowerment and open dialogue about women's issues that are often considered taboo. Started in 1998 by women's activist, author and playwright Eve Ensler, V-Day is a global movement dedicated to ending violence against women and girls.

Since 2000, the Vanderbilt Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center and Project Safe have sponsored annual productions of *The Vagina Monologues*, Ensler's groundbreaking and award-winning play that inspired the creation of V-Day. The new play is based on an anthology of writings edited by Eve Ensler.

Kayti Protos, the Program Coordinator for the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center and producer of this year's show, explained that the Center decided to break from past V-Day events as part of a larger initiative to revamp its approach to preventing violence.

"We got feedback from the Vanderbilt community that they are interested in a more inclusive V-Day production, which is a request that is happening nationally with V-Day, too," Protos said. "We chose to do *A Memory*, a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer this year to respond to that interest."

Considering the past success of *The Vagina Monologues*, the sudden change in the program came as a surprise to many. The play's director, Senior Erica Santiago, recognized that some might be confused by the unexpected changes to V-Day at Vanderbilt.

Santiago is a veteran of V-Day events: she partici-

pated in *The Vagina Monologues* her freshman year, introduced Eve Ensler when she came to Vanderbilt the year after, and was the Stage Manager of last year's performance. Like all those involved with V-Day at Vanderbilt, she is vocal about the importance of the program, and passionate about the necessity to have successful and educational campaigns.

At first, Santiago worried that the changes might alter V-Day's image on campus. Still, she saw the new idea as a positive challenge. "V-Day at Vanderbilt has the same message. It's just a new approach," Santiago explained. The constant message is that the Vanderbilt community must work to address issues of power-based personal violence, as well as to open minds about women's health and sexuality.

The "new approach" of this year's V-Day performance lies partly in the innovative nature of the play

itself. As director, Santiago used the book *A Memory*, a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer to create a 90-minute show. The task of turning prose into theater proved difficult. Santiago is happy with the work she and her cast have done, but admitted, "The book was really hard to put together as a play!"

While these changes were meant to augment the presence and impact of V-Day on campus this year, the demand for extra time and effort to create a new performance hindered the program's publicity campaign. Senior Kathryn Trappey, who has attended the past three annual V-Day performances, noted that she and her friends weren't even sure a V-Day event was happening this year. "I was wondering why they hadn't been publicizing for *The Vagina Monologues*. I was actually unsure whether they were having a V-Day performance at all," she said.

In the weeks leading up to the performance, many shared Trappey's confusion. Santiago herself recognized that her dedication of time to planning and rehearsing may have led to the absence of popular publicity campaigns, such as the famous "vagina cookies" that have been at the Wall in previous years. "My one worry is the publicity - whether people know about it," Santiago said a few days before the performance.

Nonetheless, when *A Memory*,

a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer finally took the stage for its Feb. 12 opening night, production manager Jordan Walker noted the night's great turnout minutes before the performance began. "We're very excited. There's a very diverse bunch of people here tonight," he said.

That diverse audience is testament to V-Day's continued support at Vanderbilt. While the extremes of *The Vagina Monologues* may have turned more conservative men and women away from V-Day events in the past, the less provocative word-choice in this year's production title seems to have worked to depolarize the event. However, the twelve act play stayed true to the openness and frankness of *The Vagina Monologues* by presenting emotional material about power-based personal violence.

Perhaps the play's most unique aspect was its inclusion of four male actors in the cast. As Protos explained, "This production includes people of many different identities, including men, which is exciting because it speaks to many people's experiences and illustrates the point that we all have to get involved if we want to



Joseph Beki and Jessica Gil discuss the plight of women in today's society in "Conversations with My Son" by Susan Miller.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS



Kristen Kuan performs the role of a Guatemalan immigrant crossing the U.S. border in an airless container in "Celia" by Edwidge Danticat.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS

With a performance that's more inclusive of people from all backgrounds and experiences, the Women's Center hopes to garner higher support from the community at large.



Director Erica Santiago thanks attendees for standing up to violence against women.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS



Tremaine Price presents a monologue about child prostitution in Cambodia.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS

truly end power-based personal violence in our lifetime."

