Welcome to the first edition of Tunnel Vision, a biannual publication for alumni of student media at Vanderbilt University.

DO THE MATH
If you’d only spent that much time on class papers, who knows? Calculate the investment of effort in VSC by the numbers.

PRIME TIME
VTV has gone from few staff in a small dark basement room to many staff in a big bright basement room. Read about the most watched TV on campus.

TURN UP THE HEAT
Focusing attention on hot campus issues not inflamed by the Torch staff can inflame them. See what The Torch staff learned.

HISTORY
The Vanderbilt Hustler won national award by the Newspaper Association of America for the year 2002.

Fifty years for WRVU
WRVU staff from years past might find it difficult to recognize the station today. But if they dial up 91.1 FM and listen, they’ll know their legacy lives on.

WE'RE THROWING A PARTY!
WRVU's 50th Birthday Bash!

Vanderbilt Student, Communications celebrates its 35th birthday in 2002 - WRVU gears up for 50th birthday celebration
Gaining our Vision

by Chris Carroll, Director of Student Media

Consider this an unexpected call from an old friend you haven’t heard from in a while. I hope it finds you doing well. I’m eager to use it to learn where life has taken you. And it’s great to have this chance to tell you that everything here is better than ever, though we still miss you sometimes.

Whether it’s been just a few months since you left us, or a few decades, I hope the time you spent at VSC is still a shining moment for you. This publication fills you with rewarding memories and a sense of pride. You’ve earned both.

I’ve seen six classes of you graduate since the idea to create a publication for Vanderbilt student media alumni popped up in conversations with seniors during my first year working here. Well, guys, it’s finally here. In conjunction with this Fall’s 35th anniversary of the founding of Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc., I’m proud to introduce you to Tunnel Vision. You old media tunnel dwellers will immediately recognize the significance of the name, though you might not recognize its namesake. The 1999 Sarratt renovation may have sterilized the halls, but the tunnel spirit remains.

Four years after graduating from VSC and before, my name is Chris Carroll, and I’m the media adviser for VSC. I’m the third to fill this role, following in the footsteps of Jim Leeson and Laura Hill. You may recall my蘑菇, my VSC colleagues in the story to the right, but first, I want to let you in on a secret that Jim, Laura and I each know. This is the greatest job in the world. Let me tell you why.

First, it’s all about you. The students I work with at Vanderbilt represent some of the brightest, most talented, creative, passionate, respectful and dedicated people anywhere. You offer ineradicable challenges, boundless energy, endless curiosity, and very often high drama and rollicking entertainment.

And it is, after all, a time machine. Though I get older each year, the students in front of me stay pretty much the same age. Can’t put a price on that.

Then there’s Vanderbilt. Simply mention the name in higher education circles and we instantaneously hear about the quality, quantity and complexity of the students’ operations grew. Carroll recognized both the necessity and benefit of adding more full-time professional staff. Following financial decisions that resulted in dramatically reduced expenses and increased new revenue, Carroll was brought on as full-time adviser, Jeff Breaux, was added in 1998.

In 2001, after yet more successful fiscal management decisions allowed the opportunity, a third full-time position was filled by Aleesa Ross. Here’s a brief biographical sketch of the current advisers.

Chris Carroll

For six years, Chris Carroll has served as the director of student media at Vanderbilt. In this role, he is the primary adviser to the Vanderbilt Hustler, TVW, VTH, Orbo and The Slant.

Prior to VSC, Carroll has served as the director of student media at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, S.C. Carroll also served as student media at Tulane University in New Orleans, La., and journalism instructor and media adviser at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Ark. The media he has advised have multiple award winners on state, regional and national levels, including ACP Pacemakers and CLPA Gold Crowns.

In commercial media, Carroll served as a reporter and later chief photographer for a regional daily newspaper, The Northwest Arkansas Times in Fayetteville, Ark.

Carroll has been very active in regional and national journalism education associations. He served as national vice president and then president of College Media Advisers, an association representing college student media and universities. He also served as president of the Southeast Journalism Conference, an association of some 45 schools in seven states.

He has been awarded many of the profession’s highest awards, including the Student Press Law Center Distinction Service Award in 2000, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Key Award in 1999, the CMA Distinguished Four-Year Multi-Media Adviser Award in 1997, The CMA Broadcasters Honor Award in 1990, and the CMA College Newspaper Honor Roll Adviser Award in 1989.

Carroll is a native of Arkansas, holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in journalism from Arkansas Tech University and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He is married to Mary Beth Carroll, a former program coordinator in the Dean of Students Office at Vanderbilt. They have two daughters, Sarah Harper, 3, and Lindsey Lee, 18 months.

Jeff Breaux

Jeff Breaux became the VSC staff in 1998 as the marketing director for The Vanderbilt Hustler. His role later expanded to working with all of VSC’s publications.

Breaux’s primary responsibility is serving as the corporation’s business manager, which includes overseeing the Hustler’s advertising, sales and amortizing operations and the accounting for each of the TSC student division, the administrative division.

