

ORBITS

Amplifying Vanderbilt's Progressive Voice
Vol. 5/No.7/April/2006

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS?



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a note from the editor

March 20 marked the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, which means the occupancy is moving into its senior year. In the words of Jon Stewart, the situation reflects the typical senior slide, which is likely an accurate characterization. With talk of looming civil war, the Bush administration continues to propagate its fairytale version of the occupancy, with succinct sound bites of "stay the course" and "when they stand up we'll stand down." As we critically evaluate such statements from the White House, we should also take the time to critically evaluate other assumptions that seem settled. In this issue, we examine a contentious and little discussed question: Should we continue to support the troops? Two authors arrive at different conclusions, but whomever you decide to agree with, the process of introspection about such a delicate issue is important and enlightening.

We are also honored to have an essay by Dr. Lewis V. Baldwin on the evolution of religion in politics, from the civil rights movement to the Religious Right. Dr. Baldwin is a professor in the Religious Studies department and scholar of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As Dr. Baldwin explains, liberals should avoid the categorical rejection of religion in the political arena. If we do not, we will continue to allow the Religious Right to dictate their perverted brand of religion to the nation.

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Amplifying Vanderbilt's Progressive Voice

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

Thoughts written on napkins...

Embracing the exuberance of youth

By Dan Rosenberg
LE ORBISIER

For a lot of seniors, now is not the time to be thinking about the future. It is far too late in the game. The 29 students who are in the "I don't know what I'm doing after graduation" Facebook group can testify to the particular breed of anxiety that surrounds the realization that one has completely neglected to consider his or her academic future. It is, however, still too soon to consider ourselves adults by any stretch of the imagination. We are still young, very young in fact. We are persistently assailed by advice that we should consider our actions now as our adult selves would, and act accordingly. We must, to paraphrase, act in the same manner as would want our desired future selves. We should not ignore the moderation we will undoubtedly have in the future simply in order to

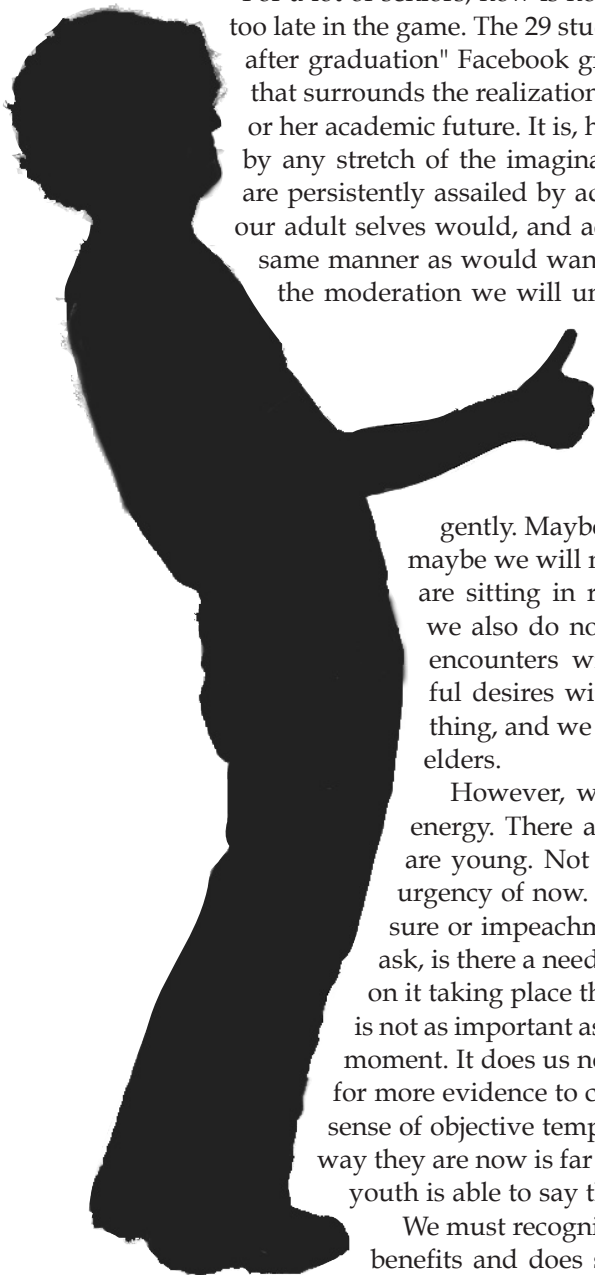
indulge according to our youthful and perhaps more radical beliefs. This is not only the message of our elders, but also, we are told, the message of the temperance of age that we will all come to experience.

In many cases, the moderation speaks intelligently. Maybe we will not want that tattoo when we are 45, and maybe we will not want one-inch wide holes in our ears when we are sitting in retirement homes in Boca Raton. More seriously, we also do not want to have promiscuous, unprotected sexual encounters with anonymous partners. Tempering our youthful desires with a dose of moderation is not necessarily a bad thing, and we should never reject outright the knowledge of our elders.

However, we must not discount the importance of youthful energy. There are some things we are only able to do when we are young. Not only that, there are some things that require the urgency of now. Some have called it imprudent to ask for the censure or impeachment of President Bush at this moment. Why, they ask, is there a need to do so now? What do we gain for our insistence on it taking place this moment? It is because the fact of us being right is not as important as us doing what we feel is imperatively right at this moment. It does us no good, ethical, or tangible to wait two more years for more evidence to come out showing Bush's failings and for a greater sense of objective temperance. One more day of circumstances being the way they are now is far too many, and often only the untempered voice of youth is able to say this.