In response to whether this was a deliberate inclusion of the LGBTQI community in the V-Day program, Santiago replied that the show's issues are relatable to everyone, no matter their sexual orientation or gender. "This is still a Women's Center project, and it has always been a Women's Center project. But I did a lot of reaching to include different perspectives in the show. I don't see this as trying to include the LGBTQI community in the program. I'm just trying to stay true to the story and the message of the book, and not worry about the politics of campus."

The inclusion of men added a new emotional perspective to the performance, and the actors sought to portray the complexities of the male experience in a world filled with violence against women.

Most notably, the play's opening scene featured a cross-dressing male actor who discussed the trials of cross-dressing and prostitution in a violent, male-oriented society. Likewise, the show's final act featured all four male cast members in a moving portrayal of the inner emotional struggle many men undergo when coming to terms with the sexual abuse of their female family members.

Santiago hopes that these new perspectives help to show that everyone can become involved in the V-Day cause. "It's no longer that you have to have been a victim of sexual violence to be involved in or to relate to the program. Now it's much more open," she explained.

Still, some of the play's more powerful acts were more traditional for V-Day, their content similar to that of The Vagina Monologues. These familiar scenes focused on the dire situations of abused and vulnerable women and girls in the Republic of Congo, Darfur, Cambodia, Guatemala and the United States.

Having to deal with such heavy material, the cast and crew sought to maintain the trademark humor, attitude and candor of an Eve Ensler production. With noticeably less shouted profanities and more widely relatable dialogue than in past performances, the Women's Center felt the production's changes could



V-Day cast members recite powerful words related to gender violence in their production of "Connect: A Web of Words" by Robin Morgan.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS

expand support for V-Day across the boundaries of personal experience.

To this end, Protos explained that "While some people may have been uncomfortable in the past with the name of The Vagina Monologues, the vast majority of the Vanderbilt community supports V-Day and the related productions." By undertaking a performance that's more inclusive of people from all backgrounds and experiences, the Women's Center hopes to garner more support from the community at large.

"We believe that it is imperative to raise awareness on campus about these issues and are proud of the amazing work of our student-run cast and crew," Protos said. Ticket proceeds from this year's V-Day fundraised for the Domestic Violence Hardship Fund at Vanderbilt University.

In Santiago's "note from the director," she thanked the audience for their support: "By being here tonight, you add your voice to those on the cast. Together, we can bring an end to power-based personal violence. We are the voices of the silenced."

Campus resources

Project Safe (615) 936-7273

Offers support for anyone in the Vanderbilt community who has experienced power-based personal violence. This phone line is staffed 24/7 to connect people with resources.

Margaret Cunyngim Women's Center (615) 322-4843

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter>
Runs Project Safe and offers other resources and guidance. Business hours are 8am-5pm.

Student Health Center (615) 322-2427

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_health/
Offers health services, including emergency contraception and follow-up services to medical-legal exams.

VUPD Victim Assistance

(615) 343-0883

<http://police.vanderbilt.edu/services/victims>
Assists the Vanderbilt community with crime-related issues. People can learn about filing an Order of Protection, filing a report with the police, and more.

Psychological & Counseling Center

(615) 322-2571

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/pcc>
Offers psychological support to the Vanderbilt community.

Office of Housing and Residential Education

(615) 322-2591

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd>
Offers support for students who are concerned about their well-being or safety while living on campus.

Office of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity

(615) 322-7868

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/studentconduct/>
Helps students file a campus stay-away order or a complaint against another student on campus.

Work/Life Connections, the Vanderbilt Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

(615) 936-1327

<http://healthandwellness.vanderbilt.edu/work-life-connections-eap>
Employees with concerns regarding these issues can contact this office.

—Resources compiled by the Women's Center

One size fits few

The Talented Tenth's absence stifles student voices at Vanderbilt

By Allie Diffendal
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The last copy of the print newspaper will land on somebody's doorstep in 2043, predicted Philip Meyer in his 2004 book "The Vanishing Newspaper." For Vanderbilt's niche student newspapers, that day might be much, much sooner.

Since Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc.'s founding, the VSC board has held the laudable goals of establishing a student media which reflects campus diversity and maintaining an active body of student media participants. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of VSC's divisions, many of those involved in student media are noticing a decline in the activity of niche publications.