Additionally Breaux serves as an adviser in the Hustler, The Potpourri and graphic design consultant. He is also the primary adviser for the Vanderbilt Review.

Before coming to VSC, Breaux served as the director of student media at Tulane University in New Orleans, La. and as art director for student media at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, S.C.

Breaux’s professional experience in freelance graphics included set design for the band Hootie and the Blowfish, and design for the National Orientation Directors Association, an annual editorial design and organization for an independent national college yearbook workshop.

He is active in national student media organizations and has served as the vice president of Southern University Newspapers. He was an instructor in yearbook design and organization for an independent national college yearbook workshop.

Breaux’s work in student media was recognized by his peers in 2001 when we were presented the national CMA Distinguished Four-Year Business Adviser Award.

During his undergraduate career, he served as sports editor, assistant editor and editor-in-chief of the The Commodore, a regional daily newspaper.

Breaux, a native of Louisiana, earned a bachelor’s degree in advertising design from Northwestern State University in Louisiana and a master’s degree in media arts from the University of South Carolina.

Aleesa Ross

Aleesa Ross is the newest addition to VSC’s full-time staff. She has served as assistant director of student media since August 2001.

Before coming to Vanderbilt, Ross was a high school journalism and English teacher at Fairview High School in Williamson County, Nashville. While at Fairview, Ross advised the yearbook and newspaper staffs and the student council. Before her teaching career, Ross worked at the Nashville Banner, the student newspaper at Fairview High School which started the yearbook, The Jackpot, and began printing issues again.

She is the primary adviser for Commercials, Versus, The Torch and The Vanderbilt Review. Because of Ross’s high school advising experience, she serves as the executive director of the newly formed Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association.

Ross is married to Brent Ross, assistant media relations director for the Vanderbilt University Athletic Department.

Meet the VSC staff of advisers

So, who are these Vanderbilt student media advisers, anyway, and what do they do? Not an uncommon question from students, current and past, and from the occasional grumbling University administrator. Alumni and current students alike will ask, “why are there three of them?”

By design, the industrious students running Vanderbilt media groups have enjoyed a great deal of autonomy: For most of the groups’ history, advantageous duties were handled by a variety of faculty and administrators. In 1977, 10 years after the chartering of Vanderbilt Student Communications, the role of general manager for the corporation, supervising managing, legal and fiscal concerns, was added. Following financial decisions that resulted in dramatically reduced expenses and increased new revenue, Carroll was brought on as full-time adviser, Jeff Breaux, was added in 1998.

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Coversed Vandv's past
by Lee Jenkins, staff writer, Orange County Register

Sometimes, my friends and I break out our old bound volumes.
We thumb through the faded newprint, with stories about Playfair and the Provost, recalling our favorite headlines and laughing at our most egregious typos.

We live in New York, in Atlanta and in Denver. From my apartment in Los Angeles, I call them when Vanderbilt’s football team blows a lead in the closing minutes, and I'm searching for someone to share my rage.

We're all still in newspapers, trying to re-create the fun we had in college, writing the kinds of stories we pushed past editors at The Hustler. Of course, it was much easier back then because we were the editors.

Since graduating in 1999, I moved from the college paper to a mid-size paper to a large paper, where I now cover the SEC football and men’s basketball teams.

Though my weekly road trips no longer take me to The Grove at Ole Miss or The Swamp at Florida, I am constantly reminded of the experiences and relationships forged in the wee hours of production nights at The Hustler.

We covered a plane crash, a suicide and a tornado, all of which taught us the importance of depth and the value of compassion.

We covered people bigger than ourselves, like presidents and chairmen and Nobel Prize winners, who taught us to grow up and act older than our age.

And we covered Vanderbilt students who reminded us that it's easier to write about an audience when you're one of them.

But we also fought for rights as reporters and respect as an independent medium. When our funding was cut in half, we went on strike. And when no one seemed to care, we came back two weeks later, refusing any university assistance help. For many of us, that meant more than a diploma.

Since we couldn’t afford certain new-age computer equipment, we had to bring back some of the most old-school newspaper traditions.

Before sending the paper to the printer at night, we would cut all of the pages with an exacto knife and then tape them to cardboard sheets with glue sticks. The exercise, called “paste-up,” felt like high-level arts and crafts.

Since we were usually exhausted, and the exacto knives were always sharp, we often gave blood to those pages. But we left with something more vital.

Although my Vanderbilt experience included creative writing classes, fraternity parties and memorable Nashville nights, most of my lasting memories and friendships came courtesy of The Hustler.

I remember my former editor, New York Times baseball writer Tyler Kepner, reminding me to always make one more phone call to get a story straight.

I remember my managing editor, Coty Whitlock, Tyler’s replacement, reminding me to always make one more phone call to get a story straight.

And I remember fellow Grantland Rice scholarship winner Dan Wolken, who's now a Denver Post sportswriter, penning his third story at midnight to help fill the last few inches.

