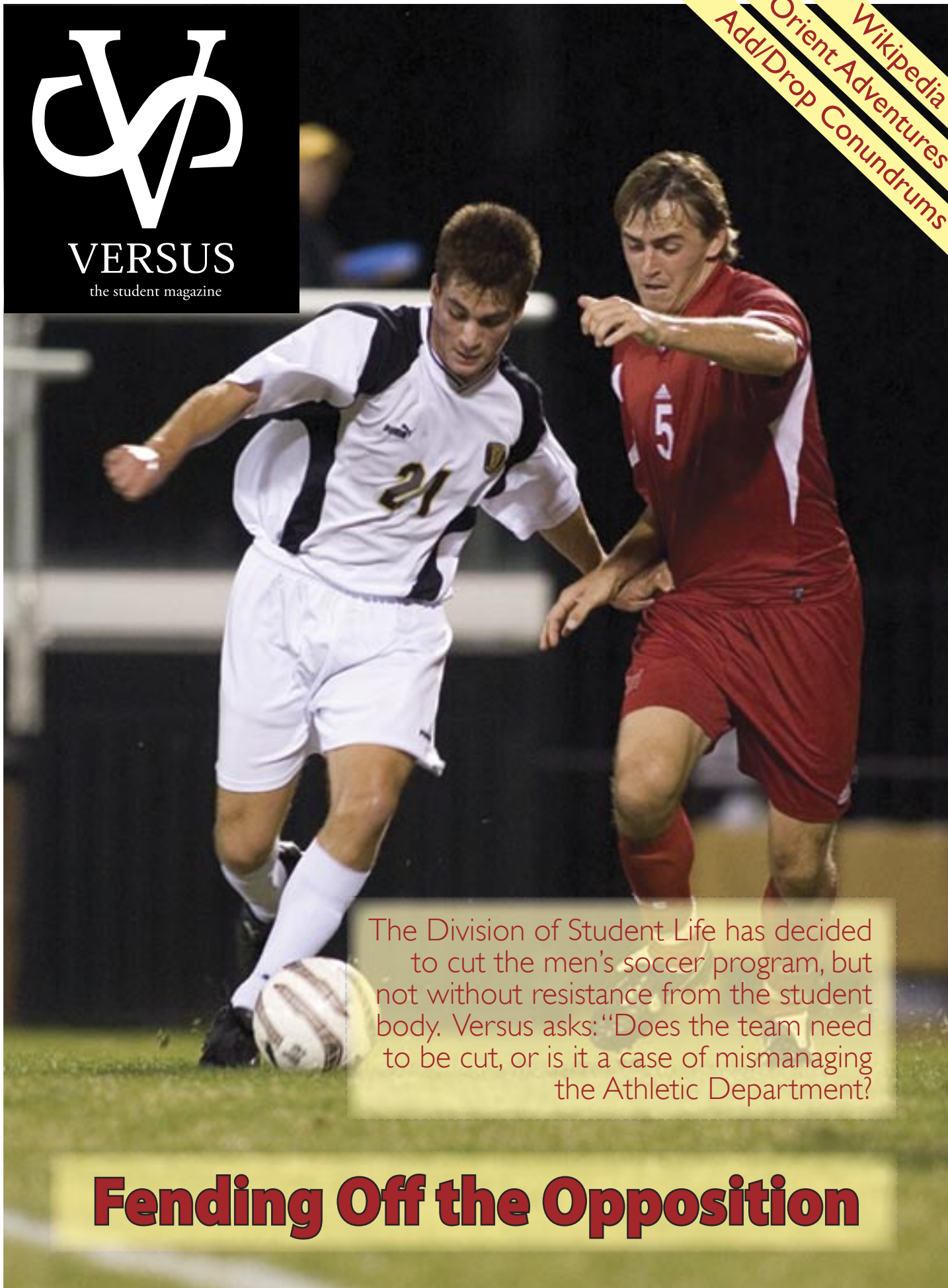




VERSUS
the student magazine

Wikipedia
Orient Adventures
Add/Drop Conundrums



The Division of Student Life has decided to cut the men's soccer program, but not without resistance from the student body. Versus asks: "Does the team need to be cut, or is it a case of mismanaging the Athletic Department?"

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After Soccer, Searching for the Truth

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photo by Elise Alford/Vanderbilt Hustler

cover photo by Peter Tufo/Vanderbilt Hustler

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Versus Magazine

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Mission Statement:

As the student magazine of Vanderbilt University, Versus creates a thoughtful voice through the fusion of in-depth writing and artistic vision.

Editor's Note

Michael Ward - [versus@vanderbilt.edu]

Solid character is a trait that many strive for, but a limited number achieve. To have character in relating with other people, a few qualities must be met: one must be kind, honest, respect others, and also take into account how decisions can positively or negatively impact the lives of those around them.

The voices from Kirkland have of late been showing a lack of the above traits. The actions of the administration in their abrupt dismissal of the men's soccer team were at best, questionable and at worst, reprehensible. The first mention of the school's need to get back into accordance with Title IX was when the team was dismissed; no warning was given, only the stark reality that the school they had given their time, sweat, and effort for was turning their back on them.

Providing an equal opportunity for men and women to participate in athletics is awesome and Vanderbilt should do everything it can to do so. The question arises in how they handled this situation and if a better solution could have been explored. The administration says that the athletic department can't handle keeping the men's soccer team and adding multiple women's sports (volleyball, softball anyone?), but outside observers have stated that it would be possible, if only Vandy would get their act together when it comes to athletics. Dr. Sharon L. Shields, former president of the National Association of Girls and Women in Sport, said that the problem was due to "the stagnant athletics budget and numerous wasteful spending projects within that department as perpetuating the very problems that the school is trying to fix by eliminating the men's soccer team." Alumni have also noticed the seemingly moribund condition of athletics, with one anonymous source stating that a season ticket offer to all sports was offered in Spring 2005 (accompanied by a contract guaranteeing the seats), but when



photo by Robert Proudfoot

this fall brought basketball season, the athletic department just said "Sorry, no tickets for basketball." I encourage everyone to note the successful development strategy being used to cultivate alumni donations.

Recently, a petition was started to reinstate the men's soccer team. Although the petition garnered the signatures of half the undergraduate student body, the Board of Directors (BOD) decided it wasn't an important enough issue to warrant spending their time to consider it. I encourage the BOD to examine the portion of the Vanderbilt Community Creed on accountability: "Accountability is taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences. We accept the duty to actively participate in the decisions that affect our academic and personal lives, and we honor our commitments to ourselves and to others." It is time for the administrators to allow themselves to be truly accountable for their actions and the commitment that they made to our men's soccer players when they decided to play here. Listen to the voices of a full half of the student body that has formally said they want to keep the men's team and do the right thing. Have character and be responsive to what those that you represent want, instead of turning a deaf ear and hoping that people will forget the error of your ways.





photo by Chris McGeady

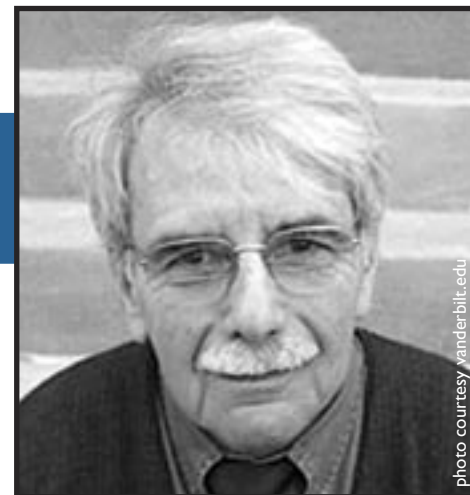


photo courtesy vanderbilt.edu

ONE OF A KIND: SPOTLIGHT ON PROF. SAM GIRGUS

To Hamlet or Not To Hamlet?

Vanderbilt University Theatre (VUT) has undertaken some ambitious projects this year. Just last semester, Vandy thespians showed comic gusto with Kaufman and Hart's ensemble piece *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and poignant subtlety with Marsha Norman's emotional drama, *Getting Out*. In spite of these precedents, some students think that VUT may be tempting fate with its latest oeuvre: William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

The play, arguably the best of all the Shakespearean tragedies, chronicles the events that follow the mysterious death of the title prince's father. Directed by Terry Hallquist, Vanderbilt's version of *Hamlet* takes a unique approach to

the familiar tale of the fateful Danish prince. The innovative, three-tiered set design maximizes the resources of Neely Auditorium's "space," and the characters' vibrantly colored costumes blend of historical fashions with the timelessness of the story.

With innovative costume and set designs coupled with a timeless tale, the only question remaining for theatre patrons is, "Can they do it?" Students can find out when the play opens on February 17th. Admission is free for undergraduate students; tickets are now on sale at Neely Auditorium. - *Chris McGeady*

It's not often that a student is lucky enough to come across a professor like Sam Girgus. His ability to simultaneously channel the ethos of both John Keating and Woody Allen leaves students in awe of the masterful schizophrenic symphony unfolding before their very eyes. His classes are lively, insightful, and woven tightly together with entertaining and often shocking tangents that keep everyone in the class on his or her toes. In fact, falling asleep in a Girgus class is comparable to falling asleep at the wheel: It's downright dangerous. I remember Girgus' English seminar last year, when a student passed out halfway through his lecture and woke up to find the entire class gleefully starting at him as Girgus went on critiquing his attire. Professor Girgus' ability to transcend the voice in the professor's mind head that says "Don't say anything controversial and don't get in trouble" makes him the best professor I have ever had. By holding nothing back and skirting around no issue, he provides his students with the most fruitful learning environment a student can ever hope for. - *Avi Ginzburg*



photo by everyschool.org

A PAWS'itive

What do homeless puppies, hospital patients and senior citizens all have in common? They could all use some company! PAWS'itive Outreach is just the organization to come to the rescue. Founded on campus a few years ago, PAWS'itive Outreach ingeniously pairs homeless animals in need of a friend with people who want to do just that: socialize. Members take homeless animals from the Nashville Humane Association to various hospitals, hospices, schools and assisted living centers to bring a furry, friendly face to lonely

Difference

audiences. This interaction fosters positive patient attitudes, improved student behavior and optimistic senior citizen mentalities while simultaneously properly socializing pets to prepare them for loving homes. Under the guidance of their new president, freshman Dena Haibi, PAWS'itive Outreach hopes to increase student involvement and its impact upon the Nashville community. Haibi urges both animal lovers and the service-oriented to join this innovative organization. - *Erica Morris*



photo courtesy abc.com

He's Not Your Typical Vanderbilt Bachelor...