Vanderbilt's African American newspaper, The Talented Tenth, provides a case-in-point. The publication was founded in 2006 by African American students who felt that the voice of the black community was not being addressed in Vanderbilt's

of the student paper's barren stands has unfortunately become more recognizable than the paper itself. In fact, only five issues have been published since the newspaper's inception – two in 2006, two in 2008, and one in 2009.

The Talented Tenth has not yet published an issue this year. "No Editor-in-Chief has to my knowledge been able to fulfill their goals of having Talented Tenth run on a regular basis," said Stokes.

She attributes part of the blame for The Talented Tenth's irregular publication cycle to a lack of staff writers.

"On a good day," Stokes said, "we have about five or six regular staff writers." In fact, a student leader has not even been a constant in the newspaper's history. The VSC board granted the Talented Tenth a one-year probationary extension in the spring of 2007 when no student interviewed to lead the publication.

The newspaper's lack of a clear mission statement

has also contributed to The Talented Tenth's irregularity, according to Stokes. "There hasn't really been a clear definition of what it's going to be."

Stokes views The Talented Tenth's hiatus as an opportunity to better define its goals as a minority publication. "What's most important is to sit down... and create a sustainable structure, regardless of whether a publication comes out," said Stokes. "When the product doesn't match the idea behind it, that's when you need to take a step back."

Funding has also been an issue in producing

The Talented Tenth, according to Stokes. Despite donations from the Black Student Alumni Association and the Black Cultural Center, said Stokes, The Talented Tenth has difficulty raising enough money to publish issues as scheduled.

Although The Talented Tenth has had trouble

finding its footing, Stokes recognizes the importance of establishing a media more reflective of a diversified student body. "If people want an African American paper on this campus, then they

"If people want an African American paper on this campus, then they have every right to have it, but at the same time, it needs to be supported."

-Janelle Stokes
Talented Tenth Editor-in-Chief



With only five issues released since 2006, Talented Tenth racks appear perpetually bare.

Photo: Allie Diffendal/ORBIS

other student media outlets. "They felt misrepresented and they felt that the only way to address those grievances was to start their own paper," said The Talented Tenth's current Editor-in-Chief Janelle Stokes.

Since The Talented Tenth's founding, the wiring

have every right to have it, but at the same time, it needs to be supported."

As a matter of logistics, the Hustler cannot cover everything, said Stokes. "It's a campus newspaper. It's a student body newspaper. So, it should be giving adequate attention to every group on campus, but it's only a group of so many people, so a lot of the events [go uncovered]."

In order for Vanderbilt's student media to accurately reflect the diversity of the campus population, it must produce multiple media outlets. By publishing student newspapers of disparate ideologies and cultures, student media at Vanderbilt is much more likely to represent campus diversity.

News is not one-size-fits-all. By fostering the growth of smaller niche papers such as Orbis, The Torch, and The Talented Tenth, Vanderbilt's student media would deny a one-size-fits-all student media and ensure one student paper does not maintain a monopoly over the rest of the campus' media outlets.

Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc.'s separation of InsideVandy.com from The Hustler was an important step in ensuring just that. VSC created InsideVandy to support the collaboration of multiple forms of student media. By separating InsideVandy from the Hustler, VSC seemingly increased the likeliness that staff writers from other student media outlets would contribute to InsideVandy's content. Unfortunately, that has not been the case.

While InsideVandy has been successful in its

goal of encouraging the participation of students outside of student media and providing an outlet for more creative online content from staffers of The Hustler and Versus, it has not represented the whole of student media.

In practice, InsideVandy functions as the personal website of the Hustler and Versus, although it was created to promote all of Vanderbilt's student media outlets. InsideVandy only displays the content of The Hustler and Versus on its front page, even though it stresses its existence as "the

online source for student media at Vanderbilt University."

In fact, the visibility of smaller student media outlets is minimized – literally. Links to the websites of The Slant, The Political Review, Orbis, The Torch, WRVU Radio, and VTV appear in size six font at the top of InsideVandy's homepage. (The url links are the only appearance of these student media outlets on the entire homepage).

How are niche publications supposed to make a home for themselves in Vanderbilt Student Media

when they're denied a residence on the homepage claiming to be "Vanderbilt University's student news source"?

Just as InsideVandy cannot legitimately claim to be "Vanderbilt University's Student news source (which it does), The Hustler cannot legitimately claim to be "The Voice of Vanderbilt" (which it also does). Without the existence of niche publications on campus, the true voice of Vanderbilt, one reflective of the campus's diversity, would be stifled.