We must recognize that while the cooled-down voice of age has its benefits and does speak from experience, our youthful voices have their own distinct advantages. Gradualism has its place; however it must not be such that it keeps us from doing what we know to be of paramount importance now. In speaking about the civil rights movement, another movement during which youth was advised to temper itself with the moderation concomitant with age, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of "...the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism." It is true that we may regret our exuberance, directness and insistence in the future. However, it is precisely because of that idea that we must act now, not in an indulgent sense, but because ethical truths do not reveal themselves in retrospect.

We may take false steps in our youthful enthusiasm; however, we must be sure to not take the fatal step into the unhurried mindset that age—and all those who possess it—would like us to.



eye on obama



In an inspiring display of his transcendent ability to work past partisan politics to fight for Americans' best interests, Barack Obama earlier this month teamed up with Sen. Richard Lugar (R - Ind.) to introduce a bill designed to move America toward energy independence. The bill, The American Fuels Act of 2006, would increase the production of cellulosic biomass ethanol and would provide a 35 cent tax credit for every gallon purchased of E85 fuel, an alternative fuel containing only 15 percent gasoline. Additionally, the bill would create the position of Director of Energy Security, whose roles would include overseeing the long-term goal of reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. The Director would serve as an adviser to the President, the National Security Council, the National Economic Council and the Homeland Security Council.

If history is any indication, President Bush will choose someone such as Exxon-Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson to fill the position of Director of Energy Security, setting up an epic confrontation between Obama and the President. With the battle lines so drawn, progressives will line up with Obama against Bush and Tillerson, who earlier this month called for an end to ethanol subsidies, and the war for America's very soul will eventually culminate with Obama rising up and proclaiming victory for the American people over Big Oil.

In other news, Obama will be meeting constituents for coffee and donuts on March 30 at 8:30 am in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. The public is welcome.

- By Michael Maio

U.S. Imperialism by the numbers:

- 135** the number of countries currently with U.S. military present
- 3-7 million** the number of U.S. inflicted civilian casualties worldwide
- 94** the number of foreign dictators monetarily supported by the U.S. government
- 49** the number of countries bombed by the U.S. since 1911
- 154** the number of regime changes attempted by the U.S. in foreign countries

News Briefs



The second coming kicks off in Italy

According to an item in *The Progressive*, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi remarked during his reelection campaign, "I am the Jesus Christ of politics. I am a patient victim, I put up with everyone, I sacrifice myself for everyone." So apparently Jesus must have been investigated on corruption charges, too.

Soldier charged \$650 for bloodied armor

William Rebrook, a veteran on the war in Iraq, was forced in February by the military to pay \$650 for his bloodied body armor, which was destroyed when he was wounded by a roadside bomb. The military eventually reimbursed Rebrook, but only after the error had been caught by a West Virginia newspaper. In a related story, President Bush announced his new idea for reducing the federal budget deficit.

Conservative values with extra cheese and pepperoni

Millionaire Domino's Pizza founder and devout Catholic Tom Monaghan is currently building a religious dream-town near Naples, Florida. His new town, Ave Marie, is intended to foster conservative values, a sense of close-knit community, and of course, violations of reproductive rights. As the owner of all the commercial land in Ave Marie, Monaghan has asked drugstores not to sell contraceptives. It will be the American dream: humid summers, unwanted pregnancies, and a Domino's on every corner.

Florida drops ball on education

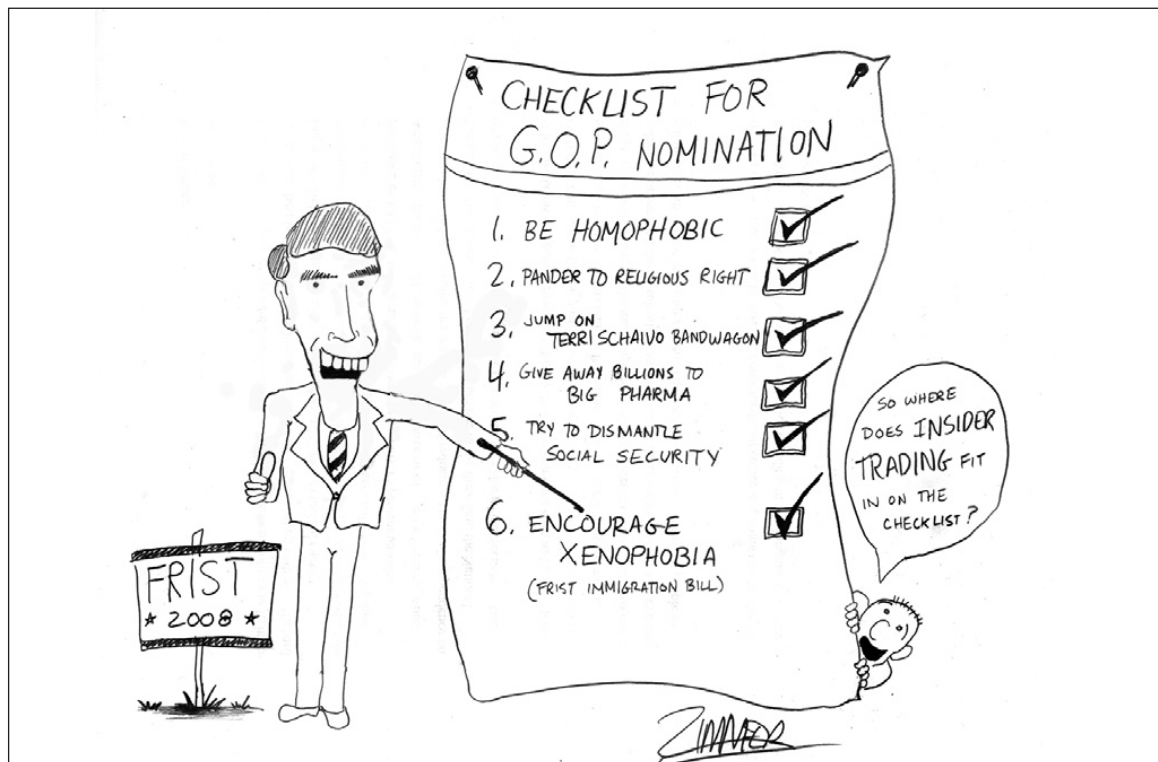
The Florida state House of Representatives passed a bill on March 23 that would force students to declare high school majors upon entering the ninth grade. The bill, which is intended to provide students with the option of tailoring their educations to their expected career paths, would require students to select a major from among subjects such as humanities, math, science, communications, and vocational skills. Florida still lags behind other states in preparing its students for the work force though. Public elementary schools in Maryland have started a successful program through which thousands of kindergartners have obtained permission to leave school three hours early each day to work at internships with companies such as HR Block.