"The Bachelor: Paris," a reality TV-show featured in February on ABC, starred a Vandy Boy: Dr. Travis Stork, an Emergency Room M.D. at the Vanderbilt Medical Center. Some students have been fortunate enough to meet the dashing good-looking Doc. Sophomore Julia Laughlin met The Bachelor, before he skyrocketed to reality-TV fame. Laughlin contracted an abnormally high fever last spring and landed in the Vanderbilt Medical Center's E.R., where Dr. Stork nursed her back to health. "He introduced himself as 'Travis', and I remember thinking, 'Wow, he is incredibly good looking,'" says Laughlin. Stork was friendly and comforting, as well. "I hadn't had anything to eat in days because I had felt so sick. Travis said, 'Hang on,' and he returned with a sandwich he had made for me!" Even Laughlin's boyfriend picked up on Dr. Stork's charming appeal. "[My boyfriend] kept joking with me, saying, 'Stop flirting with Dr. Fabio!'" Laughlin laughs. "I think he was afraid that I was falling for Dr. Stork instead!" With his strikingly good looks and friendly demeanor, only one question remains: Why did The Bachelor need to travel all the way to Paris to find a fiancé? - *Ellen Tremaine*

A TABLE IN TROUBLED WATERS: FINDING A SEAT AT LUNCH IN RAND

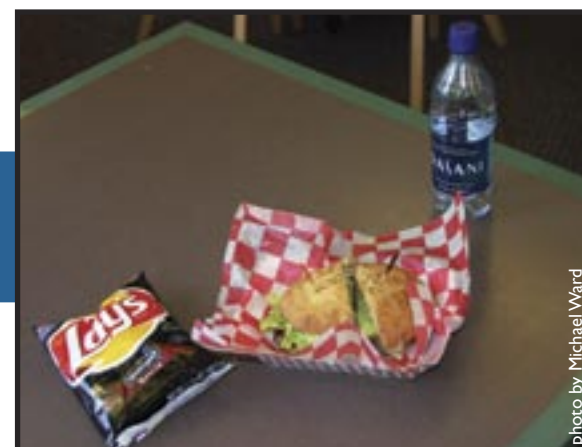


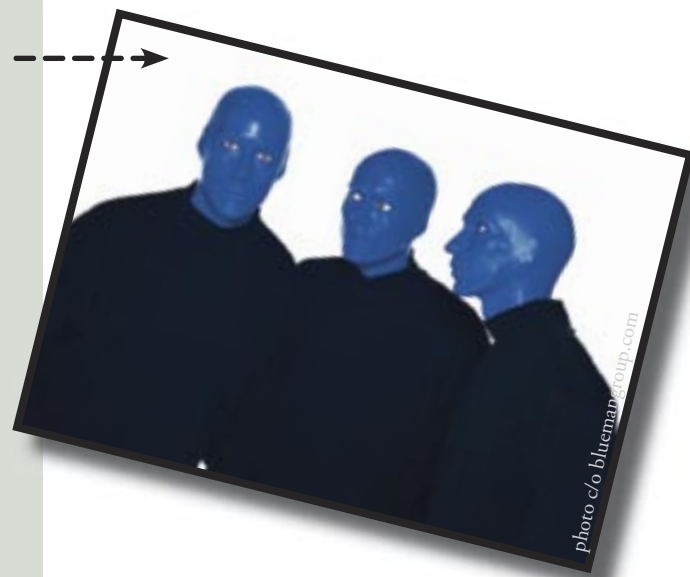
photo by Michael Ward

It's noon and the one thing on your mind is lunch. You get your turkey-cheddar sandwich on ciabatta bread (with a pickle) after standing in the long, winding line for 20 minutes, only to find that there is not a single empty table in the cafeteria. "It's not possible," you think, but there is just no room left in Rand, CX2, or upstairs. Even the study tables and benches out in the foyer are claimed by students armed with Stonehenge subs. "But I thought I got here early..." It's ok: everyone else did too.

The intense competition for tables at rush hour in Rand can be tough on students with tight schedules, especially freshmen and the Meal Plan-dependent. The close proximity of Buttrick Hall and Stevenson Center gives some students a serious advantage over the sorry souls taking noontime classes in Wilson or Furman, who might fare better brown-bagging their lunch than braving the congestion of Rand. If the tidal swarm in Rand shows no signs of abating anytime soon, students may begin legitimately consider the lunch hour traffic jam in Rand when picking midday classes. - *Chris McGeady*

A new phenomenon has developed across campus: from freshmen to grad students, the 'mood music' for studying is no longer Bach, or Mozart (or even Led Zeppelin) but the eccentric sounds of *Blue Man Group* and *Cirque du Soleil*. Difficult to classify into any existing genre, these albums are versatile enough that any one provides everything from energizing guitar riffs to *om*-inducing rhythms to anyone's daily fix of multicultural sound. Between *Blue Man Group's* two available albums "Audio" and "The Complex" and *Cirque's* broad collection of at least a dozen soundtracks, there is something for everyone.

Blue Man Group's first album, **Audio**, proudly proclaims: "This is not a soundtrack. This is better." This CD, like the show itself, is highly percussive, which is to say that there is a steady rhythm underlying each song. While some songs may be recognizable from the performance, others have been extended or otherwise modified to stand alone. In addition to standard percussion instruments—drums of all shapes and sizes—Audio incorporates items more akin to overzealous middle-school science fair projects than to standard instruments. The unique sound created by the artful mixture of standard bass drums and electric guitars with air poles, zithers and the PVC 'drumbone' is at once vitalizing and hypnotic. Of course, some songs lend themselves to a studious environment more so than others: the soothing white-noise of the final track, "Endless Column" is perhaps the complete opposite of the brisk rhythm of "Rods and Cones". Whether your studying calls for the musical equivalent of espresso or green tea, you'll find it on this album.



Similar in type to "Audio" but by no means the same is **Cirque du Soleil's** album **Dralion**. With its distinctive Asian sound, "Dralion" incorporates traditional oriental instruments such as Taiko drums and the Chinese dulcimer into a cello-and-electronic background. This melding provides "Dralion" with a unique ambience: it is mesmerizing while at the same time unique enough in its sound to keep the listener wholly engaged. However, this is not to say that the music on the album is entirely Asian in origin. The final track, "Kamande" seems more Celtic than Chinese, yet again proving that the composer, Volaine Corradi, has a little something for everyone. Unlike "Audio," the *Cirque* album integrates vocals, though these, too, are a bit different than would be expected. Corradi employs a soprano and a countertenor who sing both separately and in harmony. The interweaving of these voices with the background's Asian ambience in the songs "Stella Errans" and "Ballare" create a soothing atmosphere ideally suited for study.

Clips from both these albums can be found on Amazon.com, and CDs are available both on Amazon and at Tower Records.

McDougal's Village Coop

Top of the Pecking Order When It Comes to Fried Chicken

located in Hillsboro Village

Maybe you are looking for a quick place to grab some hot, delicious chicken on a rainy day during your lunch break. Or, maybe you need a lively, rambunctious atmosphere; one that welcomes you and your friends to sit back, order up beer and appetizers, and watch the game. You might think that this kind of place only exists in a small town—one that knows its locals by their first names and has the usual dishes of its patrons memorized. Believe it or not, Nashville offers such a place—and it is on the Card. McDougal's Village Coop is place to be if you are looking for a restaurant with a down-home, great-outdoors appeal. Whether you are dressed in your crunchy outdoor threads, your favorite Greek T-shirt, your scrubs, or your suit and tie, McDougal's is bound to cook something to delight your taste buds—and to keep you coming back for more.

From the outside looking in, McDougal's resembles a huge outdoor party—complete with picnic tables and a plastic tent. The first time I drove by, I thought someone was having a boisterous house party, especially when I saw the neon lights of a PBR sign illuminating the window and heard popular rock and country tunes emanating from the porch. A few days later, I realized that it was actually a restaurant, so I decided to stop in for some lunch. Upon entering the house, I had to remind myself that I was dining in Nashville—not on a lake or beach somewhere, as the rustic atmosphere inside strongly contrasts all other bistros in Hillsboro Village. The interior is both mellow and spirited; it is laid-back, but in a very upbeat manner. From the collection of license plates and ball caps hanging about to the randomly autographed dollar bills and celebrity photos, it is difficult *not* to find something to talk about, making McDougal's the perfect place for a casual lunch date or for a gathering of friends for a celebration.