'One Life, One Love'

Service group raises awareness about global poverty and disease

By Steve Harrison
STAFF WRITER

Vanderbilt's newest service organization follows in Bono's footsteps and gives students a firsthand look at the effects of extreme poverty, hunger, and disease.

Vanderbilt ONE, part of the national ONE campaign co-founded by musician and humanitarian Bono, emerged on the campus philanthropic scene this year to tackle an array of problems associated with preventable disease issues ranging from maternal and child health to clean water and sanitation.

Formerly titled "Face AIDS," the organization recognized the university's need to address a broader range of issues tied to preventable diseases. By joining the national ONE campaign, Vanderbilt ONE found a wider-reaching outlet for mobilizing the student population toward HIV/AIDS issues.

Wasting no time in making a new name for itself on campus, Vanderbilt ONE ran a number of high-profile events last semester. President Emily Zern is optimistic about her group's efforts to increase social awareness on campus. "We hope that our biggest accomplishment is to act as an advocacy and awareness organization to mobilize students around the issues of extreme poverty and preventable disease," said Zern.

Vanderbilt ONE's first high-profile event was its inaugural Hunger Banquet in October.

Students attending the event received an allotment of food based on a random assignment of financial standing. This rationing demonstrated the extreme wealth disparity in countries all over the

world and its effects on basic food purchases.

ONE also participated in December's World AIDS Day event featuring keynote speaker former Senator Bill Frist. The event provided insight into the HIV/AIDS crisis and discussed what actions are currently being taken by the United States and other countries to combat the disease.

This semester, Vanderbilt ONE will become involved in projects dealing with issues such as the effects of extreme poverty on children and the current catastrophe in Haiti.

ONE plans to host a special screening of the documentary "One Peace at a Time," a film that focuses on the possibility of providing basic human rights to children worldwide, on Feb. 24 at 8:00 p.m. The documentary features thoughts from Nobel laureates Muhammad Yunus and Stephen Chu on how the global community can best attain rights for every child, as well as music from Ben Harper and Bob Dylan.

ONE will also be participating in a videoconference later in the semester with notable professor and author Jeffrey Sachs regarding the Haiti earthquakes. Sachs will discuss the devastating economic results of the earthquake on Haiti's population and the level of foreign aid required for the country to restore basic economic stability. The event supports ONE's message that a nonpartisan movement to increase U.S. aid to Haiti is absolutely crucial to the country's survival and endurance.

To make a longer lasting impact, ONE also sponsors a Ugandan child named Caroline. Members of ONE traveled to Uganda and spent time with Caroline to learn more about the plight of African children. ONE supports Caroline's education so that she can one day attend secondary school and pursue a career without the obstacles of extreme poverty.

To increase visibility for the organization on both a national and local level, Vanderbilt ONE is currently participating in the ONE campus challenge.



**To learn more about the
ONE campaign, visit
www.ONE.org/campus**

ONE members can earn points for their campus by becoming a fan of ONE through Facebook or Twitter, writing letters to members of Congress about relevant legislation, or incorporating ONE issues into a class curriculum. Out of hundreds of schools across the nation, Vanderbilt ONE currently ranks 25th in terms of points with 74 new recruits for this year.

To sign up for the ONE campus challenge or to learn more about the ONE campaign, students can log on to www.one.org/campus or e-mail vanderbiltone@gmail.com for more details.

Become a part of Vanderbilt's progressive voice.

Come to the next Orbis meeting on March 3 at 6 p.m. in Buttrick 312.

E-mail vanderbiltorbis@gmail.com for details.

Tea party stirs up anger, offers no solutions

By Sam Abney
MANAGING EDITOR

As the keynote speaker at the National Tea Party Convention in Nashville on Feb. 6, Sarah Palin had what was perhaps the best opportunity yet to set out exactly what the tea party "movement" is all about. Unfortunately, Palin's speech was more focused on scoring cheap political points than defining the group's ideals.

With such extensive media coverage over the last several months, one would think the tea party message would by now be clear. Still, while they have loudly and repeatedly declared their fervent love for the constitution and limited government, tea party demonstrators have been reluctant to fill in the details.

