

# ORBIS

Amplifying Vanderbilt's Progressive Voices

Vol. 9/No. 8/May/2010



Community Life in the Vanderbubble... p. 4 and 11

## a note from the editor

You're holding the final edition of Orbis for the 2009-2010 year. Thanks for reading us as we covered another year of growing activism and progressive politics on the Vandy campus. For our last issue, we decided to focus on what exactly it means to be a part of the Vanderbilt community: what defines our "communities," how we reach out beyond the "Vanderbilt bubble," and what we can do to strengthen our communities against the injustices we continue to see.

Inside, several people have included reflections on their time at Vanderbilt, exploring the idea of finding a niche community (p. 4) and urging students to seek more inclusive and authentic relationships with the broader campus (p. 11). We also highlight several campus events focused on how to collectively address injustice in the world around us, like modern Slavery Awareness Week (p. 5) and Elie Wiesel's visit to campus (p. 7).

I want to take this time to recognize two of my fellow seniors and editors, Allie Diffendal and Sam Abney. They have contributed to Orbis for several years, and I'm proud of the work we accomplished to amplify the progressive viewpoints on campus. As I graduate, I pass the reigns over to the new Editor-in-Chief, Jon Christian. I'm confident that Jon and the rest of next year's editorial staff will help make the paper even stronger. If you want to be part of the staff, email [vanderbiltorbis@gmail.com](mailto:vanderbiltorbis@gmail.com) and find out how to get involved. With another election on the horizon, it's going to be an exciting time to work on political reporting, and you can help represent Vandy's liberal and progressive voices.

-Erika Hyde

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# ORBIS

*Amplifying Vanderbilt's Progressive Voices*

May 2010

Volume 9, Number 8

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Please recycle.

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Cover design: Allie Diffendal

## 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.



# Vanderbilt TOMS Club finds its footing

By Aimee Sobhani  
STAFF WRITER

Vanderbilt students who want to support the TOMS Shoes initiative can now do so through Vanderbilt TOMS Club, a recently founded student organization.

Last semester, junior Alex Ernst and sophomore Stephanie Brennan applied to be campus representatives of TOMS. TOMS chose the two undergraduates and put them in contact with one another.

"We began meeting and brainstorming...about how we could turn our representation of the TOMS movement into a club at Vanderbilt," said Ernst. They serve as co-presidents of Vanderbilt TOMS Club. Sophomores Kalie Deutsch and Anna McReynolds, who serve as co-vice-presidents, were also instrumental in turning the idea of a club based on the idea of TOMS Shoes into a reality.

TOMS Shoes is a for-profit American shoe company started by Blake Mycoskie in 2006, that also

operates a non-profit subsidiary called Friends of TOMS. For every pair of shoes it sells, TOMS provides a pair of shoes to a child in need. In many parts of the developing world, simply wearing shoes can protect children from many diseases and can even help them attend schools, where shoes are a mandatory requirement.

Brennan learned about TOMS Shoes in high school and thought it was a worthy cause. "I thought that TOMS had a great mission – to use the consumer power of American citizens to benefit those less fortunate," said Brennan.

"Our main goal is to promote knowledge of the TOMS shoes mission and to encourage students

within the Vanderbilt community to support this mission."

***TOMS Shoes is a for-profit American shoe company started by Blake Mycoskie in 2006. For every pair of shoes it sells, TOMS provides a pair of shoes to a child in need.***

Vanderbilt TOMS Club has already held several campus events to promote awareness. The group held a Style Your Sole party at the end of March where students decorated plain-colored TOMS shoes with art supplies or with the help of local artists. As a part of the National TOMS One Day without Shoes campaign, the group hosted a barefoot walk

around campus on April 8. The following day, Vanderbilt TOMS Club and several other campus organizations screened a documentary about TOMS Shoes at the Better World Film Festival.

In February, the Global Poverty Initiative (GPI) brought Mycoskie to speak at Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt TOMS Club helped publicize the GPI event with an information booth.

The Vanderbilt TOMS Club receives a great deal of guidance from the national TOMS headquarters. "They help us plan events and provide us with new materials and ideas for our projects through the year," said Ernst.

Next semester, the group hopes to have at least one event per month. "[We plan] to hold semesterly Style Your Sole events, screenings of the TOMS documentary, and other various monthly events to raise awareness," said Ernst.

Brennan is optimistic about the club's growth on campus. The organization currently has about 40 members.

"I would say that Vanderbilt students are excited about TOMS shoes," she said. "I'm very excited for the future of our club and for the great things that the students at Vanderbilt can accomplish through their participation."

Students interested in Vanderbilt TOMS Club can email [vandytoms@gmail.com](mailto:vandytoms@gmail.com) for more information.



Member of Vanderbilt TOMS Club and community members work together to customize TOMS shoes. For every pair of shoes that TOMS sells, it provides a pair free of charge to a child in need.

Photo: Aimee Sobhani

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# Transfer student finally finds niche

## *K.C. Potter Center serves as loving community*

By Allie Diffendal  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Choosing a college is tough. I've done it twice. The first time, I chose a good scholarship at a \$20,000 liberal arts college on the southeast coast with a surprisingly large progressive community. Still, being the geek that I am, I decided that a life with daily beach trips but without academic rigor was not right for me. So, I pulled out my college guides once more and contemplated a transfer.

Spring arrived with my acceptance letters. George Washington, Georgetown, Boston College, Tufts, and Vanderbilt. My application to Vanderbilt was really an afterthought, a nice sentiment to show my family that I was not actually planning a life-long escape. I lived my entire life 20 minutes away from Vanderbilt and never considered applying to it the first go-round. My progressive compass pointed north. I was getting out. South be damned.

And then financial reality struck. Vanderbilt meant in-state tuition. It meant fewer plane tickets and more money in my pocket. So I put my Northern dreams on hold and hoped for the best.