It seems that there is a conversation piece around every corner, in every nook and cranny both inside and out—an

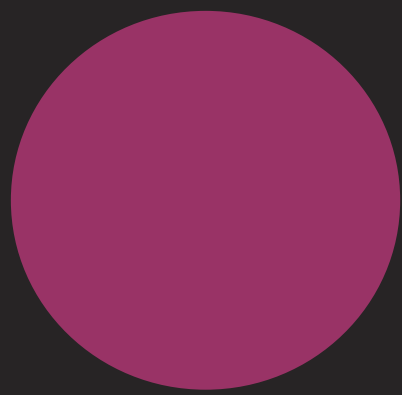


aspect of dining at McDougal's that I find particularly delightful and charming. On one visit to McDougal's, I noticed a rubber chicken hanging over the counter—this sparked a conversation about an old family tradition that my uncle initiated at Christmastime one year. On that same occasion, I happened to be dining with a friend, and a baseball cap triggered a memory about watching a Cardinals game with his dad long ago.

Not only is the dining atmosphere cozy and inviting, but also the service is fantastic. I noticed the manager eagerly bouncing around, making sure that everything was in order and that customers were enjoying their food. My friend and I were greeted with a smile when we placed our orders, and we only had to wait about ten minutes for it to be prepared. Fried chicken is the house specialty, complete with a selection of dipping sauces, including McDougal's own secret recipe.

McDougal's operating hours are Monday-Wednesdays, 11am-11pm; Thursdays-Saturdays, 11am-1am; Sundays, noon-10pm. Also, leave your cigarettes behind—there is no smoking, which allows everyone to come and eat, relax, and enjoy.





Writing Truth:

Maya Angelou's Work

Speaks to Life

by Amy Hodges Hamilton

In a BBC interview with Hermione Lee on November 22, 1998, Angelou argues that all people write autobiographically. In her strong, melodic voice, she shares:

In truth, everybody writes autobiographically, whether it's the blues singer, the gospel singer, the lyricist for Haden, whether it's the lyricist for Jimmy Hendrix, the composer tells a truth, he/she confesses...this is what it is like to be a human being; this is how we wake up in the morning to find ourselves unloved; this is how we get through the day.

When I first read Maya Angelou's world-acclaimed memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, I was 14-years-old and unaware that Angelou was one of the world's most prolific writers. I was aware, however, that Angelou had a power to connect to me, the reader, as she confessed to what it felt like to be displaced. In the opening of her memoir, Angelou writes: "If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat. It's an unnecessary insult." Many times in the writing courses I now teach, I read this quote to students and then invite them to write about a displacement in their lives that was "the rust on the razor that threatens the throat."

In the Writing and Psychology course I am teaching this Spring through Women's and Gender Studies, we began the semester by reading Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. As one student, Kristina, explains, the power of Angelou's writing lies in her invitation for readers to share their own life stories:

One of the main things that Angelou's piece taught me was the importance of sharing our stories, no matter what types of tragedies were in them. Knowing that I too have experienced pain and trauma, I always wondered if I would be able to really share it to a group of people I didn't know. As I read Angelou's work, all I could think about was the millions of people that have read her book and, even in the face of fear, the courage it must have taken to write it. It gave me strength and inspiration to write my own story and the courage to be unafraid for anyone to hear it.

Another student, Katie, reflects on what she learned from reading Angelou's memoir:

Maya states so clearly the world as seen by someone who has been forced to grow up through witnessing violence, abuse, poverty, rac-

ism, classism, sexism - and many other forms of institutionalized oppression. Her story is the story of someone whose innocence was forced away due to the realities of life - and the strength that comes from being grounded in the real world. I can connect with Maya as she talks about living in a reality separate from her peers - as I can guess most of us in this class do. I think of conversations I had last semester with my classmates as they fretted over who to take to semi-formal, and I thought of the women I worked with at the shelter and how I could best serve them the next day at work. There is a reality connected with knowing the "darker" side of the world - but a peace that comes as well. Maya embodies this peace and puts into words that feeling I've been unable to name. And I wonder... how many of those people who worry about the student body president are also struggling with another, darker, deeper story... but just are not at a point to name it as reality. Maya's strength shines through - a strength that is truly admirable.

All of Angelou's work focuses on the power of sharing truth, and she is best known for her autobiographical works, which include *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002), *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). Angelou is also an accomplished poet. Her 1971 collection, *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Die*, was nominated for a Pulitzer prize.

Angelou is also a well-known social activist, and in 1959, she became the northern coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the request of Martin Luther King, Jr. She was also associate editor of *The Arab Observer* in Cairo, Egypt from 1964-1966, as well as the editor for *The African Review* in Accra, Ghana. When she returned to the United States in 1974, she was appointed to the Bicentennial Commission by President Gerald Ford and then to the Commission for International Women by President Jimmy Carter. In 1993, at the request of President Bill Clinton, Angelou read her poem, "On the Pulse of the Morning," at his inauguration, making her the second poet in U.S. history to be invited to read at a presidential inauguration.

As my students and I listen together to Maya Angelou on February 27th at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Gym, I imagine that we will once again be struck by Angelou's ability to so honestly and poetically speak to the power of displacement, racial and social issues, and most powerfully, her personal story.

About the writer: Amy Hodges Hamilton is Director of Undergraduate Writing and the Writing Studio and Assistant Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies. Her main research and teaching interests are writing and psychology in both the classroom and community settings.

Her story is the story of someone whose innocence was forced away due to the realities of life - and the strength that comes from being grounded in the real world.

Maya Angelou will be speaking on February 27th at 7:30 PM in Memorial Gym.



photo: cda.com/mark ind.



Criticism of Wikipedia in representatives of Notable critics authoritative a that the group ers consider W as it is used for

Criticism of the Usefulness of Wikipedia

Wikipedia's utility authority, account factors by some. For example, librarian Philip Bradley acknowledged in an interview with The Guardian that the concept behind the site was in theory a "lovely idea," but that he would not use it in practice and

"[...] not aware of a single librarian who would. The main problem is the lack of authority. With printed publications, the publishers have to ensure that their data is reliable, as their livelihood depends on it. But with something like this, all that goes out the window." (Waldman 2004).

However, in Discover Magazine, March 2006 issue, it is said: "Science entries in Wikipedia, the open-source online encyclopedia that anyone can edit, are nearly as error-free as those in Encyclopaedia Britannica, according to a team of expert reviewers."

Suitability as an encyclopedia

Some critics have claimed that while Wikipedia may be a useful information resource, it errs when it bills itself as an encyclopedia — as this word properly implies a level of authority and accountability that an

Difficulty of fact-checking

Wikipedia contains no formal peer review process for fact-checking, and due to the lack of requiring qualifications to edit any article, the editors themselves may not be well-versed in the subject they write about. Since the bulk of Wikipedia's fact-checking involves an internet search (which may find mirrors of Wikipedia, including some which do not clearly acknowledge their nature as such), self-perpetuating errors are inevitable.

The amount of fact-checking per page is directly related to the amount of frequent editors per page, thus errors on obscure topics may remain for some time. This particular criticism is Wikipedia's most frequently encountered weakness in reality. Sometimes, the subject of a biographical article must fix blatant lies about his own life. [2] A nihilartikel was once inserted into Wikipedia that lasted for five months.

Use of dubious sources

Wikipedia requests Wikipedians to verify the accuracy of information by checking the references cited, which generally come from external sources. Many of these articles often do not in-

clude references for statements made, nor do the articles differentiate between true, false, and opinion. Some critics contend that the references have come from dubious sources, such as blog entries. Hiawatha Bray (2004) of the Boston Globe wrote: "So of course Wikipedia is popular. Maybe too popular. For it lacks one vital feature of the traditional encyclopedia: accountability. Old-school reference books hire expert scholars to write their articles, and employ skilled editors to check and double-check their work. Wikipedia's articles are written by anyone who fancies himself an expert."

Exposure to vandals

In 2005, Wikipedia received a great deal of bad publicity as a result of the John Seigenthaler Sr. Wikipedia biography controversy, in which a then-unknown vandal created a biographical page on Seigenthaler containing numerous false and defamatory statements; this page went unnoticed for several months until discovered by Victor S. Johnson, Jr., a friend of Seigenthaler. Likewise, numerous other pages have been attacked and defaced by vandals; either with axes to

Wikipedia:

Questioning the legitimacy of online information

by Vanessa Hoo

If you asked a random person for a Web site reference 20 years ago, you'd probably get a strange look and a response about spiders. However, the question might spark just as much discussion today as it would have before you were born.

The Internet has grown tremendously in scope since March 15, 1985, when symbolics.com became the first registered domain name. With wireless and high-speed Internet, information transmission today is faster than ever. In seconds, a student studying abroad in Sydney can read up-to-the-minute scores of a Vanderbilt basketball game played concomitantly.

For all its benefits, nevertheless, such advanced communication technology has a darker side. The Internet is a blank canvas for anyone who ever desired to see his or her name in print; but for those preferring anonymity, user names and pseudonymous e-mail accounts provide freedom resembling that of a middle-schooler with a telephone before the advent of caller ID.

Many users accept the obvious inaccuracies online as either satire or stupidity. This isn't anything new. In the press, false information crops up fairly often. Corrections aren't anything unusual in newspapers. Additionally, even the most reputable publication can have an employee intentionally submit erroneous material. Just ask Jayson Blair. The former *New York Times* reporter repeatedly fabricated quotes and interviews and even plagiarized other articles. Of course, the author's motive is rarely malicious. However, by masquerading untruth as its opposite, the author deliberately attempts deception, inviting heavy criticism if ever unveiled.

Along the same lines, some Web sites purport to be educational while posting untrue material. While this can certainly contribute to misunderstanding and confusion, the people posting the incorrect information aren't solely responsible for all of the misinformation in the world. The World Wide Web's main growing pain consists of users' failure to second-guess every bit of information gleaned online. Although many people say they don't necessarily believe what they read on a Web site, facts are flashy on the digital highway and the made-up information almost always seems the most interesting. For this reason, double-checking every reference you find should be a reflex, according to John Seigenthaler, founder of the First Amendment Center and subject of much discussion related to Wikipedia this fall after a false entry about Seigenthaler was posted on the site.