It's reasonable to ask what exactly led tea party demonstrators to call, as Palin did, for a "new revolution" to take back America, and to ask whether they have any specific proposals or goals of their own. Interestingly, many of the movement's adherents do not seem to know the answers to these questions.

The websites of the National Tea Party Convention and Tea Party Nation, its sponsoring organization, say almost nothing about the movement's mission, other

than a few remarks about the glory of America and the founding fathers and an invitation for visitors to "quench [their] thirst for freedom!"

Anyone who expected to hear a more detailed account of the big, new ideas of the tea party in Palin's convention speech surely left disappointed. Aside from restating a few points taken straight from her old campaign platform, the former Alaska governor and Republican vice-presidential candidate used the vast majority of her time to tell the audience about the many faults and failures of the current administration.

Palin talked extensively about the evils of the radical "Obama-Pelosi-Reed agenda," informing the audience that "that's what got [Democrats] into this mess" (as apparently holding the presidency and both houses of Congress, with the largest Senate majority in decades, is now considered a sign of decline). Palin repeatedly accused Democrats of refusing to listen to conservatives' new ideas, yet examples of such ideas were conspicuously lacking in her remarks.

In fact, Palin's speech practically celebrated the lack of any proposals or positions on the part of tea party groups, contrasting this "ground-up call to action" with other "top-down operation[s]" focused on a single "charismatic guy with a teleprompter," underscoring a theme of radical liberal elitists versus everyday American patriots that dominates her discourse and defines her persona.

Though Palin repeatedly charged Democrats with being "out of touch and ... out of date," it seems that this critique could be more accurately applied to tea party organizers.

In sharp contrast to Palin's portrayal of the movement, tea party protests are not about engaging the citizenry to get involved and offer new ideas. They are instead a platform for rehashing the same old, tired gripes of a minority of Americans who are deathly afraid of new ideas, now injected with a new dose of prejudice in light of the election of a president whose name and ethnic background are unlike what the tea party faithful have been used to in the past.

In reality, tea party demonstrators are in no way representative of the revolution that Palin called for. There is nothing new about this kind of post-election backlash from an angry minority, and there is nothing new in their rhetoric. It is only one more example of a growing anti-intellectualism that has dominated Republican politics in recent years, reminiscent of strategies used by George W. Bush and his supporters against John Kerry in 2004.



Wink wink: Palin's image as an average, down-to-earth American mom reveals more political savvy than many give her credit for.

In her speech to the convention, Palin criticized the president for his supposed intellectual elitism, seemingly nostalgic for the days of "the decider." "We need a commander in chief," she declared to cheers and applause, "not a professor of law standing at the lectern."

Palin has, like Bush before her, capitalized on her frequent gaffes and apparent lack of knowledge about the issues to build her image as an average American, in touch with the masses. This brilliant strategy capitalizes on both the fears and aspirations of many citizens who are legitimately concerned about whether their views are represented in government.

People seem to like the idea of a leader they can relate to. What the tea party message overlooks or denies is that the presidency is a complex and demanding job that requires someone who can make educated decisions, who knows how to make the best use of the advice he or she is given, and who can see the issues in shades of gray, rather than the simplistic black-and-white picture Palin paints in her speeches (one obvious example being her statement of the "Palin plan" for foreign policy: "We win! They lose!").

Perhaps the greatest irony in Palin's depiction of everyday Americans rising up to retake their government is that she herself is not a typical citizen at all. On the contrary, while Palin denounces "the personalities who control the political machines," she has taken on that exact role within the right wing of the Republican Party. It's curious to hear Palin say, "you don't need a proclaimed leader, as if we're all just a bunch of sheep, and we're looking for a leader to



Tea party protesters have no big ideas brewing.

Photo illustration: Sam Abney/ORBIS

progress this movement," followed moments later by her audience chanting, "Run, Sarah, run!"

Near the beginning of her speech, Palin congratulated newly-elected U.S. Senator Scott Brown, saying that he "represents what this beautiful movement is all about." Brown, according to Palin, was "just a guy with a truck and a passion to serve our country" who answered the call to clean up Washington and "put our government back on the side of the people."

What Palin fails to mention is that before his election bid, Brown was already a state senator and the head defense attorney for the Army National Guard over all of New England. His is hardly the story of an average concerned citizen rising up to undermine the oppression of elite beltway czars. Scott Brown may own a truck, but he is no blue-collar Joe Six-pack.