The College Prowler warned me. "Choosing

*Nestled in the campus is a home away from home for students. I only wish I found it sooner.*

Vanderbilt means choosing to be in a situation where name-brand clothes and high-end cars have a certain amount of importance. Most students come from white upper-class families, and while they may not all fit the stereotype of wealthy snobs, money is in abundance for most on campus." Among its top ten "worst of Vanderbilt" rankings were lack of diversity, students' narrow worldview, and an apathetic student body.

Wary of my life at a stereotypically Southern university, I began plotting my game plan. I read through pages of student club listings and went to the Student Org Fair with a bucket list of my progressive finds. I remember there being few of them in comparison to my former school – a progressive paper here, an environmental group there, scattered among a sea of booths with Greek symbols and Judeo-Christian verses.

Later that week a friend pointed out Wilson Hall,

where legend had it there was a monkey lab. Just like that, what was an informal side note became my first headline. I joined the progressive paper, scheduled an interview with a PETA primate specialist, and got my hands on the lab's USDA reports.

But a monthly commitment does not a progressive community make. So, I kept looking. I joined other organizations, but I still hadn't found my niche.

And then I found the K.C. Potter Center and the wonderful, accepting people that work, socialize, and practically live within its walls. Nestled in the campus is a home away from home for many students. I only wish I found it sooner.

In fact, had I not represented a

booth at the same Student Org Fair two years later and shamelessly scouted out organizations to spotlight in our newspaper, I would not have been handed the flier that led me there that first Wednesday night.

The K.C. Potter Center is all the community a progressive could want. The Center provides an opportunity for students to combine political activism, an LGBTQI education, and an active social life. Its staff is the quintessential quirky, loving family that always welcomes neighborly visits – and yes, even poses for cheesy holiday greetings.

After discovering the Center and the individuals within it, I started actively

reporting on the LGBTQI community on campus. I gained a new interest in LGBTQI issues and even researched the process of "coming out" for a class on gender and sex trauma.

I danced off gender norms at the Human Rights Campaign's GenderBlender Dance Party and listened to Reverend Mel White explain his constant struggle with being a gay Christian.

The more Office of LGBTQI Life events I attended, the more I was certain that the gay and lesbian marriage movement is my generation's civil rights movement.

As my final goodbye to the K.C. Potter community, I attended the second annual Lavender Graduation and received a rainbow tassel that means just as much to me as the one the College of Arts & Science will present me on May 14.

I came to Vanderbilt an eco-conscious vegetarian, a human rights advocate, and a yellow dog liberal. Thanks to the K.C. Potter community, I've added yet another identity to my repertoire – LGBTQI ally.

Consider that my "coming out."



Associate Director Michael Brown, Director Nora Spencer, and Program Coordinator Sarah Benanti of the Office of LGBTQI Life in the K.C. Potter Center pose for a holiday greeting.



The K.C. Potter Center is home to a community of LGBTQI individuals and allies. Photo: courtesy of the Office of LGBTQI Life at Vanderbilt



# Modern Slavery Awareness Week is a call for action

By Steve Harrison  
STAFF WRITER

The Global Poverty Initiative concluded its series of events highlighting Modern Slavery Awareness Week by sponsoring a luncheon with the topic of "What You Can Do." The April 16 luncheon featured speakers from the Nashville community who advocated for fair trade policies, involvement in combative social groups, and more government attention to human trafficking issues.

*"Poverty does not cause human trafficking. It only provides the context."*

*~Dr. Brian Heuser of Vanderbilt University*

Speakers included C. Lee Eby from the fair trade enterprise Ten Thousand Villages Nashville, CEO of Free for Life International Colette Bercu, and Vanderbilt University International, Educational, and Public Policy lecturer Dr. Brian Heuser.

Eby, the board of directors chairman for Ten Thousand Villages, began his speech by making a connection between poverty and the origins of modern slavery. He noted that "slavery problems grow out of poverty and children of the world are exploited by the international trade system."

Eby defined fair trade as the "direct exchange of goods based on the principles of economic and social justice" and explained that free trade and fair trade are not synonymous, as free trade only refers to economic agreements made between countries.

Fair trade businesses, like Nashville's own Ten Thousand Villages, ensure that children are not exploited as labor in any part of the production process. They also offer, Eby said, cash advances for the artisans for up to 50 percent. The main incentives for artisans to do business with fair trade companies are reliable payments and long-term relationships, fac-

tors that often cannot be found in impoverished nations. Eby pointed to Haiti and Chile, countries hurt deeply by earthquakes in the past year, as places with struggling economies with which Ten Thousand Villages now works.

Although Eby stressed that poverty is the undeniable cause of modern slavery, Dr. Heuser sharply disagreed. "Poverty does not cause human trafficking. It only provides the context," Heuser said.

He related an anecdote detailing his own personal encounter with trafficking during a collegiate study in Shanghai. Expecting to meet with a local purportedly willing to exchange currencies, Heuser instead found himself face-to-face with a man attempting to sell him a young girl. This experience caused Heuser to recognize that the problem of slavery still persists even in the modern world.

Heuser also used China as a counterexample to governmental inaction, which he sees as the cause of modern slavery. Although China contains about one-sixth of the global population, it only has about five percent of the world's trafficking. Heuser attributes this discrepancy to the Chinese government's ban on prostitution and human trafficking coupled with strict punishments for violators. China also defined prostitution and human trafficking as practices that violate women's fundamental rights in 1992. In Tennessee, no strong state laws hinder human trafficking in any meaningful manner.

Heuser encouraged the audience to lobby state and federal governments for action against slav-

ery. He made little mention of Eby's fair trade arguments throughout his speech except during his conclusion. Heuser instructed all in attendance to "find out what your government is doing... right after you buy your Christmas gifts from Ten Thousand Villages."