News flash: U.S. bailed French out of WWII

Snubbing an invitation to meet with Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, French students from all over France assembled to protest the newly passed First Job Contract. The new law allows employers to fire workers under the age of 26 without explanation and could turn young workers into a replaceable commodity. When told of the development in France, a Vanderbilt economics major remarked, "Wow, the French care about work? I thought they just drank wine and smoked cigarettes. Maybe these students will need us to bail them out, just like we did in World War II."

"South Park" finally goes too far

The television cartoon show "South Park" returned for the premiere of its tenth season last week without Isaac Hayes, the voice of the popular character Chef. Hayes quit after the end of last season, evidently because he was offended by an episode mocking Scientology. Hayes, a Scientologist, said that the episode crossed a line. "South Park" can show the pope encouraging child molestation, Eric Cartman bashing Jews in virtually every episode, and thousands of other things too vile to mention here, and it's ok with Hayes. But caricaturing the cult of Scientology is off limits.



Cartoon by Tyler Zimmer/Orbis

Stand by your man

Gender politics in SGA

The annual SGA Presidential elections always give *The Vanderbilt Hustler* a lot of meat to sink its journalistic teeth into. Suddenly, in the middle of a bleak and rainy March, there are campaign-trail photo ops to capture, inane platform points to illuminate, budding political rhetoric to misquote. But lately, I'm getting more than my usual dose of irony from the pages of our campus paper. And it's not actually that funny.

As of this writing, the two tickets headed toward the final election look like they could be on a 1950s cover of *Better Homes and Gardens*: the clean-cut, upstanding white man in a suit and tie with the slim, sleek-haired white woman looking lovely at his side.

Of course, one could say that our present SGA, with Kate Morgan at the helm, is a veritable matriarchy. But let's not forget how Kate made her political ascension: she was the prettier, blonder half

of the Maxwell-Morgan ticket in spring 2004.

I've been at Vanderbilt for three years now, and Kate Morgan was the only female presidential candidate I ever had a chance to vote for. In hindsight, the 2005 Kate Morgan/Jamie Frazier victory was tantamount to a kind of gender revolution in SGA. This makes me feel a sense of sisterhood with Kate Morgan which, frankly, I'd not gotten in touch with before. The other five tickets of the past three years? Alex and Sarah, Andrew and Kate, David and Ashley, Boone and Cara, Bill and Brennan. Each of these tickets was reassuringly hetero: man on top.

So what is it about the female Vice President that's so much easier for our campus to swallow? Do the men just look better giving the thumbs-up? Recent photos appearing on the *Hustler* front page are particularly illuminating. One picture depicts Bill Weimar

and Brennan McMahon speaking at a meeting of the Inter-Fraternal Council: Bill gestures earnestly to his brethren while Brennan, looking about four feet tall, just looks up at him. (Oh, Brennan, it really is a man's world - especially at an IFC meeting.) Later, when the Weimar/McMahon and Lancaster/Bilotta tickets advanced to the general elections, the two couples look like they had just become engaged. *The Hustler* photos of each pair's victory embrace are decidedly traditional - because we all know who's wearing the pants.