It is unclear how Palin can reconcile her own political superstardom with her harsh critiques of President Obama's status as a celebrity figurehead, supposedly using his eloquent oratory to mask the tyrannical imposition of his radical policies.

Palin made it very clear she is "tired of hearing the talk, talk, talk," but she has made a career out of public speaking in forums like the tea party convention, where her remarks are consistently all style and no substance.

Perhaps she views her use of talking points written on her hand in marker ink (the subsequent widespread ridicule of which will likely serve only to reinforce her image as an all-American underdog) as a folksier alternative to using a teleprompter, but she did not seem to be opposed to using one when she was running for the vice-presidency. Apparently such things only count as signs of elitism when they are used by Palin's political opponents.

At another point in her speech, Palin criticized what she views as wasteful spending on the part of the administration, assuring her audience that she and her husband Todd know first-hand about the difficulties of living on a budget. Perhaps she was hoping they had forgotten about the embarrassing publicity she received during the election for her outrageous clothing expenses. Perhaps she was hoping they would ignore the fact that their organization would be paying her a reported sum of \$100,000 for appearing there to give that single speech (Though Palin claimed, during the question period, that she would be glad to "turn [the fee] right back around and give it to the cause," she has reportedly accepted similar speaking fees on a regular basis).

Palin never said much to elaborate on her view of an average American living on a budget, but it is clear that she does not qualify under any reasonable standard.

The tea party movement is simply not about empowering average Americans. More than anything else, it is an outpouring of misguided fears on the part of under-informed citizens that has been latched onto by certain conservative celebrities to promote their own careers. In the end, tea party members themselves cannot agree about what their message should be. Their so-called national convention, seemingly designed to bring in everyone under one tent, actually drew protests from rival tea party protesters who were not able to get in.

The opening line of her speech—"Do you love your freedom?"—sums up the content of the tea party's nonexistent platform and helps to illuminate exactly what is wrong with speeches like the one she delivered. The kinds of false dichotomies Palin so frequently draws between "us" and "them," "real" and phony Americans, patriots and terrorist sympathizers, are regressive and counterproductive, and they in no way help the cause of political liberty. Despite their professed love for everything American, tea party protesters ultimately represent nothing but fear and denial of the core principles of diversity and inclusivity that define the purpose of the American experiment.

Orbis Recommends

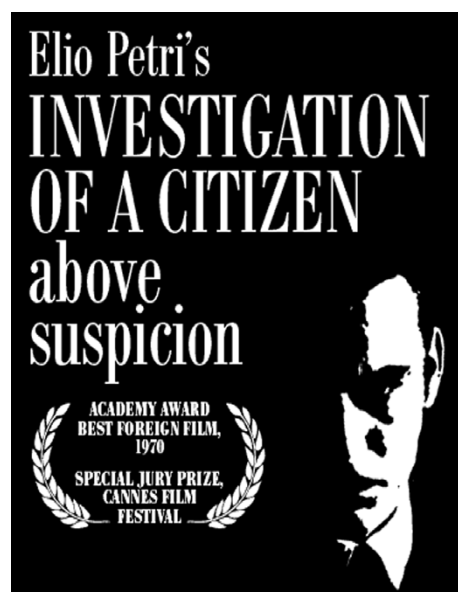
United Nations Association of Nashville presents: *War and peacemaking in Christianity and Islam*

February 18, 4:30 p.m., Green Hills Public Library

Dr. Lee Camp, Senior Faculty Fellow at the Center for International Peace and Justice and Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Lipscomb University, will discuss modes of thinking about warfare in these different faith traditions. Cost: Free.

International Lens Film Series presents: *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*
February 17, 7 p.m., Sarratt Cinema

Elio Petri's *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* (1970) is a burlesque of political corruption in Italy that has landed critical acclaim for 40 years. The film will be followed by a discussion. Cost: Free.



Vanderbilt Spoken Word presents: *Our UnIvर्सity*

February 21, 5 p.m., SLC Ballroom

In four years at college, lives change in a hundred different ways. In their largest showcase yet, VSW presents a conceptual, intimate performance about the Vanderbilt experience. Cost: \$5 at the door, Commodore Card accepted.