Colette Bercu, the co-founder of Free for Life International, turned the focus toward what social groups can do to combat human trafficking. Free for Life, a member of the Nashville Rescue and Restore Coalition, works in conjunction with shelters all around the world to assist and empower

*"These people could be you... I'm astounded by how normal they are."*

*~Colette Bercu of Free for Life*

former slaves and potential victims. Bercu co-founded the organization with her husband after a documentary on television prompted her to action.

Bercu lamented the wave of shelter closures around the world due to the economic downturn and defended their value in challenging human trafficking. She explained that girls in some shelters are given livestock for free and taught new skills like tailoring or farming in order to produce their own sustainable incomes.

Bercu's organization also hopes to address the problem of relaxed borders between countries with a high amount of trafficking. Free for Life recently opened a border monitoring station in Nepal to prevent traffickers from transporting girls from Nepal into India. Bercu looked around the audience and observed, "These people could be you. I've met a lot of trafficking victims and the thing that I'm astounded by is how normal they are."

The luncheon provided a variety of angles to view the problem of modern slavery and provided multiple steps towards involvement and action ranging from economic solutions to social groups to politics.



The Global Poverty Initiative displays a banner they made to advertise Modern Slavery Awareness Week, which was hung outside Rand dining hall.

Photo: Cayla Mackey

## Earth Day Festival attracts fair-weather environmentalists

By John Chen  
FEATURES EDITOR

Music City celebrated Earth Day with all-day live entertainment in Centennial Park on Saturday, April 17. The ninth annual Nashville Earth Day Festival included environmental education seminars, food and live music, and quite a few skeptics.

This year, the Festival's theme was "Strike A Chord. Go Green." Headlining the musical portion were Bela Fleck, a Grammy Award winning banjo player, and Sara Watkins, the fiddler and vocalist for the bluegrass trio Nickel Creek. The festival's live music attracted people from all around the Nashville area, not just hardcore tree huggers.

Nashvillian Rico Ramiraz called many Earth Day festival attendees "weekend warriors," people who are not genuinely interested in environmentalism, but participate in the festival for the fun and games. Ramiraz, who has attended every festival since its inaugural year, said that even the music has lacked spirit in the last several years. He says that most people have other, higher-ranking worries than going green. John from Donelson said, "Give them 20 minutes after they leave and they'll start throwing stuff on the ground again."

Jeffrey Bottoms from the Tennessee Department of Transportation volunteered at the festival. Although he considers Tennessee an environmentally friendly state, Forbes Magazine's list of "America's Greenest States" places Tennessee forty-third. Nashville is sixth in the nation for worst carbon footprint, according to the Brookings Institute, and the most dangerous city

to bike and walk, according to the Alliance for Biking and Walking.

David Kleinfelter hopes to change Nashville's poor biking and walking rating. Next to Toyota's Hybrid Prius showcase, Kleinfelter manned the Walk/Bike Nashville booth, which designated an area for free bike parking during the event. Walk/Bike Nashville, which was started 11 years ago, seeks to make Nashville more "walkable and bikable and therefore livable," said Kleinfelter. Kleinfelter was the editor of the Vanderbilt Hustler in 1983 and served on the Metropolitan County Council and its City Planning Committee. "The people on Metro Council are very green people," he said.

Still, John from Donelson is convinced that the younger generation will be the driving force behind the green movement, citing their higher education on pressing environmental issues. Two years ago, Vanderbilt graduate students helped ensure that the festival was "carbon neutral."

Kleinfelter thinks the Vanderbilt administration cares more about the environment now, and he admires the new eco-friendly Commons dorms. In the future, Kleinfelter wants to see covered bike parking on campus, as well as student groups that teach bike maintenance workshops. He urges Vanderbilt students to join an estimated 2,000 participants in Walk/Bike Nashville's Tour de Nash on May 22. The city-wide bike ride tour raises funds for bicycle-pedestrian advocacy.

The festival, which is free for the community and nonprofit organizations, educates the public on green habits through various seminars by local farmers and food writers, including "Wild Edible Plants are Everywhere: Introduction to Food in Your Yard" and "Composting 101." This year, a Merchant Village sold green products from local small businesses and food waste from the festival's concession stands was composted. The festival is organized by a committee comprised of 17 groups, including the Mayor's Office, home energy company E3 Innovate, and various Tennessee government departments.



The 2010 Earth Day Festival attracted a diverse crowd to Centennial Park with food and live entertainment.

Photo: John Chen

## InVUision 2010 celebrates campus diversity

By Ben Wibking  
STAFF WRITER

Students on Alumni Lawn celebrated Vanderbilt's multicultural environment April 17 with food and performances provided by member organizations of the Multicultural Leadership Council (MLC) at the third annual InVUision. The event's theme, "Spice Up Your Life," resonated both in its wide-ranging cuisine, from Mediterranean, Cuban, and Mexican to Chinese, Indian, and southern American, and its variety of ethnic performances.

Dance performances were given by over a dozen groups, including salsa dancing by Vanderbilt's Latin Dance Group (VIDA), Indian dancing by Masala-SACE, and African dancing by the African Student Union. Even Vanderbilt Student Government performed a dance entitled "Lori and the Murphettes."

Musical performances were given by Jewgrass, a bluegrass group, and Vandy Taal, with the latter performing "Jai Ho," the Academy award-winning song from the film Slumdog Millionaire. Step shows were performed by Kappa Alpha Psi, Sigma Lambda Gamma, and Alpha Psi Alpha.