I think about them — not only when Vanderbilt loses a game — but also when it’s late at night, and I’m sitting in an 80,000-seat stadium, and the seasons are starting to blur on my computer screen.

That’s when we recall the sweet smell of Pancake Pantry on a morning after we worked all night and the editors at the HUCLA football and men’s basketball teams.

“Nothing motivates me more than seeing the finished product, being able to rip open the brown box when the printer drops off the magazines and see stacks and stacks of the staff’s ideas and efforts put into paper and ink.”

—Kate Zabbia

Submitting your work to the Review

Alumni are invited to submit their original poetry, fiction and articles for consideration for inclusion in the 2003 edition of The Vanderbilt Review.

The receipt deadline to send materials to be considered is Jan. 6, 2003.

Contributors should send two copies of an original work, one that includes the creator’s name, address, phone and email, and one copy with no identifying information. Art and photography submissions should be sent in the form of 35mm slides/transparencies.

All submissions should be sent to The Vanderbilt Review, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, VU Station B 357016, Nashville, TN 37235-7016.

Questions may be directed to vanderbiltreview@hotmail.com or by phone to 615-322-6594.
The Vanderbilt Review began school year with the knowledge that she had some big shoes to fill. Her own.

For the first time in the Review’s history, this showcase for prose, poetry and art is under the leadership of a re-elected editor-in-chief, Jennifer Casale, a junior English-creative writing major from Indianapolis, Ind.

“We’re very proud of last year’s edition. We worked hard to publicize the deadline, and in turn, we got more submissions than ever before and we were able to produce a really strong book,” Casale said. “Now we want to continue to build on last year’s growth.

One way to ensure that growth, she said, is to include as many voices as possible.

“I’m proud that we have increased the staff size from nine people two years ago to 23 students on staff today,” she said.

“It is important for more students to get involved and it’s clear that the increase in staff has had a successful and positive impact.”

Since its debut in 1985, the Review has developed an exemplary reputation for quality. The publication has received many awards, including multiple national Gold Crowns from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. Heading an organization with these traditions would be daunting to some.

“I have to admit that the responsibility of continuing the legacy is motivating,” Casale said. “Plus, I feel there are so many rewards. I get to learn how to handle myself in different situations, I get to read and see a lot of really talented people’s work from Vanderbilt, and I feel like the final product is a huge reward.

“There was nothing like opening that first box last spring when the shipment of books arrived,” she said. “Then to have people approach us to tell how arrived,” she said. “Then to have more students to get involved and it’s clear that the increase in staff has had a successful and positive impact.”

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Casale said. “I don’t want to ruin our surprises, but it will be amazing, so don’t miss it.”

Special recognition is given in each year’s edition, along with a cash prize, to the student winners of the Vanderbilt Review Art Award, Vanderbilt Review Fiction Award and the Gay Goffe Means Poetry Award. Faculty members in the University’s art and English departments serve as judges for the competition.

The Review was formed as a consolidation of three previous published volumes of student work: The Poetry Review, The Photography Review, and Scrivener. Staying true to its roots, the Review accepts submissions of poetry, short fiction, non-fiction, photography and art from Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni.

This year’s staff is working to initiate some traditions of its own, Casale said.

“Some of our staff volunteered to work at The Southern Festival of Books,” she said. “It was a great opportunity to connect with the Nashville community and to have the staff members involved with such a huge literary event.”

Thought the role of editor of the Review is not new to her, the second term experience is.

“I would say that every challenge that has come up has been an amazing learning experience,” Casale said. “The lessons we are learning together, from meeting deadlines to solving problems are all priceless things to be learning before heading out into our careers.”

The Vanderbilt Review Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Casale.

The Vanderbilt Review Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Casale.

“With the staff this year, the Review has featured interviews and work from writers such as Robert Penn Warren, Roy Blount Jr. and Bobbie Ann Mason. This year’s edition, available in early April, promises to make its own mark. We are going to have some really great features in this issue,” Casale said. “I don’t want to ruin our surprises, but it will be amazing, so don’t miss it.”

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You’re invited to WRVU’s 50th Birthday Party!

To celebrate 50 years of broadcasting, the staff of student radio station WRVU are inviting alumni, current students and area community listeners to a birthday concert on Vanderbilt’s Alumni Lawn on Friday, March 28.

The celebration is scheduled to include concerts from 4-11 p.m. by local bands, a headline act and performances from WRVU alumni now working in the music industry. The station will also broadcast live from Alumni Lawn and include special guest DJs representing WRVU’s five decades of programming.

The celebration will also serve as the opening event for Vanderbilt’s annual Parents’ Weekend event.

WRVU aired its first official program March 30, 1953 at 8 p.m. Station Manager Jim Buchman, Program Directors Ray Gill and Dick Thorpe, and Head Engineer Raphael Buchman, Program Directors Ray Gill and Dick Thorpe, and Head Engineer Raphael Dick Thorpe, and Head Engineer Raphael Smith broadcast programming through the electrical wires on campus to dormitories and most fraternity and sorority houses.