VIVA, SPEAR, PAWS and Sierra Club present: *Food, Inc.*

February 27, 2 p.m., Sarratt Cinema

The documentary "Food, Inc." provides insight into the perils of the modern food industry. A panel discussion will follow the film.

Cost: Free.

International Legal Studies Program

presents: *General David Petraeus*

March 1, 5 p.m., SLC Ballroom

General Petraeus, commander of the United States Central Command, will engage in an open dialogue with Mike Newton, Vanderbilt law professor. This sold out event will be broadcast live on VUCast.



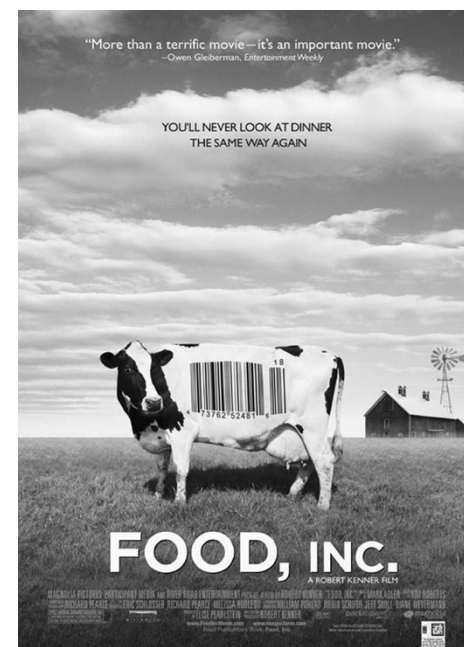
Cuninggim Women's Center presents: *Girls Rock!*

March 25, 7 p.m., Sarratt Cinema

Girls Rock! follows a summer rock 'n roll camp for girls, and covers everything from friendships to school to relationships, with a strong dose of girl empowerment.

Cost: Free.

—Compiled by Jon Christian



What do you think about...

the rise of the tea party movement? Sarah Palin's impact on politics?

*Paul Yeh, Junior
Biology & Poli. Science*
They have a lot of energized people and they get a lot of media attention. They're going to make American politics more interesting-let's put it that way.



*Sam Earls
Junior, History*
For the average person, Palin seems to have a nice appeal, but I don't know if she should be the frontrunner of the conservative movement.



*Nikhila Reddy
Sophomore
Molecular & Cellular Bio*
They are fighting for a lost cause if they are only anti-Obama.



*Matt Shelton, Junior
Comm. Studies,
Film, English*
It seems like a sect of ultra conservatives that don't get their voices heard, so the only way they feel they can be heard is by "acting up."



*Haley Rauch
Sophomore
Spanish & English*
[Palin's] speech didn't do that much- it improves her image with those who already follow her.



*Brandon Lyle
Sophomore
MHS & Spanish*
Sometimes people on both sides can be too extreme criticizing each other when really they need to get their act together and find common ground.



*Crystal Fang
Senior
Anthropology & Spanish*
It's not helpful for the tea party movement to be so extreme. It's surprising how many people are still very conservative.



*Spencer Montalvo
Junior, Philosophy &
Political Science*
A party should have a solid foundation and authenticity that I think this movement lacks... because it appeared as a reactionary organization.



*Christine Zhang
Junior, BME*
Association with a group with so much zeal will spark [Palin's] campaign, but it won't help her win.



*Gabe Horton, Junior
Relig. Studies & Poli. Science*
I think the tea party is a further right version of the Republican Party and it seems like there's a little bitterness on Sarah Palin's part [toward Republicans] after the election.



*Racquel Martin
Freshman, Public Policy*
I think with most Americans being moderate, I don't think the tea party's a smart way to appeal to most Americans.



*Zye Hooks
Sophomore, History &
Latin American Studies*
As a movement, the tea party movement is very fascinating. It's been a long time since we've seen [such] a groundswell of a movement.



*Calla Ketchens, Junior
French & Communications*
[The tea party movement] doesn't relate to young people. If they modernize and let people know what it's really about, maybe it can attract some younger people.



*Dennis Chow
Graduate Student
Business Management*
[The tea party] could be a bad thing if all the talk is focused on Obama and diverts away from the real issues.



*Adesewa Adelekun
Freshman, Undecided*
It's ridiculous to be so anti-Obama. Sarah Palin likes to be in the limelight, so she is in anything that gets her name out there.