Organization-staffed booths provided games, prizes, and information about their respective organizations. Vanderbilt Hillel displayed infor-

mation and decorations related to the major Jewish holidays at its table. Likewise, the Muslim Students' Association provided pamphlets and English renderings of the text of the Qur'an to inter-

*The event's theme, "Spice Up Your Life," resonated both in its wide-ranging cuisine and its variety of ethnic performances.*

ested undergraduates. The Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic Students displayed a piñata and gave free candy to passersby. The Vanderbilt Chinese Association gave free chopsticks to any student

who could use them to pick up a marble.

Other student organizations not explicitly associated with ethnicity or religion were also represented. The Vanderbilt Lambda Association, an LGBTQI organization, had a cupcake tasting, and the Pi Beta Phi sorority invited students to create bookplates. For each plate decorated, the sorority and its partner organizations donated a book to a child as part of the national sorority's literacy campaign.

Reactions from student attendees were positive. "I'm glad to see [InVUision] return this year as a street festival," said Teresa Temkin, president of the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic Students. (Last year's event was held in the ballroom of the Student Life Center.) Sarah Goodrich, president of the MLC, also thought the favorable weather and the outdoor location encouraged students to stop by, even if they had not planned to do so. "It went really well. [It] had a good turnout from the community," said Goodrich.

This year's turnout improved over the previous year, according to Goodrich. Throughout the afternoon, the number of students this year varied from a few dozen to over 100.

When asked about what the multicultural event meant for Vanderbilt, Goodrich said, "It says that we appreciate each other and their organizations. It shows that we're working toward becoming one community, one Vanderbilt."



# Wiesel urges remembrance of victims, work for a just future

By Stephanie Mann  
STAFF WRITER

Project Dialogue continued a 20-year tradition of dynamic conversation with a speech by Nobel Laureate, human rights activist, and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Wiesel's April 12 speech came the night after Holocaust Remembrance Day, adding poignancy to the event's theme of civility and justice.

Co-sponsored by Vanderbilt Hillel and the Office of Religious Life, "Civility and Justice for Whom? An Evening with Elie Wiesel" sold out April 8 and was attended by hundreds. Wiesel was introduced by Vanderbilt Divinity School's Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Culture, Jay Geller, who noted how the night could help the audience recognize "the fragile nature of civility when confronted by acts of injustice."

Wiesel took the stage to a standing ovation, and began his talk by praising the mission of Project Dialogue. "I like the topic of dialogue," he said. "We are a group all over the world of thinkers, leaders, and students."

Wiesel's message on the capacity of conversation to promote progress was central to his speech, establishing his view of dialogue as the fundamental key to peace. "When dialogue fails, violence becomes the language," Wiesel said. His own family, Wiesel explained, fostered this emphasis on the interchange of ideas during his youth. "To ask a question was the most important element in my education," he said. Fittingly, much of Wiesel's speech was a kind of internal question and answer session, posing difficult questions and following up with Wiesel's own unique answers.

Addressing the night's broad themes of civility and justice, Wiesel asked the audience to "remember that when we speak of civility, there is 'civil' in 'civilization,' and civilization means we accept one another for what the other is." Wiesel explained the problem of "the other," the tendency of groups to marginalize and stereotype

those that look or act differently from the majority. This type of injustice, he said, is directly related to institutions of law which "can be perverse, and perversely used and abused," by those who fail to respect differences in opinion, appearance, thought, and religion. "In my lifetime, there have been two major ideologies - Nazism and Communism - that used the law against humanity," Wiesel said. "When the law is the law for everyone: that is justice."

In addition to his broad discussion of the definitions and nuances of the law, justice and civility, Wiesel offered a compelling talk on the history and current condition of all three concepts at work in the United States. "We are here in the South, after all," Wiesel quipped. "When I came to the South I saw racism, not only at work [as a journalist], but racism being the law. For the first time in my life, I felt shame. I was never ashamed being a Jew. Now, I was ashamed being white." This moment in Wiesel's speech related the night's themes to Vanderbilt's history and future as a Southern institution, and illustrated Wiesel's point that law and justice are very often at odds with one another.

Wiesel also spoke of the current threats faced

by the United States and the rest of the world in an age of terrorism and nuclear weapons. "A new fanaticism has dominated events all over the world. For the last twelve years I speak about it whenever I can: suicide killing," he said. Wiesel spoke about how education of young people "against the cult of death" is the only defense against the spread of this kind of suicide terrorism, which world leaders fear will eventually encompass the use of nuclear warfare. His message was one of solidarity, calling on everyone to "do what we can do to see in one another not an enemy, but a companion."

The author of fifty-seven books offered some reflections on his experience as a prisoner in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. As an injunction against the forgetting of the unimaginable horror and injustice of the Holocaust, Wiesel described the terrible realities of what

a lack of civility meant for the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. "Auschwitz did not come ready-made from heaven. It was constructed by man," Wiesel read. "Now we must, of course, ask ourselves, 'Has the world learned anything?'" According to Wiesel, the recent situations in Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur, and the Congo show that civility and justice still remain evasive concepts for much of the world.

Wiesel's speech culminated in a lively question and answer session with the audience. Among other things, Wiesel was asked to reconcile his views on justice and nonviolence with his views on Israeli violence, to which he responded, "I must tell you, I don't believe Israelis commit violence just to commit violence. I don't believe Israeli soldiers gratuitously kill. They respond." Wiesel was also questioned about his faith in God after the Holocaust. While admitting he was angry with God for a time, he said, "I went on praying to God. I love praying."

The event came to an end with another standing ovation, and reactions to the speech were emotional for many audience members. Vanderbilt junior Marlowe Brant explained that having Wiesel come to Vanderbilt was a tremendous privilege. "For me, this was like a dream come true," she said. "I grew up reading Wiesel's book, 'Night.' I loved when he read the passage he wrote about Birkenau, but also thought he did a wonderful job



Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel spoke to students about his experiences and hopes for the future.