Birthday organizers continue to seek sponsors and volunteers to support the event. To help, contact Station Manager Jennifer Sexton at jennifer.c.sexton@vanderbilt.edu.

VSC, by the numbers...

- Copies of VSC publications distributed in 2001-02: 434,200
- Student portraits printed in the 2002 Commodores: 1,785
- Populaces in October 2002: Versus cover photo: 41
- VSC students attending national media conventions in 2002: 17
- VSC divisions (media organizations) in Fall 2002: 6
- Decades during which WRVU DJ Ken Berryhill has been an active DJ: 7
- National awards won by VSC media in 2002: 4
- Former Alumist editor-in-chief elected to the U.S. Senate: 1
- Masochism computers in use in VSC offices: 28
- Hours of Persian music broadcast on WRVU in October 2002: 8
- First term editor: a first for Vanderbilt.
- The Slant t-shirts featuring Chancellor E. Gordon Gee: 2
- Hours “Vanderbilt Sports Weekly” on VTV each week: 10.5
- Square feet of Samford Student Center space occupied by VSC: 3,158
- Square feet of Tickle Student Center space occupied by VSC: 1,060
- Pizzas consumed during typical Drisk production night: 3
- Percentage of 2001-02 VSC funding generated by sales, service and other revenue efforts: 60
- Former Alumist staffers currently working for The New York Times: 2
- Presentations showcasing VSC before the Vanderbilt Board of Trust: since 1998: 2
- Students on staff of VSC groups Fall 2002: 437
- Years Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc. has existed: 35
- Pulitzer Prize winners featured in the 2001 Vanderbilt Review: 1
- Copies of The Torch burned in protest on live campus television: 1
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As the Vanderbilt Hustler enters its 115th year of publishing, the students determining its content today are constantly aware of the difference the newspaper has made in the past. "This newspaper is an institution," said Editor-in-Chief Alex Burkett, a senior American and Southern Studies major from Dalton, Ga. "We try to live up to the difficult job we have, realizing we have no formal journalism training. But we try our best to fill the shoes of former Hustler staff who have gone on to do great things, acting as the stewards of something great."

The staff’s efforts to maintain the paper’s legacy were recognized recently when the 2001-02 Hustler received a national Pacemaker award from Associated Collegiate Press, long considered the Pulitzer Prize for college media (see related story on page 1). "It’s exciting and encouraging to be part of an organization that is enjoying national recognition for the work that it has done," Burkett said. "But I think our biggest accomplishment is breaking some major stories that have made national ripples—the renaming of Confederate Memorial Hall, a story we broke, the renaming of the Confederate building, and the Confederate renaming of Confederate Memorial Hall, a story we broke, the renaming of the Confederate building, and the renaming of the Confederate building."

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Some of the things we report could theoretically cause them to act in dramatically different ways. "A great many students simply don’t care about some of the important issues facing this University. And that makes it very difficult to attract quality reporters—people who are interested in making a difference," Burkett said. Fortunately, The Hustler has an impressive track record for finding the few students who are passionate about working for positive change. Many of these luminaries were featured in "The Hustler Chronicles" which appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of Vanderbilt Magazine for alumni.

This reminder of former editors’ achievements helps motivate the current staff to continually improve the newspaper. "Our current goal is to expand our readership, to incorporate more of what more people want to read. It’s their paper. One of the things I’ve stressed this semester is that The Vanderbilt Hustler is a community newspaper," Burkett said. "People don’t want to read about wide-reaching and abstract issues all the time. They need some local color. And I think we’ll truly capture the entire market-place of readers once we put something in the newspaper for everyone," he said. "We’ve come a long way this semester in adding content, but we’ve still got a way to go.

Burkett suggests that his staff members hold some of the highest-stress student jobs at Vanderbilt. There’s no question that the jobs require a tremendous investment of time and sacrifice, but at least for Burkett, the reward is worth it. "Picture it this way: you’re sitting in the back of a crowded lecture hall before class," he said. "You’re looking forward at about 200 students, all of whom are reading the newspaper, reading and pointing at articles you edited or wrote. You get the sense that they’re going to do something different as a result. That’s when you know your work is important."

Hustler staff maintains celebrated legacy

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Royalty that webcasters must pay to copyright holders. The new royalty that webcasters must pay to copyright holders. The new royalty that webcasters must pay to copyright holders.

VSC board revises bylaws

In its first major bylaws revision in years, the Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc. board of directors voted to change its structure beginning in Fall 2002. Operating under the old bylaws, the membership of the board had grown to 28 members, an increase necessitated by the creation of four new student publications. "The size of the board made meetings with full attendance practically impossible," said Director of Student Media Chris Carroll. "Coordinating the busy schedules of so many students and faculty was unwieldy, which resulted in meetings being less effective." Afull copy of the revised bylaws is available online at www.vscmedia.org.