I realize this all sounds a little bit, well, mean. But my purpose isn't to trash our SGA candidates. The issue is that patterns in our student government reflect broader trends in the media and our national political system, which promote gender roles in which women are the nurturers and comforters, not the leaders and decision-makers; the secretaries, not the CEO's. I'm deeply concerned that at Vanderbilt - where our famously gorgeous women

Turn to **SGA, Page 7**



Ellen McSweeney
STAFF WRITER

Prohibition kills

The side of effects of prohibition far outweigh the effects of the drugs themselves

In addition to flappers and unfettered capitalism, the 1920s evoke images of gangsters like Al Capone leading the Chicago underworld in a web of organized crime and violence. The rise of organized crime and gangs during that decade was inextricably linked to the Eighteenth Amendment, which banned intoxicating liquors and subsequently created an extremely lucrative black market, allowing criminals to build supply and distribution organizations to quench the unstoppable will to drink of much of the American public. Americans certainly did not stop drinking during those years; they just purchased alcohol underground or made it themselves. In fact, drinking, homicide and organized crime all increased during the Prohibition years and then dropped after its repeal. In the words of Mark Thornton of the Cato Institute (the libertarian think tank), "The only beneficiaries of Prohibition were bootleggers, crime bosses and the forces of big government."

Since the time of the Nixon administration, America has been plagued with another prohibition that has resulted in far worse consequences than the short-lived alcohol prohibition. The war on drugs has been a complete failure since its inception, and like an addicted gambler, we cannot stop throwing more money at it in hopes that our luck will change.

Writing about drug policy as a young bearded liberal is just asking for dismissal or rolled eyes, but my convictions are shared by a number of individuals who actually have credibility - street cred, if you will - in the world of policy making. They are members of an organization called Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), which is a coalition of some 3,500 former and current law enforcement officials, including police



Tim Bowles
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

officers, DEA agents, judges, mayors and former governors. Founded in 2003, they argue that the war on drugs has failed, noting that drugs are less expensive, more potent and more available than ever before. In speaking tours across the country, they try to engage citizens in a dialogue about the legalization, regulation and control of drugs, while addressing the litany of failures and side effects of current drug policy, which are far worse the effects of the drugs themselves.

Like alcohol prohibition, drug prohibition has spawned numerous criminal organizations and acts of violence, empowering a black market that funds gangs, civil wars and terrorist organizations.

It has not reduced the number of people taking drugs in any significant way. While drug use dropped to all time lows in the early 1990s, they began to steadily climb again later in the decade. For example, in a study by Monitoring the Future, the prevalence of use of any illicit drug by 12th-graders was 16.4 percent in 1991 and peaked at 26.2 percent in 1997, then lowered slightly to 23.1 percent in 2005. While these levels are somewhat lower than those of the 1960s when the surveys began, the decline cannot be attributed solely to prohibition, since extensive education campaigns have occurred over the same time.

According to estimates by the United Nations, illicit drug trafficking is a \$500 billion per year industry, amounting to about eight percent of the total international trade. One ounce of marijuana costs the same, or more, than an ounce of gold, and heroin is worth more ounce-for-ounce than uranium. And the plants from which the drugs are derived are essentially weeds. The enormous profits are funding criminal and terrorist activity across the world.

More than 1.6 million Americans are arrested annually for nonviolent drug violations, making the prison industry one of the fastest growing in the country, at a huge cost to taxpayers. The stench of racism persists in the enforcement of drug laws, with far greater proportions of African Americans convicted of drug crimes than whites. For example, 33 percent of convicted whites receive a prison sentence whereas 51 percent of convicted African Americans are sentenced to serve time. Many of those jailed for drug offenses are addicts, incarcerated for repeated usage under minimum sentencing statutes or the "three strikes" judicial guidelines. In this way, the addict is treated as solely a criminal, instead of a sick person, and their problem with drug addiction persists. Upon release, they are further stigmatized by society for their criminal record and if convicted of a felony, they lose their right to vote.

There is a common source to all these problems, and it is not the drugs themselves; rather, it is the prohibition of these drugs.

It is essential to note that drugs are dangerous and can be fatal, but prohibition exacerbates their lethality to society to such an extent that it dwarfs their inherent danger.

Would the Food and Drug Administration allow the distribution of a prescription drug that caused far worse side effects than the illness it was designed to treat, while it failed to treat the illness? Of course not. It seems nonsensical. But that is exactly what our drug policy is doing. Furthermore, would a physician continue a treatment that was clearly counterproductive? If so, then I would find a new doctor.

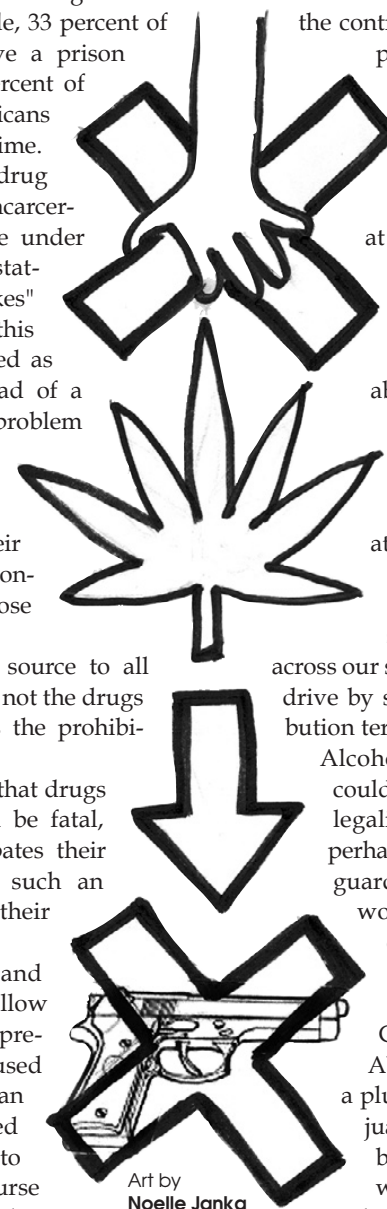
There is no doubt that drug use is a grave, potentially life-threatening problem. But prohibition expands the problem from an individual to an international level, causing disastrous side effects. The argument is not whether drugs are safe for people to use. Clearly, the majority are dangerous and

potentially life-threatening. The argument is about what is the best treatment for the problem with the most positive impact, and that is where our drug policy of prohibition fails.