Photo: [www.viferbo.edu](http://www.viferbo.edu)

*"Auschwitz did not come ready-made from heaven. It was constructed by man. Now we must, of course, ask ourselves, 'Has the world learned anything?'"*  
- Elie Wiesel

throwing humor into his speech."

Other audience members echoed Brant's positive reaction. Senior Brendan Alviani was struck by Wiesel's calm and poised demeanor in the face of the emotional topics at hand. "I saw in him utter patience and compassion. He seemed very warm and open to the questions people asked."

Perhaps what audience members will remember most is Wiesel's impassioned plea to remember the Holocaust as they continue to demand justice for all: "Remember the victims and you will open your hearts to compassion. Remember. Otherwise the world will suffer from our forgetting."

# Local clinic teaches med students, treats uninsured

*Second annual Shade Tree Trot provides funds to keep free clinic running*

By Erika Hyde  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A family clinic operating out of a doublewide trailer gives many Vanderbilt medical students their first experience in hands-on patient care. The Shade Tree Clinic in east Nashville has connected the university's future doctors with the city's uninsured population since 2004.

In tough economic times, though, keeping the free clinic's doors open becomes a difficult task for Shade Tree's volunteer students and medical staff. To offset the growing costs of health care expenses, the clinic will host its second annual Shade Tree Trot, a charity run that fundraised over \$30,000 last year.

This year's Trot will take place on May 1, and volunteers like second year VUMC student Katie Ayers are hopeful that the clinic will raise even more this year. She explained that Shade Tree operates both as a care center for patients and a learning facility for new medical students.

"It's an invaluable learning experience. We can get access to and see patients at a very early opportunity for students, and it's a safe learning environment where upperclassmen teach and guide us," said Ayers.

Shade Tree provides the first experience in patient care for most VUMC students and is also a well-known resource for pre-med undergraduates.

"Probably every medical student at one point or

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*"It's an invaluable learning experience. We can get access to and see patients at a very early opportunity for students, and it's a safe learning environment where upperclassmen teach and guide us."*

*~Katie Ayers, second year VUMC student*

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another in their careers here will volunteer [at Shade Tree]," said Ayers.

All of the clinic's personnel are volunteers. The medical students staff the center with supervision from VUMC's doctors and faculty.

Shade Tree, located in a refurbished trailer in the McFerrin Park neighborhood in east Nashville, treats patients on Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Its programs include diabetes education, prenatal care, seasonal vaccine outreach, and a neighborhood garden to promote healthier eating habits.

According to Ayers, running the clinic exceeds \$150,000 annually, and the cost rises every year. Some of Shade Tree's financial support comes from Vanderbilt directly, but the clinic also solicits multiple



Hundreds of Vanderbilt students, faculty and staff along with Nashville residents will participate in a 5K run through Vanderbilt University to support Shade Tree Clinic on May 1st.

Photo: [shadetreeclinic.org](http://shadetreeclinic.org)

grant programs, donors, and pharmaceutical corporations to keep its doors open.

Vanderbilt students and Nashville residents make donations in order to run the Trot, which starts at the Vanderbilt football stadium and runs along campus.

The Shade Tree clinic grew out of a summer research project started by two medical students in 2004. Today, it serves over 1,300 patients, catering mainly to the uninsured and under-served Nashville community. The clinic is currently not taking on new clients, given the high number of chronic care patients they serve.

Clinics like Shade Tree across the country are facing an uncertain future, not just because of rising costs but also due to changes mandated by new health care reform legislation. Second year VUMC student and Trot Director Ryan Fritz explained, however, that Shade Tree would continue to be a resource for patients. "We are still years away from the 'universal' aspects of the bill, but I am sure that the clinic will adjust with the changing landscape to become more efficient in the new system," said Fritz.

In the meantime, Shade Tree will focus on fundraising and raising awareness about its clinic's volunteer efforts. "The success of last year's [Trot] is reflective of the support we get. The clinic's recognized as a valuable part of the community," said Ayers.

*The Shade Tree Trot will take place on May 1 at 11 a.m. For more information, visit [shadetreeclinic.org](http://shadetreeclinic.org).*



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# VSC discontinues Versus Magazine

*Longstanding arts and entertainment publication will not return in fall 2010*

By Jon Christian  
COMMENTARY EDITOR

The last issue of Versus will hit the stands this semester, ending a 42 year Vanderbilt media institution. Spurred by the tough economy and the changing market for print media, the Vanderbilt Student Media Board of Directors laid the publication to rest after a career spanning five Vanderbilt chancellors and nine U.S. Presidents.

"I've always been impressed with the hard work they've put into [Versus], but it basically came down to a tough monetary decision," said Sydney Wilmer, a senior on the VSC Board. "It was hard for me to put my peers in a position where they might feel that VSC didn't appreciate their work."

*"It was hard for me to put my peers in a position where they might feel that VSC didn't appreciate their work."*

*~Sydney Wilmer, senior and VSC Board Member*

The VSC board cited declining readership figures in the difficult decision to end the publication of Versus. Student surveys and circulation data indicated that Versus has increasingly fallen behind the ever popular Hustler. Advertising revenue also presented a problem, with student groups and community businesses reluctant to commit to advertising deals with only two issues of the Hustler published weekly.

The VSC board deliberations on the Versus cancellation were originally scheduled to take only 15 minutes, but student leaders felt the gravity of the decision warranted scheduling an entire board meeting to the topic. After discussing the details in-depth at the rescheduled second meeting, the board voted seven to one to eliminate Versus.

Surprisingly, the Versus editorial staff has not yet chosen to mention the cancellation in print. Many students remain unaware that Versus will not return next year. Due to the lack of coverage, even fewer have been exposed to VSC's financial reasoning. "I would like to know the explanation behind why VSC thought it was a good idea to [discontinue Versus]," said junior Kathryn Edwards.