After spending the entire 2001-02 academic year discussing changes and drafting proposals, the board unanimously approved a bylaws revisions on April 10, 2002. "The number of voting members was reduced to eight, with the spirit of the original bylaws retained with respect to ensuring majority student representation," Carroll said. As required in the bylaws, Vanderbilt Chancellor E. Gordon Gee approved the revision on Sept. 5, 2002. The voting composition of the new board includes three faculty members, four student representatives from the student body and one student representative from the newly formed Media Council. Non-voting members of the board include the associate vice chancellor for student life, one professional print journalist, one professional broadcast journalist, the director of student media and the board secretary.

Each of the student leaders of the 10 VSC, Inc. media organizations hold a seat on a new Media Council. The leaders elect one from their membership to represent the Council on the VSC, Inc. board. A full copy of the revised bylaws is available online at www.vscmedia.org.
Commodore develops photo-focused book

Even though it is the oldest student publication on campus, the Commodore may surprise readers this year with its new approach to yearbook content.

"I've set out to use some nontraditional elements in creating and sculpting the 2003 Commodore," said Editor-in-Chief Houston Ruck, a senior American and Southern studies major from Newark, Del.

Getting the staff of 20 to open creative channels and question the importance of visual representation in relation to journalistic content has been a major focus, Ruck said.

Ruck is expanding an approach begun with the 2002 book that departs from classic yearbook format in favor of more informal, photo-oriented content. The 2002 Commodore was awarded a third place ranking at the Associated Collegiate Press Best of Show competition in Orlando in early November.

"We didn't know how judges and audiences would approach the 2002 Commodore since it rejected so many elements of a traditional yearbook," Ruck said. "To win third place in Orlando means that we're being recognized for our departure from the norm, which is very exciting for us."

Despite the changes in style, the essence of the Commodore, according to Ruck, remains capturing the school year in words and pictures.

"I think the yearbook has a unique opportunity as a journalistic tool for student media," he said. "The Commodore has the duty of reminding its reader of the social, academic and political environment over a time span from today to 50 years from today."

Ruck wants his yearbook to function as a witness to the year's most pressing issues, either through the visual medium of compelling photographs or the textual method of good article copy. Capturing the year and giving it the distinction of showcasing this year alone is what Ruck wants the book to do.

"The Commodore has the duty of reminding its reader of the social, academic and political environment over a time span from today to 50 years from today," Houston Ruck

Members of the University's fraternities first published the yearbook as the Comet in 1887. In 1909 the book's name was changed to Commodore in response to a campus movement to unite the school under a common mascot and identity.

About 1915 the Commodore evolved from a fraternity publication to a University-wide yearbook. The book came under Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc. control in 1967.

Ensuring the yearbook is representative of the entire campus in staffing and content is a continuing goal.

"Assembling a staff that speaks to a cross section of the University is not so much a sacrifice, but an opportunity to spend time with friends and expand my skills as a journalist. In effect, I'm supplementing my Vanderbilt education."

"The Commodore has the duty of reminding its reader of the social, academic and political environment over a time span from today to 50 years from today."

Houston Ruck

Breaking the mold...

The 2002 edition of the Commodore broke away from typical yearbook tradition, focusing heavily on photography and not using the standard section divisions. Instead, the staff divided the book chronologically.
Moving to all-digital format big step for VTV

Major television executives might be surprised by the shows Vanderbilt students tune into each night. The most popular don’t appear on the networks or prime cable providers.

Campus Channel 6, with original student-produced programs like “Vanderbilt Sports Weekly,” “Arrested Development,” “VuPoint” and “Vusic,” has captured the attention of campus resident, thanks to the efforts of Vanderbilt Television.

“VTV has a lot of momentum right now to become one of the best campus television stations in the nation,” said Station Manager Matthew Saul, a senior economics major from Dalton, Ga. “There was a lot of potential with VTV that was not realized until the past couple of years.”

VTV began as Vanderbilt Video Productions in 1985 with a focus on videotaping events on campus and producing a video yearbook. That mission evolved into a television station in 1992 with a goal to produce original programming created by students for students.

“The station has grown steadily in the past four years,” Saul said. “At the beginning of the academic year 1999, there were only seven people working at the station. The only show on the air on a consistent basis was VIV Sports.”

“We have been able to make our studio user friendly in every aspect, from sound to cameras,” Saul said. “This allows the students to produce shows without taking too much time or having too much technical expertise. Now we’ve increased our staff numbers and we put out quality programming every week,” he said.

The biggest problem VTV faces, Saul said, is recruiting students and keeping them interested in television. Another challenge is keeping the station in good working order and having the best equipment to produce professional programs.

That problem was at its worst when VTV was housed in two small, cramped block rooms in the basement of Lupton Hall. The station was difficult to find and presented an image that turned away all but the most dedicated volunteers.

To provide VIV with a step up, Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc struck a deal with University Housing in the summer of 1999 and invested in the construction of a new 1,060 square foot studio in the basement of Stapleton Hall.