“As it is easier than ever before for people to turn into Internet authors, students and professors might ask, ‘How reliable are Internet references?’”

* How Accurate Is Wikipedia?

by Michael Ward

Wikipedia.com describes itself as a “multilingual Web-based free-content encyclopedia wiki service ... written collaboratively by volunteers, allowing most articles to be changed by anyone with access to a web browser.”

The site has received some critical remarks about its information controls, due to the following mendacious entry about Seigenthaler that remained online for four months.

“John Seigenthaler Sr. was the assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy in the early 1960’s,” according to the Wikipedia entry. “For a brief time, he was thought to have been directly involved in the Kennedy assassinations of both John, and his brother, Bobby. Nothing was ever proven.”

Brian Chase, an operations manager in Nashville at Rush Delivery, admitted to posting the erroneous information last May as a joke. Seigenthaler said he did not become aware of his edited biography until a friend told him about the site in September. Seigenthaler has since spoken out against the enigmatic reference site, drawing the ire of Wiki-fanatics. “Since the controversy, people are upset because I criticize Wikipedia,” Seigenthaler said. “There has been a flow of anti-Semitic, racist, and homophobic comments (posted) that are easily found in my history on Wikipedia. They’re still accessible, and it’s frustrating the way the system works ... There’s no limit to what they will say.” Seigenthaler also said reference verification shouldn’t apply to the Internet exclusively.

“I think information on the Internet is as good or as flawed as information in books or the press,” Seigenthaler said. “People are beginning to get comfortable with the Internet now, but the first thing you’ll find is that ... credibility is often in the eye of the beholder. I would not accept any information without checking the information elsewhere. In *World*

Book, Britannica and any other encyclopedia, you know that the entries have been made by people with significant expertise. If a Web site provides that, you’d approach it with the same confidence.”

Seigenthaler repeatedly urged readers to seek multiple references, whether conducting research on the Internet or in the library.

“Sure, there are errors in encyclopedias and there are current events that make entries obsolete and wrong, but you are most likely to find authoritative entries or postings online if you know that the author of the content has a discipline in which he is a specialist,” he said. “You wouldn’t go to a heart surgeon if you had a psychiatric problem. I make it a practice to find where I can get the most credible information. Wikipedia accepts information from anywhere, which is not necessarily flawed, but I may check two or three or four other sources.”

As a matter of fact, Wikipedia sprang from Nupedia, another free Internet encyclopedia also founded by Jimmy Wales, according to Wikipedia. Unlike its offspring, however, Nupedia’s articles came from experts exclusively. In fact, “in many cases where the topic is specialized, highly academic, or where the editor expects the category as a whole might be closely judged based on the result, we will want to assign topics to persons who have already done extensive, high-quality research -- not necessarily published work, but probably, in most cases -- on those topics,” according to Nupedia’s assignment process at <http://nupedia.8media.org/policy.shtml>.

Nupedia’s seven-step editorial process seems to have rivaled that of many academic journals. However, by the time Nupedia shut down in September 26, 2003, fewer than 30 articles had completed the entire editing gauntlet after its beginning in March 2000.

“Nupedia was to be a highly reliable,

peer-reviewed resource that fully appreciated and employed the efforts of subject area experts, as well as the general public. When the more free-wheeling Wikipedia took off, Nupedia was left to wither. It might appear to have died of its own weight and complexity,” wrote Larry Sanger, former chief organizer of Wikipedia and former editor-in-chief of Nupedia in “The Early History of Nupedia and Wikipedia: A Memoir.”

Sanger said that although he fully appreciates Wikipedia’s merits, it’s main problem is “anti-elitism, or lack of respect for expertise,” as Sanger stated in his article “Why Wikipedia Must Jettison Its Anti-Elitism.” Essentially, Sanger argued that Wikipedia had no way to ensure that the most knowledgeable individuals in a particular subject got to contribute to an entry permanently. In other words, the Web site always would risk allowing people with less expertise to edit an entry.

Chase wasn’t a Seigenthaler scholar and his edit to the Wikipedia entry wasn’t a minor inaccuracy. Chase also wasn’t the only person to change the entry. Even after Wales and Wikipedia administrators removed the spurious facts, others continued to edit the biography after the site gained so much attention in the press. However, Seigenthaler said he was concerned more about Wikipedia’s failure to oversee the edits.

“When you’re dealing with a Web site whose contributors post without any knowledge or expertise, it’s a less credible Web site,” Seigenthaler said. “I’d like to see voluntary actions by online managers to protect themselves against that sort of irre-

sponsible commentary when something is blatantly offensive or in error. It doesn’t take much common sense to straighten out. All I’d like to see is a little common sense.”

As it is easier than ever before for people to turn into Internet authors, students and professors might ask, “How reliable are Internet references?”

Before Google antiquated wooden card catalogs, few people felt the need to veri-



fy a leather-bound *Encyclopaedia Britannica*’s contents. From elementary school library orientations, they learned a dichotomous filing system: fiction and nonfiction. Nonfiction was true, and fiction was not. References were part of the nonfiction section. The Internet isn’t that simple. Reference sites like Wikipedia, which allows users to edit entries, aren’t necessarily as consistent as others. However, critics have argued that the larger problem is one of irresponsibility. “Wikipedians don’t accept any commentary as irresponsible, even one that accuses someone of murder or of being suspected of murder,” Seigenthaler said.

Sanger said that “regardless of whether Wikipedia actually is more or less reliable than the average encyclopedia, it is not perceived as adequately reliable by many librarians, teachers, and academics,” which is important, because the lack of support of these groups shows “it is not succeeding as well as it might.”

While Vanderbilt professors and students aren’t entirely condemning or embracing Wikipedia as a resource, the most advisable attitude seems to be skepticism. “It’s not much different online than anywhere else,” Seigenthaler said. “If you’re watching television, and something on CNN seems not to be credible, you might find Fox to get another point of view. If Fox seems incredible, or not credible, go somewhere else.”

Such a vast amount of information online has some benefits. The multitude of academic journals and experts only a click away should indicate facilitate any information-gathering process much more reliably -- and almost as easily -- as any publicly edited resource. In other words, readers have the responsibility of making their research more credible by capitalizing on the technology that brings real experts to their screens.

Wikipedia has come under a flurry of scrutiny since the Seigenthaler incident, with many questioning the validity and accuracy of the popular reference site. However, not all of the response has been negative. The British science journal *Nature* facilitated a study that examined the comparative accuracy of scientific entries in Wikipedia and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in December of 2005. *Nature* found the two sources to contain a similar amount of errors, with each having 4 serious errors relating to misinterpretations of important concepts in the pairs of articles reviewed. A considerable amount of minor errors were also found in Wikipedia and Britannica according to *Nature*: “Reviewers also found many factual errors, omissions or misleading statements: 162 and 123 in Wikipedia and Britannica, respectively.”

Despite the *Nature* study lending credence to the validity of Wikipedia as a reference resource, Wikipedia decided to increase security measures by allowing only

registered users to edit the entries. This measure would seemingly allow Wikipedia to track the profiles and names of those who edit the entries; however, Versus found that the registration process required only the creation of a user ID and password, without disclosing any personal information or an email address. Wikipedia has previously tracked the IP addresses of some contributors to the site and recently found that many officials in Congress were “polishing” the articles about themselves. Wikipedia stated that many of these changes were beneficial to the accuracy of the entries, but the case raises an ethical quandary about the neutrality of a source that has a vested interest in the content of the entry. IP tracking was

also used to discover the identity of Brian Chase, a Nashville resident, who created the malicious entry about Seigenthaler.

Wikipedia has revolutionized the way many people research on the internet since its inception by serving as a free, centralized portal for factual information. Many college students use the site on a regular basis to find a quick fact or to do research for a paper, but students should ask their professor before using Wikipedia as a source for papers. Versus found that the policy on the use of Wikipedia differed widely between professors, so the best advice for students is to stay on the safe side and ask, or that ten-page paper may be returned as incomplete due to using “disreputable sources.”

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE:

TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND VANDERBILT'S DIGITAL FIXATION

by Zach Norton

When I was thirteen years old, I dragged my father to the local Cineplex to watch a screening of Star Trek: First Contact with me. Now I am not, nor will I ever be, a Star Trek junkie (or Trekkie, as the subspecies is commonly known); Commander Kirk and Mr. Spock never compelled me to fandom like Han Solo and Darth Vader. The series' robotic villains, The Borg, however, do to this day still pique my interest.

The Borg are a race of cold, relentless killing machines that represent without a doubt science-fiction's most frightening class of man-machine hybrid. The Borg are unlike Vader, Agent Smith, and the Terminators in that they are all slaves. The Borg's legion "drones" are unwilling constituents of a dominating, digital hive-mind. Once sentient, they've all been stripped of their individuality, their freedom, and their organic systems. When they speak, their millions of voices sound in unison and in threat only. "We are the Borg. Lower your shields and surrender your ships. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt to service us. Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated."

The technology and gadgets I see being used around the Vanderbilt campus remind me a lot of the Borg. Whether it's cell phones, the internet, online dating services, instant messengers, video games or digital audio players, we all seem to be hooked, jacked, or otherwise plugged in for better or worse to a massive electronic Collective. The internet is not a far cry from a cybernetic hive-mind; it's a lot more chaotic, but it still seems to run our lives. It's our go-to communication tool, media resource and study aid. This past semester, Vanderbilt throttled the Internet ports that utilize the popular peer-to-peer downloading program, BitTorrent, in an effort to reduce the expense of their online bandwidth. How many movies, songs, games, and unlicensed software programs could we be downloading on a daily basis to merit a severe port-choking? Worse still, aren't File Transfer Protocols and BitTorrent clients essential for not only student, but faculty use as well? I don't think the Biological Sciences and Neuroscience departments are going to say goodbye to the ease of "BT'ing" series of CT scans and synapse maps to Vanderbilt's medical facilities any time soon.