"I'm a bit disappointed insofar as I've put a lot of time and effort into this publication, but it's not really disappearing - basically, what's happening is that Hustler is absorbing Versus," said Chris McDonald, former Life editor of Versus. "[Wednesday's Hustler issue] will be primarily music, entertainment, cul-

ture, fashion. It'll be a very similar format."

Like McDonald, Director of Student Media Chris Carroll sees the situation as a compromise. "What will happen next year is that the Wednesday will go back to being a Hustler that will likely have a sports page and may have a little news in it, but will be predominantly arts and entertainment," said Carroll. "Wednesday's paper was a single-genre publication."

"It would be difficult for me to see my publication go, but as a board member and a fellow writer who has worked in a lot of capacities at VSC, there are so many different ways to express yourself," said Wilmer. "It's difficult to know ahead of time what's going to be successful and what's not going to be successful."

Versus began in 1968 as a conservative alternative to the Hustler, which had earned a reputation as a liberal student publication. In the early 1970s, it shifted to literature and arts content, and then changed again to cover counter-cultural issues, according to Vanderbilt Student Media's web site. During a long stint in a glossy magazine format, Versus cultivated a niche on campus reporting on arts and entertainment.

*"This was a lifeline, thrown to a dying magazine."*

*~Chris Carroll, Director of Student Media*

In 2007, declining readership spurred VSC to reexamine the role of Versus in student media. The Hustler's current Life editor, Darcy Newell, pitched a re-imagined Versus which abandoned the long-standing magazine format in favor of a broadsheet newspaper which took the role of the Hustler's Life section. Carroll, impressed by what he described as a "beautifully executed proposal," helped to reformat Versus into the arts and entertainment broadsheet which has appeared on campus racks for the

past two years.

Starting in Fall 2008, Versus was published on Thursdays. Beginning this year, it replaced the



Versus Magazine has been discontinued after a four decade run.

Photo: Jon Christian

Wednesday Hustler as part of VSC's media consolidation project. "This was a lifeline, thrown to a dying magazine," said Carroll.

In general, VSC stresses that the Wednesday Hustler will retain the arts and entertainment coverage that readers have come to expect from Versus. "Wednesday editions of the Hustler will still maintain a heavy life and arts/entertainment emphasis with some news, sports, and opinion," said Phil Carroll, a junior on the VSC board of directors, in a written response. "Basically, we are maintaining the same content as Versus on Wednesdays with some diversification."

The Versus editorial staff hope to maintain editorial control over Wednesday's Hustler. Some on the VSC board hope so too. "The staff did make known their desire to maintain relative autonomy over the Wednesday issue," said Phil Carroll. "Next year's Hustler editor [David Namm] will have the final say, [although] we believe the Versus staff will have autonomy."

McDonald remains optimistic. "While it at first took me by surprise, it's really not the worst scenario I can imagine. It will be the same content, with extra opportunities for us on Mondays and Fridays," said McDonald.

McDonald confirmed that the Versus staff is planning to commemorate the end of the paper's run with two printed pieces - one with a serious tone, the other a tongue-in-cheek obituary.

# New Kissam Project KLiCKs into place

By Carol Chen  
ISSUES EDITOR

The Kissam Learning Initiative in Collaborative Knowledge Program (KLiCKs) wrapped up its inaugural year with presentations on campus diversity, job opportunities for engineering majors, and social capital in impoverished countries at the Program's year-end event on April 15.

Over the summer, a collaborative effort of the Dean of Students, Office of Residential Education, and VSG created what has been billed "the Kissam Experience" (KXP), of which the KLiCKs are a component. Elected house presidents from each of the six area dorms form the Kissam Programming Council (KPC) along with two RAs, two area representatives, and a member of Vanderbilt Student Government. The Kissam Area coordinator, Monesca Smith, and Kissam Experience coordinator, Antoine Birch, act as advisors. The Programming Council's mission has been to create social events for the area and to help residents develop individual interests through the KLiCKs projects.

The projects are the conception of the students but are honed through extensive consultations with Birch. This year's KLiCKs program is comprised of four students, who presented three projects. All three projects utilized Vanderbilt community resources, experts and alumni, and support, according to Birch. Birch called the participants "tremendously successful" not only for their work but the effort and time the students invested.

## Fighting Poverty with Social Capital

Arts and Science junior Michael Tranchina's project, "Social Development: Social Capital and Poverty Alleviation" investigated the idea that solving problems in disadvantaged areas of the world requires more than what he called "organizations throwing resources at communities." For his project, Tranchina spoke with the Vanderbilt Institute of Global Health, which is currently involved in a project in Mozambique which explores changing the structure of social capital.

As foreigners, his project asked, how can we positively effect change in the long-term? Tranchina became interested in the relatively new study of developing social capital, the intangible networks based on trust and community that are often neglected in charitable attempts to help poor places. Developed in the 1980s, "social capital" is the marriage of political science and sociology to explain the problem of persistent poverty even with the financial resources of outside organizations.

According to Tranchina, attempts to donate money and resources to the poorest villages in Africa do not change underlying problems such as war, economic devastation and the lack of trust

between people. Without social capital in the form of education bringing people to a forum of ideas in a classroom, or strong and reliable institutions ranging from community to national government, poor areas will continue being poor, Tranchina explained.

Building social capital is thought to be a better approach to creating sustainable regeneration and growth than just plain donating money. As

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*Students presented projects on campus diversity, job opportunities for engineering majors, and social capital in impoverished countries.*

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a community, according to Tranchina, we should encourage organizations that foster long-term solutions and recognize the need for social capital in areas, rather than ones that appeal to misguided "feel good charity" that are only going to be quick fixes.

In the post-presentation audience question section, Michael called the KLiCKs projects an "amazing opportunity to start an idea and allow it to evolve" and to be put in touch with mentors on campus.