But we do not have to continue fighting an unwinnable war on drugs, despite the absence of any real discourse to the contrary. An alternative treatment plan that has already shown clear success with tobacco is legalization, regulation and education. The three components must be intimately linked to be effective at curbing drug use without the terrible side effects of prohibition.

When a government prohibits a substance, it loses the ability to regulate and control that substance, and that is what legalization would restore. Legalization would eliminate the violence associated with the drug trade and redirect the profits away from nefarious sources. You don't see Corona being smuggled across our southern border. You don't see drive by shootings over tobacco distribution territory.

Alcohol and tobacco regulation could serve as a starting point for legalized drug regulation, with perhaps even more stringent safeguards for purchase. Regulation would not make drugs more obtainable than they currently are under prohibition. In a 2002 survey by the National Center on Addiction and Drug Abuse at Columbia University, a plurality of teenagers said marijuana was easier to obtain than beer or cigarettes. Regulation would also allow taxation of drugs and the control of their purity and potency. Many lethal drug overdoses are a result of the varying potency of illicit drugs, so tightly controlling this could actually result in less drug-related deaths than under the policy of prohibition. The same was true during alcohol prohibition. In 1925, deaths from poisoned liquor totaled 4,154 nationally, compared with 1,064 in 1920.



Art by
Noelle Janka

Vanderbilt Scientists sign letter to U.S. Senators to protect Endangered Species Act

United to defend the integrity of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 5,700 scientists from across the United States signed a letter expressing the importance of protecting biodiversity and the integral role of science and scientists in this endeavor. On March 8 it was hand-delivered to all U.S. Senators. Several Vanderbilt scientists signed the letter, including:

- Steven J. Baskauf, Ph.D.
Department of Biological Sciences
- Amanda Benson, Ph.D.
Department of Biological Sciences
- Kefyn M. Catley, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Teaching and Learning and Biology
- Carl H. Johnson, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Biological Sciences
- Wallace LeSturgeon, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Biological Sciences
- Randall S. Reiserer, Ph.D.
Research Fellow
Department of Pharmacology
- Stephanie M. Shorter-Jacobi, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Vanderbilt Vision Research Center
- Robley Williams, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
Department of Biological Sciences
- Mark A. Woelfle, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer
Department of Biological Sciences

The effort was organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) in response to legislation that passed the House of Representatives last August that would weaken the ESA significantly. According to the UCS, "the legislation transfers the authority of deciding what is the best available science from scientists to political appointees in the Department of Interior. Second, the legislation requires decisions affecting species to be based on empirical data—effectively eliminating the use of established scientific techniques such as modeling, population surveys, and taxonomic and genetic studies." For more information, please visit www.ucsusa.org.

Cutting off debate

SGA's Attorney General wrongly restricts campaign activities

By Michael Maio
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On Thursday night SGA Attorney General Gabe Hemphill sent an email to Ceaf Lewis, editor-in-chief of *The Slant*, expressing his desire to block a presidential debate co-sponsored by *The Slant* and *Orbis* from taking place.

In his email, Hemphill explained, "I do not think it is in the best interest of the candidates or of the Student Government Association to have a debate with such little preparation and publicity. Also, the standard is such that any official SGA debate has been moderated by the student publication providing the official coverage of the elections, which is *The Hustler*."

The debate, which was in the process of being planned, was to take place between Boone Lancaster and Bill Weimar in the Pub on Friday night. Individual students would have been able to submit and personally ask their own questions of the candidates.

Hemphill also emailed the two candidates to let them know he was opposed to the debate. Neither candidate had accepted the invitation to the debate before Hemphill contacted them.

As Attorney General, Hemphill has discretionary power in deciding what types of campaign activities are not allowed.

So, he didn't think there was enough publicity? Perhaps Hemphill was still intoxicated by the breathtakingly high turnout of 20 students at the first debate and did not want Round 2 to be a disappointment. (It is worth noting, too, that most of those in attendance at the first debate were SGA or Interhall insiders, or staffers of student publications.)

While he stopped short of specifically forbidding Lancaster and Weimar from participating in the debate, Hemphill sent the clear signal that he disapproved of the debate. If it had taken place, he could have brought charges of campaign violations.

Hemphill's actions as Attorney General are subject to oversight by the elections commission, which is composed of unelected student members. But because his email was simply a thinly veiled threat and did not constitute formal action, the elections commission can-

not review it.

Hemphill's opposition to the debate raises questions about SGA's powers in regulating campaign activities. If candidates are free to plan other speaking engagements, then why are they not free to choose whether or not to participate in an unofficial debate? After all, it would have been absurd if John Ashcroft had told George W. Bush and John Kerry that they were not allowed to debate each other back in 2004.