What the university doesn't download from the internet, we upload to it in the form of personal information, chat logs, blogs, and People Finder profiles. Facebook may be an international phenomenon, but by looking at all of the Vanderbilt profiles, groups, party invitations, and "friend visualizations," one can't but help but feel the site is the most important vertebrae in Vanderbilt's social spine. A

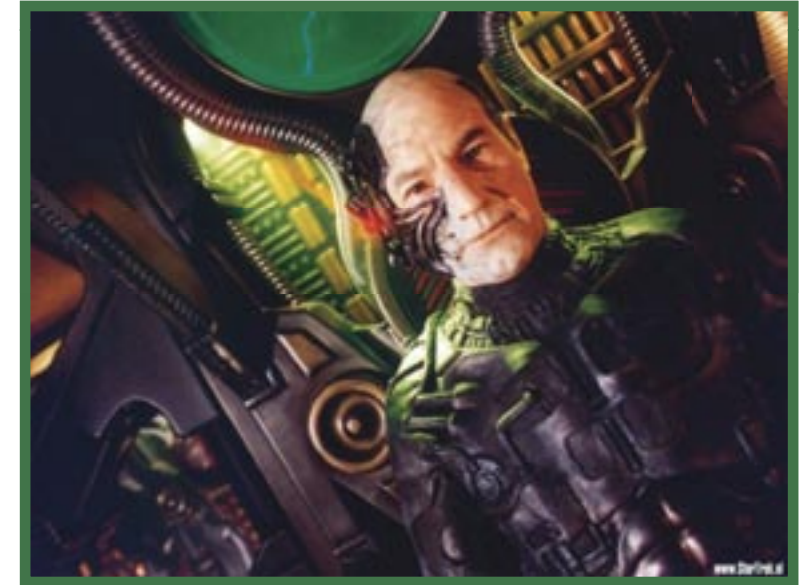
recent Hustler article exposed the possibility of employment discrimination based on the information and media we post on Facebook... and yet there's been no en masse withdrawal from the site, no protesting uproar of any kind. It's so important for us to look at and connect to one another on a regular basis that all of us are willing to risk unemployment to do so. You can't help but question the values of such an idiosyncratic population.



photo by Zach Norton

Two of my best friends, let's call them Mr. B and Mr. G, are at two ends of the spectrum when it comes to embracing technology's stranglehold on our society. Mr. B doesn't own a working cell phone – he refuses to get one – and learned how to download and use a BitTorrent file just two weeks ago. Until one week ago, he didn't even have a landline phone in his off-campus residence. I still don't know a number to reach him directly, but we routinely play each other in head-to-head Slayer matches of Halo 2. He accesses his Facebook profile on a daily basis from a 12-inch Powerbook, which he's hooked

"The Internet is, for the most part, a massive time-waster, but I often find that I can only realize that after I've wasted almost an entire morning or evening sitting in front of my LCD panel."



to up to two booming speakers and an obnoxiously powerful subwoofer. He only checks his email when the need is dire and carries around a fourth-generation iPod whose screen he cracked accidentally with a goofy-footed snowboard. Mr. G, on the other hand, lives in a Towers single and rejoices in his vast amount of gizmos and techno-toys. He owns a Powerbook, an iMac, two iPods, a TiVo-equipped Samsung HDTV, a waist-high refrigerator and an industrial-standard microwave. He uses a cell phone with a Bluetooth headset on a casual basis, is a Battlestar Galactica fan and plays World of Warcraft in what little free time he has. And in spite of all this technological addiction he refuses to get a Facebook account or even create an AIM profile for fear of the unfettered access it would grant data-miners.

My two friends each use gadgets and electronic items, but with varying proficiencies and to distinct extents. Mr. B uses machines and the Internet as one would use basic tools, only wading into the techno deep end as much as he needs to for the sake of comfort and utility. Mr. G celebrates technology as the enabler of a new paradigm, a new lifestyle. But, because he's savvy enough to recognize the negative implications of pervasive information technology, he's not willing to compromise his privacy. Otherwise, he's a whole-hearted technophile. Of course it doesn't matter how different my friends are. Their similarities are more telling. Both of them, whether they sing its praises or shun its ubiquity, regularly consume the fruit of the Digital Revolution. Its influence on their lives is inextricable.

And, after having relied on it for so long, I don't think either of them, nor any of us for that matter, will ever be able to forsake its convenience and leave all the doodad marvels behind.

I'm not at all innocent of course. I own an iPod, a Powerbook, a Playstation Portable, a RAZR cell phone and a Bluetooth headset. I'd be lying if I said that I never used BitTorrent at all. Until recently, I had perfunctory profiles on Myspace and Facebook that I updated with some regularity. I know that the Internet is, for the most part, a massive time-waster, but nowadays I often find that I can only realize that after I've wasted almost an entire morning or evening sitting in front of my LCD panel.

What's most striking about this massive proliferation of technology at Vanderbilt University is the ease with which each and every one of us lets go of his or her privacy and personal freedom. Whether we like it or not, each student is a number in Vanderbilt's digitized system (a Social Security Number no less). If we factor in cumulative GPAs, SunTrust bank accounts, and Meal Plan transactions, then we're more like a series of numbers. We're becoming the Borg. Seven of Nine. Eight of Ten. One of 11,481. What's the difference?

All of the sci-fi movies depict robots and artificial intelligences as insidious manipulators or destroyers, as androids and cyborgs bent on humanity's annihilation and assimilation, or as slaves subservient to human wills. How could our eradication be necessary when it's plain to see that we're doing our best to become the Ghosts within the Machine?



*The lightning strikes and you wait,
holding your breath for the thunder
to crash around you.
Rain falls
and you count in the pitter patter
the seconds as you wait.
One, two, and it hits.
A sigh of relief,
almost a whimper
breaks from your mouth
and your eyes flash with the next hit.*



THE END OF AN ERA:

After Soccer, Searching For the Truth

by Aleksey Dubrovensky

What were they thinking?

Clearly, that was the first question in the minds of the Vanderbilt faithful when the news broke a few weeks ago that the Division of Student Life and University Affairs, the acting athletics department on campus, had made the decision to disband the men's varsity soccer team this summer in favor of starting a women's swim team that won't even be able to compete on campus.

So what gives?

"We really regret the fact that we had to make this decision," said David Williams, the Vice Chancellor for Student Life and University Affairs. "It is a complex decision, but we had to make it. It's a financial issue, it's a facility issue, it's a Title IX issue, and it's an SEC issue."

Come on, Dave. Let's try to be serious here. It's all about the money, right?

"We look at financials and recognize that Vanderbilt's athletic department is one that is subsidized by the university," Williams said. "So we have an obligation to not let that subsidy to be a runaway subsidy." Drawing on the results of a recent internal audit of the University's athletic programs, Williams tried to make the case that soccer was essentially a drain on the school's meager financial budget, and that over the long haul this move will greatly benefit the school's athletic programs.

I'm still not buying it.



photo by Elise Alford/Vanderbilt Hustler

Williams said that the University was going to make changes in the athletics department with two basic conditions at the forefront of it all. First, the University did not want to add or lose any programs on net. If another sport was to be added, then someone would have to get the axe. Second, the school was not prepared to endow any additional athletic scholarships.

My only curiosity in the matter is how long it took the trustees and officers of the University to find the most vulnerable and clearly defensible sport to make away with, because it doesn't appear that they didn't look very long.

The men's soccer team is coming off their best season ever, finishing with a 9-7 record and a third-place finish in the Missouri Valley Conference, narrowly missing the NCAA tournament. Head Coach Timothy McClements was named this season's MVC Coach of the Year, and four players were named to the Conference's Scholar Athlete Team. Additionally, the team's leading scorer, John Krause, was named to the First Team All-Midwest Region Team by a panel of the nation's collegiate soccer coaches.

Additionally, how much did all these incredible athletic accomplishments "cost" the University? The team's budget was a mere \$250,000, a pittance compared to the many millions of dollars that the school's football and basketball programs spend each year. The twenty-one full athletic scholarships likely didn't cost a great deal either. Seeing as virtually all the players that attend the school graduate, many have become kind alumni as well, eager to support their school and its athletic programs with hearty donations. Claiming that these scholarships made a real difference in an athletic program that ends around 300-400 such scholarships is stretching the truth just a little bit.

So the search for the truth wears on. Was the semi-professional collegiate sports behemoth of the Old South, the Southeastern Conference, responsible for the death of a revived and competitive athletic program?

"Men's soccer is not, at least with my discussions with the commissioner, probably going to be an SEC sport for a fairly good while," Williams said. "Coach McClements had us in the right direc-

tion. But, it is the Missouri Valley Conference and, while it was not overly expensive, it was sort of expensive to deal in."

Run that by me again, Dave?

So, the SEC wasn't going to add men's, or for that matter women's, soccer as a sport any time soon. By extension, the fat checks given to all the member schools for participation in each sport weren't going to be coming in either. You're trying to remedy the situation by dropping a dynamic and growing sport in favor of a vaguely-popular, seldom watched program that won't even have the facilities to be able to compete on campus? What's more, you're giving up the earnings that the team's membership in the Missouri Valley Conference earned, not to mention the potential money coming from any future invitations to the NCAA tournament.

That throws me for a loop. But, Williams has it all figured out already and we're just trying to catch up.