“We have focused on developing the capability to produce high quality programs that are not currently possible. It would allow more students the opportunity to produce shows,” Matthew Saul said. “As a result, we have combined with Burly Bear Zilo television, a syndicated program for college audiences. Zilo combined with Burly Bear (another syndicated show) gives us alternative quality programming from outside the Vanderbilt bubble.”

“By moving the station to an all digital format, we will be able to produce high quality programs that are currently not available,” he said. “This year we also added VuPoint digital equipment that should last for many years,” Saul said. “By moving the station to an all digital format, we will be able to produce high quality programs that are currently possible. It would also allow more students the opportunity to produce shows.”

A number of VTV alumni from the organization’s early years have gone on to be successful in local and national television. Saul said he is aware of the high standards set by these former students.

“We have developed a programming lineup and shows that should last for many years,” he said. “This year we also added Zilo television, a syndicated program for college audiences. Zilo combined with Burly Bear (another syndicated show) gives us alternative quality programming from outside the Vanderbilt bubble.”

“The next challenge for VTV is keeping up with the ever-changing technology of television,” Saul said. “I hope the station can progress to a fully digital station.”

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The installation of a campus-wide fiber optic cable network and the development of audio/video encoders and decoders have combined to provide a relatively inexpensive alternative to satellite trucks and microwave links.

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New technology has put a long-held dream of VTV within its grasp.

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To address a perceived global view on campus not as fully rounded as they would like, a group of students launched Orbis in the Fall of 2001. Created to focus on liberal, minority and multicultural viewpoints, Orbis covers news, politics, art, religion, culture and student opinion in an attempt to "change the atmosphere on Vanderbilt’s campus," said Editor-in-Chief Jay Prather.

"Orbis is Latin for both 'world' and 'circle,'" Prather said. "We felt the word 'orbis' exemplified the unifying goals we had in creating Orbis.

Orbis traces its roots to the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election, when a group of students saw an opportunity and a need to establish a forum for the growing but largely unorganized population of liberal-leaning students on campus.

Four students, led by Andrew Harris (class of 2001) and including Prather, began building a coalition of students representing various progressive and multicultural organizations. This group was charged with establishing a direction for the publication and selecting permanent leadership. A number of the organizations represented, along with faculty, students and parents, provided the initial financial backing for Orbis.

"Despite Vanderbilt's conservative reputation, there is an opportunity for this school to have even more vibrant and active liberal and multicultural communities than exist now," Prather said. "Vanderbilt is continuing to build diversity in every area, and the campus needs an organ like Orbis to bring those sometimes disparate communities together."

Orbis fulfilled all of the requirements established by the Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc., Board of Directors and became a full division in the Spring of 2002. Orbis now has a staff of about 40 students.

"Transitioning to our status as a full division of VSC, coupled with a more rigorous publication schedule than last year, and being sure to fully take advantage of the resources that are now available to us have been some of the biggest challenges facing me as editor," said Prather. 

"Orbis is trying to build on the solid foundation we laid during our first year of publication by continuing to improve our conten and design with every issue and by developing a new generation of leadership that can really take Orbis to the next level," Prather said. "The rewards come in little ways, whenever a student, faculty, or alum tells me how thought-provoking a recent article was, for instance, or how glad they are that liberals have found a voice at Vandy." —Jay Prather

Many students and other members of the Vanderbilt community have expressed appreciation that Orbis has increased coverage of liberal perspectives and important local issues on campus, Prather said.

"The rewards come in little ways, whenever a student, faculty, or alum tells me how thought-provoking a recent article was, for instance, or how glad they are that liberals have found a voice at Vandy," Prather said. "Orbis strives to challenge social atmosphere"
The Torch staff illuminates issues

The founders of The Torch hoped to spark some incendiary discussions with their new publication, but didn’t expect readers to take its name literally.

It happened last year when the publication was “torched” in protest against an opinion piece about need-based financial aid during a live student television show.

“At times we’ve angered a few people, from those who fashioned literal torches out of our first issue and set them alight, to a consumer activist in California who wrote in to object to our criticism of Ben and Jerry’s corporate support of anti-globalization riots,” said Editor-in-Chief Jacob Grier. “Through it all we offered provocative commentary and produced some of the most original writing on campus.”

The Torch, which provides the campus with monthly student commentary and conservative points of view, was originally conceived by three upperclassmen who found themselves too busy to launch the paper. In the summer of 2001, Grier agreed to spearhead the project without any journalism experience.

“I did not have any media experience prior to editing The Torch, but when the opportunity to start a new publication arose I jumped at the chance,” he said.

“In the two previous years I’d become increasingly interested in political issues and wanted to express libertarian views outside of classrooms and coffee shop discussions.”

By October 2001 Grier had assembled a team of two associate editors, a layout editor, a financial director, a webmaster and several writers. That month he took a proposal to the VSC Board, which granted The Torch associate division status.