## Opportunities Beyond Engineering

Shafiq Hamdan is an RA in Hemingway. Hamdan, who is from Malaysia, came to Vanderbilt on a scholarship to study engineering, but felt confined by the linear career trajectory of an engineering scholarship.

Shafiq spoke about learning how the parts of a car engine worked or the aerodynamics of a tube but realizing he was not as interested in actually engineering things as he thought. His degree prepares him to be a researcher or worker, but was he also equipped to be a manager or a business owner? Could he speak eloquently to engineering laypeople? The specificity of his knowledge, he explained, was potentially going to be a handicap.

Hamdan's project was titled "Venturing to Other Fields with an Engineering Degree" and incorporated video interviews with students and professors. Hamdan learned that engineering students tended to choose the major family members or outside influences expected. Those who had a personal interest were predictably more satisfied with their choice and more likely to continue in the field.

Hamdan was also interested in what a person could do with an engineering degree outside of

engineering. Although he was worried that engineers would be bound to technical fields, he was relieved to find that what he has gained through engineering school – tools like problem solving and critical thinking – were transferable to related fields. One could even go into something only tangentially relevant like law.

While Vanderbilt offers help in diversifying an engineering degree, such as creating the engineering management track, it still remains the domain of the individual to apply his knowledge to his own post-graduation goals. However, the prospect of going into different fields is possible, and that's what mattered to Hamdan.

## The Vanderbilt Diversity Experience

Sophomores Camila Ortiz and Seraiah Vinson used to stay up late talking about something near to their hearts: their perception that the Vanderbilt campus was diverse on paper but not when it came down to social groups and interaction. At the Thursday presentation, Ortiz spoke of coming from a neighborhood where she and her family were the only Hispanics, but was disappointed that the Vanderbilt social scene was not nearly as interactive between people of diverse backgrounds as she had hoped. Both Vinson and Ortiz realized that the KLiCKs project would be a useful avenue to explore the causes of this lack of mingling and the solutions available.

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*Ortiz and Vinson argued that it is imperative to study whether we are in reality a campus of true interaction, or a lot of cliques.*

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This topic is increasingly relevant to our campus. Vanderbilt's 2009-2010 undergraduate student population has a minority population of 25 percent, and increasingly contradicts its historic stereotype of being a bastion of rich, white Southerners. On April 1, the Vanderbilt Hustler reported a 27 percent increase in applications from self-identified minorities and 35 percent increase in international student applications for the class of 2014. As the admissions office continues to appeal to ethnic minorities through programs like MOSAIC in March, Ortiz and Vinson argued, it is imperative to study whether we are in reality a campus of true interaction or a lot of cliques.

Ortiz and Vinson posed several pointed questions. Does Vanderbilt encourage social interaction after admissions? Are students satisfied with the amount of diversity on campus? And perhaps most importantly, what is diversity anyway?



## *Is Vanderbilt University a community or a commodity?*

By Sam Abney  
MANAGING EDITOR

I can still remember opening my desk drawer for the first time my freshman year and seeing a card displaying the Vanderbilt Community Creed. I was impressed by the description of “a common set of values” that unite the people of this university – students, faculty, and staff.

The creed’s underlying spirit of tolerance and inclusion suggests an ideal model of a university as a meeting place for the exchange of diverse perspectives and ideas. Still, as a Vanderbilt student, I have often questioned the sincerity of our administration’s rhetoric about community and togetherness. I have asked myself whether “Vanderbilt” more appropriately refers to a community or to a commodity – a manufactured experience sold to students.

During my four years here, there have been times when Vanderbilt certainly did not seem so close-knit, times when I have wondered whether I was a part of a community of scholars and friends or simply a customer of a big business selling me the privileges of its name while transmitting a prescribed number of units of knowledge. I have wondered whether some students were more motivated by the idea of purchasing membership in an elite social sphere than in gaining new perspectives.

It is disheartening to see the atmosphere of intellectual engagement in the classroom replaced by the ghost-town campus of the weekends. Even more troubling, in a supposedly close-knit community, is the fact that students so often self-segregate, ignoring those unlike themselves and, to a greater extent, the employees and other community members who make this school run each day. Is it realistic to hope

we might truly build the kind of community we often talk about, to take our exchange of ideas and our commitment to caring beyond the walls of our classrooms?

Interestingly, the moments that have given me the most illuminating glimpses into the roots of Vanderbilt’s real community spirit have often occurred in the midst of troubling and divisive

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times. The “I am Vanderbilt” events are a shining example of how students can come together in response to intolerance. Programs like Project Safe, sponsored by the women’s center, have been created to combat sexual violence and related issues faced

by community members. In a similar way, the height of the Living Income for Vanderbilt Employees campaign in late 2006, when students and workers joined forces to fight for economic justice, remains one of the best examples of what the people of Vanderbilt can achieve together.

What the living wage movement at Vanderbilt demonstrated so well is that a spirit of community cannot be imposed from the top down. Instead, it grows from the interactions and relationships of students, workers and professors each day. While administrators spoke about Vanderbilt’s economic concerns as a faceless corporation, more in touch with numbers than with people, student activists responded by telling the stories of individual workers’ personal struggles, and they eventually helped to win an important pay raise for employees.

Ideally, the meaning of “Vanderbilt” lies with those workers, professors and students, the people who come together to make this place of learning thrive. A sense of community is not created by banners claiming that Vanderbilt loves its workers. It is found when that mutual understanding and respect is played out between individuals. Togetherness cannot grow out of a statement of values. It is the result of the collective examples of community members who live by those values.