"Quite honestly, the SEC has for years wanted us to think seriously about us adding women's softball, (women's) volleyball, (women's) gymnastics and (women's) swimming," Williams said. "They have wanted us to add one or all of them."

When the fat-cat mafia dons of the collegiate sports world, the ones who write annual checks to your athletic department for nearly \$7 million, make a suggestion, it isn't meant to be taken lightly. But, I find it hard to believe that a bunch of greedy power brokers who rarely even feign interest in your school's football team would spend any time worrying about some of the less-marketed, non-revenue sports that you decide to put on the field.

Last I checked, the SEC hasn't taken any kind of responsibility for the decision that the administration handed down a few weeks ago regarding the future of the athletic program and I won't hold my breath in waiting for them to acknowledge having a hand in all this. After all, those football-obsessed school presidents and athletics directors at the beloved University of Georgia, University of Florida, and University of Alabama are clearly not in business to please the powers-that-be. They're in it for the money, glory, and enormous exposure that winning in the nation's toughest collegiate sports conference carries with it. They're not really inclined to sit around and worry about the semantics of being in sports that "aren't overly expensive, but expensive to deal in," whatever that means.

That brings me to Williams' next point: the facility issue. Rather, that should be phrased, what facility issue? The men's soccer team played at the soccer/lacrosse complex that was just completed in 2002. Now, the only teams that will use the stadium, widely considered to be the gem of the SEC among such facilities, will be the women's soccer and women's lacrosse teams.



Meanwhile, the new women's swimming team will not have any on-campus facilities where they can host meets. They will have to use an off-campus complex such as Centennial Sportsplex, an arrangement will make it difficult to attract students to the events. The men's soccer team regularly drew a fair number of students to its home games. Adding on to the current athletics complex on campus was apparently not an option either, according to Williams.

"We can't build a women's softball facility," Williams said. "We can't dedicate a gym just to gymnastics. And while we could probably make due by using the (Memorial) gym for volleyball, we would actually have to install a volleyball floor. So when you really look at the ease when it relates to facilities, the two sports that actually jumped out at us over the last few years were women's bowling, which we added last year, and women's swimming."

Obviously, dropping a team that drew crowds to its on-campus games in favor of an off-campus program that will be in its infancy when it arrives in fall of 2007 just makes sense for the University, but **we're not all bright enough to follow that kind of logic.**

I don't know about you, but I'm still not convinced.

The answer, apparently, is to be found in the big, bad wolf of college athletics, the requirements of the Title IX amendment to the 1972 Higher Education Act. Even the mention of this infamous federal provision can send chills down the spine of a major Division I program's athletic director. Apparently, the scare tactic has worked with the Vice Chancellor.

The wording of the provision is as such:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

That is what this all boils down to, right? Equal treatment of the sexes in collegiate athletics is certainly an important moral that we should not disregard or take lightly. Before the announced changes, the University is not Title IX compliant, according to Williams, but the school will be once the changes are implemented.

So at the cost of twenty-one male scholarships and three coaches, the school plans to align itself properly so that it doesn't lose any lucrative federal funding. That doesn't seem so bad. After all, so

many of the school's landmark research projects are being funded with money from the Federal government. But did the University go about the necessary changes in the right way? After all, could the school have spared a team that is growing in success and popularity and still reach its goal of being Title IX compliant?

Unsurprisingly, it could have. A recent letter to The Vanderbilt Hustler by Dr. Sharon L. Shields, former president of the National Association of Girls and Women in Sport, berated the University for its irresponsible handling of what should have been a routine part in the shift to gender-equalized collegiate



photo by Robert Proudfoot

sports. **She cited the stagnant athletics budget and numerous wasteful spending projects within that department as perpetuating the very problems that the school is trying to fix by eliminating the men's soccer team.** Instead, Dr. Shields suggested that the school could have remedied the situation and still have gained Title IX compliance by creating a new, larger women's sports program, an addition that would have been similar to the founding of the women's varsity bowling team last year. Even more importantly, that could have shielded the school from possible costly lawsuits.

The cost to the school would have been relatively trivial, considering they plan to establish a women's swimming program anyway, along with the lost investment in the soccer program.

So now we've come full circle, and we literally are back where we started. Williams' explanations and excuses for the difficult decisions haven't really sufficed to explain or excuse any of this mess. In digging for the truth behind this muddled embarrassment to the University, we have scraped the very bottom of the rubbish pile. And so the twenty-one student athletes and the three coaches that once proudly represented the Black and Gold nation have to reconcile their losses and try to move on, even though the rest of the Commodore faithful, myself included, are still searching for the truth.



photo by Elise Alford/Vanderbilt Hustler



You can never go home: an exception

story and photos by Chris McGeady

I had been thinking about it for a while, virtually since I left. It had been six months since I'd been back. *Back where? What is it you're going back to?* I still don't know. The night before I left, I began to wonder what I was accomplishing by spending time and money to go visit this place. My brothers and sister asked me why I was going and the only answer I could come up with was, "There are a lot of people I really want to see." *Was that all it meant?* Not really. It was about the memories.

For ten out of the last eleven summers of my life, I was away from home for two months either attending or working at camp, so when I decided to go to boarding school I was no stranger to living away from my mother and siblings, two of whom had already lived on their own for a few years. I received a letter in December of 2001 telling me about a school that was about to open in northern Wisconsin: a boarding school. I didn't think about it again until after freshman year, when I decided that I couldn't stay in the school I was attending. We started looking around, and then I remembered the letter. We filled out all of the application materials and all I had to do was interview and take a test. The summer camp I worked at was about 20 miles south of the school, so I knew the surrounding area and what the summer weather was like. Little else ever seemed important.

The school was gorgeous: the buildings had just been completed that spring, all the furniture was pristine, and some of the planters had yet to be filled. My first visual impression of Conserve School was as I drove up the winding road from the Gatehouse through the woods, between the lakes, and up to the Lowenstein Academic Building (L.A.B.). The architecture looked like it was designed to resemble its surroundings, very earthy yet angular, painted with tones reflecting the Leave No Trace policy.

There were many reasons to attend: the sizable endowment, the quality of the staff, the technology, classes starting at 10 o'clock, flexible scheduling, 20 minutes of homework per class, competitive

sports, fantastic academic and recreational resources, and the solemn and comforting seclusion of the North Woods. It was perfect. Its name might tell you that it was a place for environmentalists and hippies, but in truth there was more to it.

For the three years I attended, there were two things keeping me there after the administration started changing things: the people, and the fact that I knew there were few other places in the world where I would have those resources at my fingertips every minute of every day. It was a great place to learn independence, people skills, and technological prowess, but it was also very frustrating. Gossip was a constant reminder of the small size of the community and, due to the school's insurance liability and the newness of the facility, students had few of the personal freedoms that our peers took for granted. I have a lot of great memories from Conserve and a lot of memories I wouldn't mind forgetting.

Nevertheless, I was going back, and I didn't know what to expect.



I left on New Year's Day. My aim was Kenosha, Wisconsin to pick up Ian, my old suitemate from Conserve. The two of us would drive the rest of the seven hours up to Land O' Lakes, near the Wisconsin/Michigan border. We stopped in Wausau, and after almost getting lost we finally found the Culver's and Mobil gas station off of Highway 51. After eating, we got gas and I realized that everything around us was all too familiar.

A year earlier, during track season, we snuck away from a meet at Wausau West High School to find a place to get a better meal than we had packed. We didn't know where we were going, so we aimed for the busiest street assuming that there had to be some restaurants down the way. We walked for about 35 minutes until we finally spotted Culver's. It was like pre-emptive *deja vu* – here we were, revisiting old memories from our days at Conserve before we even got there.

We arrived at Conserve at about 11, went through security, and drove up to Mandel House where Chad, our former house-parent, was waiting to let us in. Within a minute of our arrival we saw another "alum," Zion, who also was back to visit. We were talking in the atrium when the door to Hawk Wing flew open and all our old wing-mates poured out like a busted dam. After innumerable handshakes, back-pats, and a hug or two, Chad made them get back in the wing because it was long past curfew. We followed and hung out for while, catching up on the last six months.

Eventually, Chad came back and made them get in their rooms. Ian and I stayed up till 2 a.m. in Chad's study, but finally crashed in the spare room that Chad and his wife Jeneen had set up for us. Nothing had changed.

The next day we got up late since there were no classes that morning. Lunch was the same as the night before: seeing old faces, talking about where we go to college and what we're studying. As we were walking around the L.A.B. we were prompted by the Headmaster to check on the gift we had donated to the school: a park bench to be placed atop a hill along the road surrounding the campus. After making sure the bench was in good order, we went back to walking around the L.A.B. and making faces in the classroom windows – nothing more or less than we would have done when we were students.

After classes finished we did exactly what we did in the old days – sat in our friend Kyle's wing doing nothing and talking about anything that occurred to us. We had dinner with Hawk Wing in Chad and Jeneen's apartment; to commemorate our visit Chad had made his special habañero chili, and we all feasted until our palettes and tongues could no longer withstand the relentless onslaught. Afterwards, Jeneen baked us all a huge batch of chocolate chip cookies

while we sat down on the couches and recovered from the meal.

When most everyone had dispersed to go fulfill their various commitments, Ian, Kyle, and I went into Hawk to watch Mystery Science Theater 3000. I must say, there are few things better than hilariously bad B-movies to solicit fun out of what could have turned out to be a very boring night. After two movies it was getting near curfew, so as the Hawk wing-mates filed in we all decided to play "Bang!" – an over-the-top card game based on spaghetti Westerns. It took a while to finish, so afterwards we had to give Chad a call to come and collect us. Nothing had changed.