“But a month later our first issue was on the racks and The Torch became an instant household name around campus,” said Grier, a junior worldly philosophy major from Spring, Texas.

The staff produced three more issues that year and proved themselves willing to take on controversial issues and speak their minds, he said.

Grier said The Torch’s name has multiple meanings.

“The most obvious reference is to the Statue of Liberty, a symbol meaningful to all of our writers,” he said. “For people who have read ‘Atlas Shrugged,’ the name is reminiscent of Wyatt’s Torch, a symbolic protest of government seizing property in that novel. Finally, the torch also represents a source of light, illuminating political issues and providing guidance to the future.”

In October 2002, The Torch became a full division of VSC.

“Our greatest accomplishment so far is thriving through our first year and attaining full division status in VSC,” Grier said. “We have expanded our publication schedule to four issues a semester and have a very active staff.”

That very active staff includes 10 editor-level members and about 20 additional writers.

“We’re the first Vanderbilt publication to integrate the new phenomenon of blogging (short for web-logging) into our website, which promises to keep our staff engaged with the campus in between printed issues,” he said.

Grier said to date the greatest challenge for the Torch staff has been to balance the views of the editors and writers.

“While the libertarian and conservative elements tend to agree on economic issues, on social issues we often disagree strongly. It’s a constant struggle to make sure everyone feels that his views are being presented while maintaining a coherent editorial policy,” Jacob Grier

“Hopefully the staff will continue to become increasingly involved and the magazine will grow in popularity on campus and on the web,” he said.

To Grier, the reward and motivation for working in student media is the gratification of seeing the product distributed on campus.

“Visit us online at www.vscmedia.org

Members of the Vanderbilt community are now able to gain up-to-date information about student media at Vanderbilt by accessing Vanderbilt Student Communications’ new website www.vscmedia.org.

“The site was created to help alumni, parents and other community members keep in contact with their university through student voices,” said Jeff Breaux, assistant director of student media and webmaster of the VSC site.

“Links to websites of each of our 10 media groups may be accessed by visiting our site,” Breaux said. “In addition, we now offer subscription forms, advertising rate card packs and other information that are normally sought by alumni and parents.”

The new site also features information about Vanderbilt Student Communications, including the history of the corporation, a calendar of publishing dates for Vanderbilt’s media groups, a list of current student leaders, a record of the awards and honors that student media has earned over the years, plus information about VSC’s Alumni Mailing List and the Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association.

“We hope the site will be a helpful tool for those community members wishing to stay in close contact with their university,” Breaux said.
Approaching campus life from a slightly skewed perspective has helped The Slant become one of the most highly read publications at Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc.’s student humor publication, Slightly Amusing, fell dormant in 1998 and was revived by a group of students in 2000. The founders immediately changed the name of the new publication to The Slant, for reasons unknown, but it probably has something to do with the amount they had to drink. The night they came up with it,” said Editor-in-Chief David Barzelay, a sophomore English and computer science major from Tampa, Fla.

Regardless of the name, the intent of the new publication remains bringing laughter and satire to the Vanderbilt campus, he said.

“What makes me most proud of our role on campus is seeing students actually reading, enjoying and respecting a student publication — especially one that by its very nature is offensive to many of those same people,” Barzelay said. “It means we make people laugh, but beyond that, people are managing to laugh at themselves, which means we make people think.”

Reviews on campus of the new humor publication have been mixed, and range from avid readers who snap up the 3,500 copies printed every other week to vocal opponents who charge that The Slant teeters over the edge of acceptability.

“Our greatest challenge has been convincing people that the laughter and thought-provoking satire we print is justified in the face of its occasional offensiveness,” Barzelay said. “We are the only truly unfiltered and unbiased Vanderbilt forum for people to express an opinion that may not be popular to the masses, and as such, it often offends. People these days are more willing to give up their right to free speech in favor of political correctness, and we take a lot of crap because we don’t submit to this sort of censor-ship.”

The Slant was granted associ-ation status by the Vanderbilt Student Communi-cations, Inc. board of directors in spring 2002. Associate division status gives the organization the face of a one-year unfunded proba-tory period during which it must develop its campus audi-ence. “As far as funding goes, we are funded entirely through adver-tiering — and the occasional small donation, hint, hint,” Barzelay said. “We accept no University funds, because we wish to remain free to make fun of anything on campus we deem making-fun-worthy.”

As a way to give the paper a personal touch and reach as many students as possible, the staff of nearly 60 writers goes out each publication day and hand dis-tributes copies on campus, he said. “Our pri-mary goal this year has been to come out with an issue every two weeks that students actually read and some students actually enjoy, and which stimulates thought and debate on campus in a way no other student media outlet has managed to accomplish,” he said. “Our secondary goal is to have fun making The Slant — to be not just a group of people who work on a newspaper, but to be a group of friends who produce a newspaper. We have one of the most diverse, and that is why I am so excited about any student group, and we like it this way.”

Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc. launched a new organization this fall that will promote high-quality stu-dent media at Middle Tennessee high schools.

The new group, Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association, will oper-ate from within VSC, Inc. and provide educational outreach, potentially recruit strong media students to Vanderbilt and generally elevate awareness of VSC, Inc. programs on campus and regionally. MTSPA was designed to provide networking opportunities for area high school journalism teachers and students, and to play host to workshops and events to encourage high school students to have a continued involve-ment with publications/journalism.

Aleesa Ross, VSC, Inc. assistant direc-tor of student media and MTSPA execu-tive director, said another main focus of the organization is to conduct contests, seminars, conventions and workshops with the intention of stimulating greater efforts from students and advisers to produce qualiti-ty publica-tions.

“As a former high school teacher in the area, I was always looking for workshops to take my students to or contests in which I could enter their work,” Ross said. “There really was nothing like that in Middle Tennessee, and that is why I am so excited about MTSPA.”

Ross said the MTSPA workshop, which will take place March 4, 2003, will offer invaluable experiences for high school students in the Middle Tennessee area. Students will have the opportunity to have their publications critiqued by professionals and to enter their work in a number of different award categories. Additionally, profes-sionals from the area will conduct small group sessions and interact with stu-dents on a personal level.

“We think it will be extremely helpful for students and advisers to attend the workshop in March,” Ross said. “We plan to offer sessions that cover Adviser issues as well as topics relating to news-papers, yearbooks, news magazines, lit-erary magazines and broadcast staffs.”

Ross also said that by having the workshop on Vanderbilt’s campus, more area students would become familiar with the University.

“We certainly hope that if area stu-dents choose to attend Vanderbilt that they will consider continuing their efforts in journalism by joining one of VSC’s 10 groups when they get here,” Ross said.

Currently 38 different student staffs from 20 area high schools have joined the association.
Spoon offers new views on art, travel

Spoon, Vanderbilt student media’s newest publication, grew out of two students’ desire to look at something old in an entirely new way.

“The magazine integrates visual art into intriguing articles and encourages people to think outside the box,” said Editor-in-Chief and co-founder Laurel Staples, a junior mechanical engineering student from Nashville.

“Through the original idea was to have Spoon solely an art magazine, we decided to also incorporate personal travel experiences from around the world.”

Staples, along with friend Heather Yost, developed the idea for Spoon last year out of a concern that Vanderbilt did not cater to the fine arts as much as it should, she said. Unlike The Vanderbilt Review, which is published annually, Spoon is published twice a semester and has a more hands-on approach to art.

The magazine was granted associate division status by the Vanderbilt Student Communications, Inc. board of directors in spring 2002. Associate division status gives the organization a one-year unfunded probationary period during which it must develop its campus audience.

The name for the magazine came from a scene in the movie “Matrix,” Staples said.

“To us it means if you can get out of your normal mode of thinking, you can understand simple things in many different ways,” she said. “This is one way of looking at art and travel. We hope that readers will form their own opinions of the art and then learn about the artist’s point of view, which gives them two different perspectives and helps them see the ‘spoon’ in a different way.”

Creating a new publication out of thin air has presented its founders with some difficult hurdles to clear.

“Getting funding for Spoon has been the greatest challenge of the magazine,” Staples said. “Heather and I were repeatedly told that we could never get enough money to produce a publication with such an expensive format. Yet, we have already put out two issues and gone from a black and white cover to color on the front and back.”

“Spoon is fully funded by businesses in the Nashville area,” she said.

“Selling advertisements is time consuming and difficult, but luckily we have managed to get enough ads each time.”

And for a new staff of a new publication, generating revenue is only part of the total picture.

“I would have never thought that creating something like this magazine would be a full-time job,” Staples said. “Aside from fully funding ourselves, working with a small staff, and trying to do justice to people’s artwork and writing, one of the more difficult aspects of getting started is getting accepted by other publications and the community as a whole.”

But the struggles are ultimately worth it, she said.

“Photography has been a love of mine for a long time, and to be able to share this along with the creativity of many other people with the entire Vanderbilt community is a reward in itself,” Staples said. “I produce Spoon because of my love for art and my curiosity of travel, but at the same time I hope that it is someone else’s from of expression that gives even as few as one reader a desire to create something or the ability to think in a new fashion.”

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Laurel Staples

Our future issues of Tunnel Vision will include information about alumni of Vanderbilt student media. If you would like to be included, please complete the information below:

Name
Address
City
State
Zip
Phone (optional)
E-mail (optional)
Years at Vanderbilt
Class of
Major
Which media group did you work with

Tell us about your Vandy student media experience, your career since Vandy, awards and honors you’ve earned and about your family or other news you would like to share*

Questions? 615-322-6810

*Please attach additional sheets if necessary
Welcome! Our students and staff welcome you to our... student media alumni mailing list

10 ways to use your voice

at Vanderbilt University

for more information about student media at Vanderbilt University, visit us online at, www.vscmedia.org

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