Also, nowhere in the SGA Constitution or Statutes does it state that the Attorney General's duties include looking out for the candidates' "best interests." One supposes it wouldn't have been in Weimar's electoral interests to get a dyed blue mohawk on the day before the election. Would Hemphill have tried to stop Weimar if he had wanted to adopt the new hairstyle?

And just what did Hemphill mean when he said that *The Hustler* provides the "official coverage" of the SGA elections? This is democracy, not the Olympics. Is SGA trying to make *The Hustler* into its *Pravda*, the Communist newspaper of the old Soviet Union?

Certainly, *The Hustler* is the only publication on campus that has to pretend to be objective and possesses the resources to provide up-to-date coverage of SGA elections, but that should not entitle Hemphill to actively block other publications from having a role in the campaign process.

It is a fundamental problem for any democratic system when only one news source mediates the flow of information from the government to its constituents. *The Hustler*, for example, does not and probably cannot cover every relevant action that SGA takes; it does not even have a beat reporter covering SGA meetings.

Furthermore, the paper's habit of allowing important figures in SGA into the office during production calls into question its commitment to providing objective reporting. For instance, Bill Weimar was seen hanging out in the office watching a basketball game with *Hustler* staffers on March 26. While it is unclear what the nature of his visit was or if he dropped by without invitation, allowing the subjects of supposedly critical reporting to be present during the production process is a questionable

journalistic practice at best.

The point is not necessarily that *The Hustler* does a poor job of covering SGA, but rather that its coverage, like that of any other publication, should be balanced by as many other sources of information as possible. Having multiple presidential debates moderated by different organizations would be just one way to accomplish this goal.

Even though it is inevitable that *The Hustler* will provide most of the SGA coverage on campus, SGA does a disservice to students by proactively reinforcing the paper's primacy.

The full text of Hemphill's email is posted below. Hemphill did not respond to requests for comment.

Ceaf:

It has come to my attention that The Slant wishes to organize a debate between our remaining Presidential candidates. As the Attorney General, it is my responsibility to lay out the timeline for the elections process which is something we did back at the beginning of this semester. As The Hustler is providing the official coverage of the SGA elections, they were the hosts of the official Presidential/Vice-Presidential debate. Also, Wednesday night's debate was planned for quite some time. Therefore, in response to The Slant's desire to host a debate, I do not think it is in the best interest of the candidates or of the Student Government Association to have a debate with such little preparation and publicity. Also, the standard is such that any official SGA debate has been moderated by the student publication providing the official coverage of the elections, which is The Hustler. As the appointed and Senate confirmed officer in charge of the SGA elections, I am not in favor of another debate taking place, and I have advised both Presidential/Vice Presidential candidates not to participate in the aforementioned debate. However, the editorial staff of The Slant is more than welcome to invite both candidates to speak at your next meeting as many student organizations have done.

Thank you for your time, and please let me know if there are any questions you may have regarding this issue.

Regards,

Gabriel C. Hemphill
Attorney General

Communities suffer from Bush Americorps Cuts

By W. Casey Perry
STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 6, President Bush released his proposed budget for the 2007 fiscal year. A particularly disturbing budget-cut that President Bush has set forth is a reduction of support for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Specifically, one of the most troubling omissions is \$22 million to fund the Americorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

Created in 1993 during the Clinton administration as a kind of domestic version of the Peace Corps, Americorps is network of over 2,100 non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations and public agencies. Americorps consists of three programs of which the National Civilian Community Corps is one. The NCCC is a national service initiative that each year employs over 1,100 individuals, aged 18-24, in a ten-month, team-based service program. Objectives of the program include improving the environment, working to improve education, securing public safety, making available affordable housing, strengthening homeland security and working with disaster relief efforts. Participants in the program receive a small living stipend of \$80 per week, along with government-provided housing, meals, medical insurance and uniforms. Completion of the program qualifies a participant for a \$4,725 educational award that may be used to pay off student loans or for future studies. Currently, about half of the NCCC volunteers are deployed in recovery efforts in Mississippi and Louisiana, cleaning up after the tragedies of Katrina.

Ironically, Bush initially supported the Americorps in 2001 as part of his "compassionate conservative" agenda, but he now seeks to eliminate this vital program...

Ironically, Bush initially supported the Americorps in 2001 as part of his "compassionate conservative" agenda, but he now seeks to eliminate this vital program, his administration having judged it "ineffective." The budget cut



GETTING THINGS DONE

will reduce the program's budget from \$27 million to \$5 million, a sum intended to cover the costs of shutting down the five Americorps NCCC campuses that house participants. This action is in complete contradiction to the president's 2002 State of the Union Address in which he issued a national "call to action," challenging each American to devote 4,000 hours of service to his or her community. In a time when Bush's lack of leadership following Hurricane Katrina has drawn

stinging criticism, the president is seeking to destroy a program that was the base for many of the first responders to the disaster.

It is hard to understand the reasoning of a president who purports to be dedicated to homeland security but wants to eliminate a program in which 100 percent of the participants are trained in CPR, first aid and disaster relief. It's hard to understand why he would eliminate a program through which over 250,000 hours of service have been completed in the Gulf Coast cleaning up after Katrina. Yet again, Bush is demonstrating his ability to run the country into the ground. Luckily, the budget proposals must still go through many deliberations on the floor of Congress.

Perhaps our representatives and senators will display more reason and sense than our president.

SGA Continued from Page Four

are often doomed to be decorative—the gender politics of SGA just aren't as open to female presidential candidates as they are to male candidates.