On our last day we woke up at ten and continued walking around and talking to people we hadn't seen. After lunch, instead of class, students had "mini-courses," one of which was broomball. Basically, broomball is ice-hockey, but you wear shoes, the stick has a blunt head, and you use a ball instead of a puck. It was the first legitimate exercise I'd had in a while; my lungs were burning and my legs were sore, but it was worth it.

We ate dinner in the cafeteria, but after a semester of college where I'd been solely responsible for my diet, much of the food didn't appeal to me anymore. Four of us later went down to the LRC – Lowenstein Recreation Center – and played our own completely insane and illogical version of badminton. As we were leaving, I saw that the school had obtained a pool table and I was not too happy about that – I was a student government representative and I can't even remember how many times the administration told us we couldn't have one. They were good at saying no.

I don't remember what we did the rest of the night, if in fact we did anything. All I remember is that I didn't want to leave. I was anxious to get out of there after I graduated, but who wouldn't be? Now I was just visiting, but it felt more like home in those two days than it did the whole three years I lived there. I guess the grass may be greener on the other side, but once you get over the fence the old lawn seems, if not as green, then at least familiar. While my experience at Conserve was about the memories, my visit was little more than a vehicle for the hope that there are at least some things in this world that never change.



Orient Express:

A Vandy perspective on the culture of Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo

story and photos by Robert Proudfoot

Seoul

Of the three cities, Seoul was the youngest and most vibrant. In Beijing, the growth is there, but the metropolitan, urban feel is lacking. Tokyo, on the other end of the spectrum, was so urbanized it felt as though everyone was tired and old. Seoul is definitely the most westernized of the three cities. The cinema culture is amazingly strong for such a small country (50 million people). In Seoul, everyone is in a cutesy high school relationship. It's almost as if the whole country discovered idealized, westernized love at the same time. On the way to the subway from our hostel, which is about a three minute walk, I counted no less than 39 couples. These couples were holding hands, hanging over each other and having the perfect relationship. Of course, my bitter response was "How could so many people be so happy?" It just isn't right. Korean sources have also confirmed this couples phenomenon. The straw that broke the camels back, though, came two hours after the New Year as I was waiting in the subway. The man knelt down and started massaging his girlfriend's calves while she was standing and waiting for the subway! It was so ridiculous my tripgorian (read sidebar on XXX) team had to document this gross infraction of ridiculous love.

Beijing

Beijing is one sprawled city that grew out instead of up. That could be said for most of America these days. The city stretches at the same height of about 10-20 stories as far as the eye can see. As soon as you step off the airplane the smog will engulf your lungs. Hacking a loogie and spitting in public is socially acceptable and I would wager it is out of necessity. The city almost seems like a young teenager with pimples and hormones trying to figure out how he grew a foot in a year. Beijing has potential; it just has to grow up and mature.

A source from Korea says that Beijing women have it pretty good and are spoiled. I met with this source at our Korean hostel. He had been kicked out of China for "talking about the damn commie government." He captivated me by talking, continuously, for 30 minutes about the horrors of Chinese women. No matter how hard I tried to politely ease out of the door to my frigidly cold room, he continued to explain the evils of Chinese women. Perhaps a 55 year old balding man shouldn't be teaching English in random Asian countries and dating younger women? He obviously had some less than satisfactory dating relationships in China. He, logically, explained that all women from China were spoiled, because everyone is single child. He went on to speak to me as if he was having a flashback of a previous conversation and I was a spoiled Chinese woman. I have to admit that it was a little unnerving to be talked to as a woman while an old bitter man recounts failed relationships. He said:

So you dropped a marshmallow on your shoe . . . WTF do you want me to do about it . . . baby? I ain't your daddy . . . baby. (He repeated this over and over for about five minutes)

Tokyo

With the combination of Caribbean black pimps, fantasy anime porn and lonely Japanese businessmen, Tokyo isn't exactly the capital of happiness. One gets the feeling that the society is so close and bonded that actual individuals are completely isolated. There are video arcades on every corner with Japanese men playing in solitude, as if detached from the rest of Japan. Japan's sexuality is a lot more open than the United States'. There is anime porn sprinkled throughout the city in shops thinly partitioned by small signs saying "No under 18."

Probably one of the strangest experiences throughout the whole trip though, was when I attempted to "go out" in Roponggi. Tokyo's nightlife district, Roponggi hosts hundreds of bars ranging from small time dive bars to whole buildings. After spending four days walking throughout Tokyo's surreal landscape of ultra modern buildings on man made land and old traditional houses, I found the Roponggi district a flashback similar to Times Square in the seventies.

Imagine my surprise however, as a relatively well dressed black man with a Caribbean accent starts following me down the street asking me, "Titty bar? Hey man, I'll give you a free drink. You want a titty bar?" After following me one hundred yards and trying to hold a conversation with me in broken English, I had to make some choices. Since I wasn't interested in a "titty bar," not to mention one suggested by a strange Caribbean man who looked like he had been transplanted from New York City, I had to figure out how to get him to go away. Since I hadn't spoken to him yet, I figured that if I made up my own language and responded back to him, he might be so confused he would leave me alone. So, in the fashion of the Swedish Chef from Sesame Street I responded, "Schreepurdeer veur de purdee feer." He then walked away.

How to spend less than \$300 a week in Beijing, Korea and Tokyo

BEIJING: \$300 *We live like kings*

Everything in Beijing is cheap except for the iPod. Lodging runs about \$5 a day. With the great exchange rate (\$1 for 8 RMB), full course meals cost around \$3-\$5. Be sure to ask for a menu before you get settled down to eat. Also, be sure to ask for a non-English menu along with the English menu (a large portion have English menus) to match up the prices. They are sometimes different. The "Night Life" in Sanlitun District has great sights, but the beer runs about \$3.50 a bottle. At the hostel I could get a 1600 mL beer for about 40 cents. You can bargain the price of beer down, but it is an expensive night. Have healthy skepticism about everything, be polite and remember to smile. And when the people scream CHEAPER!, what they really mean is CHEAP! AH! This is similar to the "Cheap, eh?" Canadians use.

[Beijing Jade Youth Hostel: <http://www.xihuahotel.com/>]

SEOUL: \$300 *We live like nobility*

The street vendors of Seoul are an amazing sight to see. It is nothing to see a group of friends eating oysters and squid inside tents kicking back a couple of Sojos. As the foulest drinks I have experienced (except, of course, barley milk, don't ask), Sojo is about 20 percent alcohol and is about \$1 USD for 800 mL. Some drinks just aren't worth drinking. Meals cost about \$3-\$5. Be sure to try the noodle shops, as they have a different style than Japan. Most of the restaurants are family owned, with the women in charge of the cooking. Lodging runs about \$15 a day.



TOKYO: \$300 *We live like serfs*

The biggest myth about Tokyo is its cost. Everyone thinks that this metropolis is insanely expensive, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. Anyone familiar with New York City pricing will be able to comfortably adapt to Tokyo costs. The only glaring difference between Tokyo's costs and the U.S. are the media. DVDs run about \$40 and CDs run around \$30. It is ridiculous, especially when you promise your sister you would buy her two CDs from every country you visit (rack up \$70 right there). Actually, in my five day stay, those CDs were 25% of my cost. Stick to the noodle and curry shops. Meals will run around \$5-\$7. Lodging in a hostel is about \$20.

[Khaosan Tokyo: <http://www.khaosan-tokyo.com/>]



Speaking Code

Almost everyone in Asia understands at least some English words. As a foreigner, one has to watch your words to make sure no one knows what you are talking about. This comes especially in handy when you want to make fun of someone right beside and you don't know if they know English. A traveling buddy of mine developed this complex code to talk about groups of people right in front of them. It is based off of the Mongorian episode in South Park, for those familiar:

Mongorian	Chinese
Kongorian	Hong Kong
Japgorian	Japanese
Korgorian	Korean
Augorian	Australian
Coupgorian	A Couple
Tripgorian	Three Lonely Male Vanderbilt Students

OH NO! Did you know that using the term "orient" can be offensive and derogatory? In fact, the term orient has been banned in the state of Washington from official documents. The term Orient is associated with the western countries colonizing Asian countries.



Whipability Factor!

How easy is it for women in each country to play their partner? Here is one look at the market in each city:

Beijing 7

Being a single child can only enhance the whipability of Beijing's dateable population. On more than on occasion, I saw women pull out the "pout" and "cry" to get their way.

Seoul A F##%#ng 10!

Anyone able to get a calve massage in the subway is doing something right. The whole culture seems to support this cutesy pseudo-serious high school relationship format.

Tokyo 4

The competition for attention is pretty intense. Not only is porn pretty open in Tokyo, it's mostly anime. That means your man is idealizing some woman with green skin and eyes half the size of her face. It ain't easy in Tokyo.

so
many
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and then wonder

how long must they wait?



Welcome to Oasis

Enter VUNet ID:

Show Schedule:

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Issues with the Add/Drop Period and scheduling suggestions

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

Add Drop: Y/N?

by Mary LaDriere

Each semester there is the excitement and, for many, the dread of beginning classes again. Although the prospect of starting fresh is appealing, the idea of being stuck in a terrible class for the next four months can be terrifying. This fear could be mollified, however, if students had more resources available to them such as a lengthier add/drop period and online access to course evaluations and syllabi.

Last semester, our Student Government Association proposed an extension of the add/drop period from seven to fourteen days. Currently, this resolution has not been passed by the administration, although SGA members plan to present it to the faculty senate and Provost. A substantial portion of the student body – 87% in a survey conducted by A&S council – supports this idea in hopes that it will increase students' abilities to create effective educational plans for themselves. Junior Meghan Savage said, "One week isn't enough time to determine your ability to perform well in a class or to decide whether or not your learning style meshes with the teaching style of your professor." Many students use the add/drop period to "try out" different courses or professors, and often one or two class periods is not enough. This is especially true for classes that meet only once per week, as students will not get a clear idea of what the class will be like in a session that is used to simply review the syllabus.