We have seen the potential of our combined efforts, and as community members we are the only ones who can bring Vanderbilt’s creed to life. If we want to make Vanderbilt a community not only of ideas but of people, if we want to be first and foremost participants in an academic exchange, rather than the temporary customers of a corporate edutainment plan, we must leave our safety zones, look beyond our own interests, and unite ourselves. That is something no creed or proclamation can achieve.

## *Kissam Project members present, continued from 10*

A discussion with Gillette House students and their faculty head of house, Dr. Frank Dobson, the director of the Black Cultural Center, led to the idea of hosting a fireside chat to discuss diversity.

The pair also filmed short interviews with students from around Kissam. The video clips demonstrated that students generally believe there is not as much interaction between groups as there could be, but students who are more involved in activities and better integrated into Vanderbilt culture see more diversity.

It is not surprising that Ortiz and Vinson found through anecdotal evidence that people gravitate towards specific groups based on common interests, through so-called “self-segregation.” Vinson speculated that ethnic diversity stems from visuals: people look different, so we expect people to

act differently.

Vanderbilt students also have nuanced views on what diversity is. Multiple students in the videotaped interviews said that it was not just about ethnicity: there’s geography, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, academic majors, and outside interests. Focusing on ethnicity or cultural background was misleading and oftentimes detrimental.

Perhaps the most important conclusion from the KCLICK project is that personal attitude towards diversity is important. As one audience member pointed out during the question-and-answer portion, Vanderbilt has a Multicultural Leadership Council, but its events are not always well-attended. People cannot be thrown together and expected to embrace diversity. It stems from a positive outlook on meeting different people and

genuinely being interested in new experiences.

Vinson and Ortiz plan on helping students feel more comfortable with reaching out to other groups on campus. They hope to establish an organization or advisory committee next year to focus on campus interaction.

Ortiz seems to be conscious of the importance of attitudes. “After doing some self-reflection via weekly journals on ‘identity,’” she said during a follow-up interview, “I came to realize that I myself need to make the conscious effort to bridge the gaps and surpass the invisible barriers set forth by the various groups. We all need to.”

*Carol Chen is a member of the advisory council, who has watched and guided KCLICKs projects throughout the creative process.*

## At the end of another year, what have we learned?

Welcome to the end, even if it doesn't quite seem like the end yet. Everyone is stuck in a stress-fest of exams and papers. But before the year officially ends, let's take a look back on what 2009-2010 has offered us.

The first Orbis issue this year featured an article about what freshmen should know about Vanderbilt, and it is fitting to have the last page of the last issue this school year talk about what knowledge we've gained from making it through to the summer (almost).

In every area - academic, extracurricular, life,

career, the future - another year at college has affected each one of us. For the students Orbis interviewed it ranged from summer plans, to dealing with living arrangements, to finding out what they really loved to do.

Find out what your peers have discovered over the course of the year, and what they're looking forward to in the future.

Best of luck to our graduating seniors, and as for the rest of us, may we all survive finals crunch time and have a relaxing and fruitful summer vacation! We hope to see you all again next year.

~The Orbis staff



### Felicia Bell

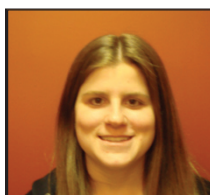
Senior  
A&S  
U.S. History with a concentration  
in African American history of the  
19th-early 20th century

How has your perspective changed in your four years here?

*In my years here, I've learned to be open to different environments. There's a diverse population at Vanderbilt, and with so many people, you can never have your guard up.*

So what do you plan on doing after graduation?

*I'm in the process of looking for a job... I'd like to work in community development, and eventually go to law school.*



### Brittany Cowfer

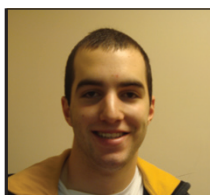
Sophomore  
A&S  
Molecular and Cellular Biology

What's the most important thing you've taken from this year?

*There's just not enough time to do everything I want to do!*

What are your priorities then?

*I've learned that I love medicine as a career but outside of that, education and mentoring are my passions. I love working with children, the people of tomorrow, and making sure that they are also able to have as great a life as we have.*



### Nathan Rothschild

Junior  
A&S  
Economics, Political Science

How has this year been different from your previous years?

*This was my first year living with a roommate; I've always had a single before. I have had to learn how to work out problems.*

What's your verdict: roommate or no?

*I like it better living in a double.*



### Jennifer Quan

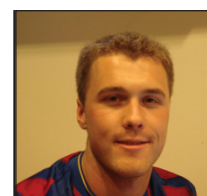
First Year  
A&S, Communication Studies

As a first year student, what have you learned?

*To take out my contacts before pulling an all-nighter!*

Oh, dear. Anything else?

*It's possible but not sustainable to survive on two hours of sleep.*



### Alec Richards

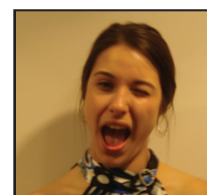
Sophomore  
Engineering  
Civil Engineering

What's sophomore year like for an engineer?

*Freshman year, a lot of my courses were really generalized knowledge and things I'd taken in high school. Now, the stuff I'm learning is much more specialized.*

What have you learned then?

*Engineering is all about problem-solving and learning to look at the larger scale of things... I plan on going into business, and do an MBA.*



### Rebeca Ojeda

Junior  
A&S  
Economics, English

Have you gained any new insights this year?

*Well, now I see how things can always be worse. In February, my grandfather passed away and compared to that, sometimes things aren't as bad.*

*Also, sometimes in organizations, people let you down - but at least it's not your entire board.*

Plans for the summer?

*I'm taking the LSAT in June and plan on going to law school right after college.*

*I'm applying for scholarship programs like the Fulbright too. Hopefully it'll all work out.*

*I'm spending the summer compiling research with Professor Barsky [of the English department] on immigrants in Nashville. We hope to be able to present it to Tennessee senators.*

Compiled by Carol Chen