It's not that the vice presidency doesn't require significant intelligence, experience, leadership and hard work. It's not that all these male presidential candidates for the past three years have been unqualified pigs (especially not David Darwin). But I'll tell you this: there's a trend, and it's no coincidence.

Why have so few women become candidates for the presidency while so many have made apparently wonderful candidates for a kind of political assistant? In order to climb the ladder of leadership and power, must Vanderbilt women still engage themselves in unequal partnerships with men? No matter how much time goes by, it seems we'd still rather see a woman standing by her man than a woman standing by herself.

Prohibition Continued from Page Five

An effective and large-scale education campaign—that means not DARE—would have to accompany legalization. And such a program has worked. In 1965, 41.9 percent of adults smoked cigarettes, but after concerted education campaigns over the next few decades, the number had fallen to 24 percent by 1998. Funds earned from taxation and saved from ending prohibition could fund both education campaigns and treatment programs.

There are, of course, numerous details that would have to be considered before such a plan could ever be implemented, but the first

step is simply acknowledging that drug prohibition kills many more people than it saves, and at a substantial monetary cost. Then we can start to talk about other treatments until discussion of legalization is not dismissed as impossible or the extremist opinion of naïve hippies.

For more information on this topic, please visit the following Web sites:

www.monitoringthefuture.org

www.leap.org

www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-157.html

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IF INTERESTED

Three years after the invasion of Iraq began, should we continue to...

Support the troops?

Bumper stickers and t-shirt slogans often remind us to support the troops. But what does that really mean? Is it contradictory to simultaneously support the troops and oppose the war in Iraq on moral grounds? This issue of *Orbis* gives space for two differing views on the topic. The point of having the debate is not to offend or to provide "aid and comfort" to terrorists, but rather to examine an important idea that is mostly accepted unthinkingly: that as Americans we must support our troops in an absolute sense.



Soldiers complicit in the moral error of war in Iraq

By Dan Rosenberg
Staff Writer

From an early age we are taught that as intelligent people, we must know the meaning of the things we say, and not just say whatever comes to mind. To just "say something" is to be thoughtless. We as a society place a great importance on not only knowing what we are talking about, but also intellectual independence. We do not respect people who follow the ideas of others blindly.

For this reason it is very odd that we believe without question certain ideas are true. Among these notions is the mantra that we must support the troops. We see on billboards, bumper stickers and TV commercials the omnipresent message that "Support the Troops" is to be a good American, and the implication is that if we do not follow this lockstep message, then we are against freedom and no better than the enemy. What, though, does it mean to support the troops? What are the implications if we do not support them? These are the questions we should be asking.

It seems that to support the troops means to do many things. First, one must agree with their actions, motives, and presence in Iraq on at least a complicit level. Second, we must agree to view them as not only heroic for their actions but also as doing something "for" us. They fight so that we do not have to. Therefore, in supporting the troops, we implicitly support the war in Iraq, the notion of 'pre-emptive' conflict and the idea that we have to be in Iraq to protect our country. The concept that the troops are heroic is also tied into the conclusion that the troops

Culpability for Iraq chaos falls on administration

By Kelson Bohnet
Staff Writer

Three short years ago, we sat in front of our televisions, riveted as "shock and awe" flashed hypnotically before our eyes. After months of saber rattling and final ultimatums, Iraq had become the latest battlefield in America's misguided and mismanaged War on Terror.

At the age of sixteen, there were so many things that were simply beyond my ability to comprehend. I understood precious little of the intricacies of geopolitical power and was only dimly aware of the larger forces at work on that fateful March evening. While it's certainly true that I may not have fully understood the deeper injustices of the conflict playing out before my eyes, there was one acute understanding that weighed heavily upon me: this was war, and American citizens barely older than me were marching to their death.

Three years and 2,316 deaths later, little has changed the dark revelation I came by that night. Yes, I am now impressionable nineteen-year-old rather than an impressionable sixteen-year-old. I understand a great deal more about the War in Iraq, and why its far-reaching effects may ultimately make it the issue of our time. Yet nothing has changed my realization of the fact that many of my fellow countrymen were sent to die that night, and that they are still dying for an unclear cause on distant soil.

Yet despite my abhorrence of the war in Iraq, I am an unabashed supporter of our troops in this conflict. One of the main reasons for my support deals with the horrors of war that have been unleashed upon our military personnel in Iraq. Among those who would argue against supporting our troops in this conflict,

Soldiers complicit

Continued from Page 8

and their commanders are infallible. That is to say, if the troops are heroes no matter what actions they take, then their actions are necessarily correct, and thus those who command them are constantly in the right. If one supports the troops, one also supports a plethora of other aspects of the administration. To support the troops is not just to support the troops, but also to support the administration by proxy.

Beyond the immediate implications of what supporting the troops entails, there is the question of whether or not the troops themselves are in fact a morally supportable group. How can one actively support troops who are fighting in a war that was immorally initiated on a false pretext? Furthermore, how can someone make a blanket statement about the praiseworthiness of American soldiers when there is undeniable proof that many of our troops are engaging in immoral and reprehensible actions not only in Iraqi cities, but in prisons and bases as well? If the imperative of "support the troops" applies to all troops, then to do so we must support the Abu Ghraib tortures and the use of white phosphorous in Fallujah. While this certainly may not be the underlying sentiment of those who wish us to give our support to the troops, it is what they are literally asking. We must be wary of the implications of our support, for as long as war crimes

such as the abuses in Abu Ghraib occur, our support of the troops is the support of these atrocities.