The segment of the university population against this proposal are concerned that the extension will lead to record-keeping "headaches" as well as make it difficult for students to catch up on the work they would miss by joining a class after three or four sessions. These claims may have cause for concern, so why not suggest a happy medium? Rather than extending the *entire* add/drop period to fourteen days, increase the amount of time that students are able to drop classes without receiving a "W" on their transcripts. Often, students sign up for more hours than they will likely take in one semester in order to decide between two classes or to compare professors, eventually dropping the less favorable option. This will undoubtedly lessen the burden because professors will not have to deal with students entering their classes after the first week and students will not have to worry about making up missed material. Another option, proposed by SGA members, is to require professor approval for adding a class during the second week.

Less emphasis would be placed on the add/drop period, however, if the administration provided more resources for students during this "trial run". SGA has worked hard towards making course evaluations available online, and, although just a few weeks too late for this semester, they are currently accessible on the SGA website. The response is a positive one, as this newly available tool serves as a sign that the administration is listening to student concerns. Some students, however, will forego the SGA website and continue to use ratemyprofessor.

com as their main resource for determining classes. Junior Samantha Thomas said, "I wish the new online evaluations included the 'comments' sections because those tell me a lot more than a numeric average. On ratemyprofessor.com you get a better idea of what the professor is really like."

Course evaluations have in the past been meant for professors' and administrators' eyes only. They are designed as a method of constructive criticism for teaching styles as well as a way for department heads and administrators to keep professors in check. Professors currently have the right to refuse the posting of the evaluations - so if student comments were able to become public, professors undoubtedly would likely choose to keep this information from students. However, professors should consider the relative fairness of comments on course evaluations, as opposed to those that students can read on rate-my-professor.com. Since students know their professors will read the course evaluations, their remarks are more constructive in nature, whereas online, students can write anything from personal attacks to profanity. It may be more beneficial to have the evaluation comments online, thus eventually deterring students from using less-than-objective websites to make their decisions.

There may not be a fool-proof way to avoid that monotonous history professor from hell, but requiring syllabi to be posted online would save everyone a lot of time. Knowing that a grade will be based on four five-page papers or with just a midterm and a final is knowledge that would help both students and professors alike. Often, students decide to drop a class once they see the syllabus and realize the way grades are determined isn't the best format for their learning style, or find out that their preconceived notion of the class was incorrect. The three or four sentence course descriptions may be beneficial to those taking organic chemistry, but more substantial information is required to make a decision about whether or not that Blair class requires considerable musical knowledge. By being able to view syllabi online, students will be able to more effectively narrow down their selections, and consequently will not waste professors' time by signing up for classes that they will eventually drop.

Some may argue that professors do not make their syllabi in advance of the semester in which they teach the course, so it would be difficult to post syllabi online in November (when students sign up for second semester courses) for what they will be teaching two months later. However, professors who have taught the course before should be able to post a previous semester's syllabus online and then make slight alterations to it once the new semester begins. For new courses, there would be an exception, but new courses each

semester are few in number. The availability of syllabi would also allow students to see what texts are required for the courses, enabling them to get a head start on ordering cheaper versions online. This

would be beneficial to professors because there would be fewer excuses from students about not having texts to do assignments in the first couple weeks.

One of the greatest benefits of a Vanderbilt education is the ability to have intimate class settings and personal attention from professors. Professors here care about their students' well-being, and students delight in the ability to be a name rather than a number. This is not UCLA or the University of Texas, so students should be able to get the classes that they choose. This process could be enhanced not only by providing some background material to ensure that students sign up for the classes that they really want (or really need), but also by lengthening the add/drop period to make certain that students are not essentially stuck in classes that do not match their learning styles or interests.



Alternative Winter Break

homelessness: a reevaluation of common misconceptions
story and photos by Margaret Price

Most of us have served food in a soup kitchen, folded clothes for a clothes drive, maybe even put some money into the Salvation Army tins during the holidays. These are all kind gestures, but how often do we really confront the issue of homelessness by asking a person who was homeless how they were doing or spend the night in a homeless shelter? Over winter break six Vanderbilt students and I embraced the opportunity to do all of these things as part of a spin-off organization of Alternative Spring Break named Alternative Winter Break.

For six days we worked with the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, an organization in downtown Atlanta, GA that provides meals, transitional housing, and advocates for the rights and dignity of the homeless population in Atlanta. The group was fortunate

to engage in a variety of activities, from serving food to 500 men and women each night, going to court and listening to trials about panhandling, to touring the city of Atlanta and seeing the torn down low-income housing units being replaced with expensive luxury apartments. All of these experiences gave us a better understanding about the depth and underlying issues of homelessness.

The most meaningful experience came on the last night of our trip when we spent the night in the shelter. The men on the trip stayed in the "garage" consisting of 300 plastic chairs occupied by men who were unable to secure a bed in a shelter. The women stayed upstairs in a small hallway which held 30 plastic chairs occupied by homeless women and their children. Throughout the night I had to hold back tears as I watched the two-year-old boy and his seven-year-old sister attempt to sleep on the chairs in front of me. Behind me were two high school girls who were

doing their homework and sleeping in their school clothes. The women spoke of ex-husbands, proudly showed pictures of their children and asked a lot of questions about my experiences in college. The women knew each other and had created a community amongst them. The eldest lady helped rock the young boy to sleep and when one woman came in later in the night crying because she had been sexually assaulted, some of the women got up and comforted her. I was amazed by their openness to share their stories with me and the ease I felt when speaking with them. At times I felt guilty as I sat in the shelter and laughed with these women. It did not seem right to be enjoying myself, but the truth is that the women were friendly and they learned to make the best of their situation. Prior to leaving for our AWB experience the group



Interested in AWB or ASB?

visit www.vanderbilt.edu/ASB

They Teach More Than Academics

by Elizabeth Claydon

I believe many are familiar with the saying, **"The people who make a difference in a life are not the richest, drive the fastest car, or have the most flashy titles to their name. The people who make the most difference in life are the people who care."** In ten years all of that superficial materialism will be forgotten and obsolete. If you have not met someone who cared to an extent that they changed your life, you have experienced the greatest loss in life. Everyone needs someone to care for them and someone to care for; it is a basic human need to strive for affiliation and intimacy. At Vanderbilt, we need look no further for that someone who changes all of our lives, every single day: our teachers. Who could be more important?

Just consider, it is your first day of class and you walk into a musty corner room, sunlight streaming in the window, lighting particles of dust like an antique attic. The smell of old books enraptures your nose as you wonder how many years of learning took place in this room. Yet, the environment can only make so much of a difference to your education and life. Certainly, a warm comfy room with red padded chairs will make it easier on your rear end when you doze off to sleep during your 8:10, but to me, the person speaking is far more important.

Now visualize a teacher standing before you, ready to greet you on your first day. They could be cold, monotone-voiced, and the kind that hand you a syllabus with a smirk as if to say "Just try to pass it". But for a moment, let me give you a teacher who will make you smile, who will make you want to learn, and allow you to gain so much more than just an education.

Let me give you my high school AP History teacher. Imagine walking in to see a short stout man with graying wisps of hair, horn-rimmed glasses shoved in one breast pocket, a pointing stick in one hand, and a mischievous twinkle alighting in his eyes. He starts out your lecture in a booming voice, telling you to question everything you know, if only to learn why you believe something. He takes history and turns it into a story, making people real with motives and desires. You find yourself saying that Louis XIV was a pretty cool dude, though he lived 400 years ago. You catch yourself telling someone at lunch just why salt was important in trade hundreds and thousands of years ago. And yes, some

think you are a nerd, but what is wrong with someone who has caught the flame of learning? All you require is a teacher like mine to pass that torch on; then it is up to you to keep it burning.

Teachers make a more lasting impact than any other profession that I can imagine; yet they are still the most underappreciated. These are the people we trust to educate us in our future careers and, later in life, these are also the same professors that we depart with our children for, allowing them to impart the same morals and guidelines for life that they taught us. Our lives from the very outset, then, have been determined by the strengths of teachers. I have often heard that behind every great man is a woman. Well, in a much more agreeable and less sexist statement, let me say that behind every great person is an even greater teacher. We trust our lives to doctors, but where would they have been without teachers? The answer: probably still at a fishpond somewhere, scooping up tadpoles to dissect.

Great teachers make us realize our potential and expand our perspectives in ways that we never thought possible. They turn our minds into a lump of clay, molding it this way and that until we are happy with the right mixture. My history teacher always said that he wanted us not to see just a single tree, but to imagine the forest. He played devil's advocate, just to allow us to see a different side to an argument. That is teaching: allowing the mind and person to truly connect until they can formulate coherent ideas and beliefs. A great teacher is one who does not indoctrinate, but guides you with advice, information, and encouragement. At Vanderbilt, we have the fortune to retain a great many of those such on staff, but I will not discriminate or embarrass by announcing their names - that is not my purpose.

My purpose is, however, to make you think twice about the person who stands up in front of your 8:10 Biology class. Think about what they are teaching you besides biology, and try not to miss any of their lesson. A great teacher has thousands of chances to try to enliven students' lives; you have only one chance to accept that gift. And give them your own gift, too. At the end of the day, thank the ones who have made a difference. I owe so much to my one particular teacher; he changed my entire outlook on life and believed that I could get into a competitive university. He was so right - look where I am now, at Vanderbilt, in a community of learning and of the best teachers possible. So, thank them. I will always be glad I thanked him, before it was too late.

Dedicated to Dr. Seitz

Photo of the Month
by Sean Kelley