In examining the supportability of the troops, we must make one clear distinction, each with its own unique consequences. If we are to call the war immoral (which many of us do), we must decide whether the war was immoral from the beginning or if it has become immoral only after it became clear that our country was led to war on the false premise that Iraq possessed WMD. If the war has been immoral from the beginning, then any person who would willingly join the military after the outset of war willingly acts immorally and thus insupportably. We do not feel sympathy for Faust when he loses his soul to the Devil. However, saying that soldiers went to war knowing that Iraq did not pose a threat to us is a contentious claim and hard to reconcile with the idea that we were led to war falsely. If we were so falsely led, then so too were the soldiers. This begs the question of whether or not we

can blame soldiers for entering into an unjust war if they believed that it was not only just but also necessary for our national security.

We certainly can. Ignorance does not imply the absence of responsibility. We cannot in good conscience state that because they did not know the potential ramifications of their actions, they are free from guilt. If we do this we not only excuse the knowing immorality of some soldiers, but rob from all of them their agency in making this choice, and all the choices that they make "over there." If they are to undertake the oaths of service, they are taking the oaths lightly if they do not assess the likely and unlikely possibilities of the pledge. Many say that the soldiers are honorable for being willing to die for America whenever it is asked of them, but given America's record of war crimes in Iraq, this would mean that the soldiers are honorable for carrying

out atrocities at the request of the government. The notion

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Culpability falls on administration

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it is this element of war and death that seems most conspicuously absent from their analysis. This is not to say that those of such an opinion are ignorant of or even callous towards the mounting death toll in Iraq, but rather that they often misunderstand the dynamic of war itself.

As shown in Peter Davis' 1974 documentary "Hearts and Minds," soldiers in Vietnam rarely identified with the United States' larger mission in Southeast Asia. Soldiers wading through rice paddies and firing blindly into the brush were largely unconcerned with the "domino theory" and winning the day for capitalism and democracy. Rather, they simply moved and fired because their enemies were doing the same, and inaction or indifference meant their ultimate demise.

Though the soldiers in Vietnam were drafted, unlike those in the military today, the chaos of battle does not discriminate between volunteerism and conscription. How many soldiers engaging in firefights with insurgents in Iraq are truly conscious of and worried about the larger mission of the War on Terror? Soldiers in Iraq are going about their duty in large part because they simply understand that any other course of action could make them the victim of an ambush or well-placed car bomb.

Many would make the argument that

these soldiers might be complicit in continuing a conflict that we now know was without justification, but how important are missing weapons of mass destruction and fabricated connections with al-Qaeda when survival for our soldiers depends on fighting off insurgents bent on bringing about their deaths? There

may come a day when war becomes so austere and mechanized that such complex thought finds a place on the battlefield. But so long as the primal heat of battle remains, the thoughts of a soldier will remain (and rightly so) solely in the realm of survival.

This entire line of reasoning exhibits a larger fact which so many critics of supporting the troops often fail to grasp as well: not only are soldiers not likely to be personally invested in a conflict's immediate aims, but it is also very possible that they are not fully invested in the larger concept of war, or even the military itself.

For so many of our soldiers, the military first and foremost represents an occu-

pation and source of income. So how fair is it that we demand our individual soldiers to lay down their arms and abandon the campaign in Iraq? Those who claim not to support our troops seem to ultimately be advocating this particular outcome, citing the moral culpability of soldiers willingly participating in an unjustified conflict.

It was the Bush administration that was responsible for the misrepresentations and fabrications regarding our case for war, and it is they, not our troops, who we should not support.

Yet when considering the role of a soldier in an occupational sense, we see quickly that this claim fails to address the conflicting interests in a soldier's life. Should our men and women in Iraq abandon their posts and forget the well being of their families at home? No one can say with certainty that any particular ethical concerns take precedence over others, and thus assertions of moral culpability on the part of individual soldiers are both irresponsible and unfair.

We also have to consider the larger implications of asking our troops to be the ultimate moral arbiters of the conflicts they participate in. Saying that we do not support the troops and by implica-

tion urging them to abandon conflicts we deem immoral may be an enticing avenue (especially in Iraq), but what kind of precedent does this set for our armed forces?

Unless humanity finally wises up and forsakes war altogether, there will likely come a day when we need an efficient and fluid military response to a crisis at home or abroad. If we as a society give soldiers the impression that it is acceptable to simply act how and when they want due to their current "moral" disposition, we run the risk of not being able to field a cohesive and unified fighting force when the presence of one becomes necessary.

As with most of my fellow liberals, I am a strong advocate of non-violent conflict resolution. But I am also a firm believer that, if America is to keep an active military, it must be a strong and cohesive unit fully ready to protect the best interests of American citizens. If we give soldiers the leeway to fall into what could ultimately amount to mutiny, that vision of a strong and capable military falls far beyond achievement.

If we are thus making soldiers devoid of choice and judgment in matters of war, then logically there must be some force making the decisions that determine the overall dynamic of war and conflict in Iraq. This force is none other than the

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BRING THE

TROOPS

HOME

N  W!

no FLAG

is BIG enough

to cover the bodies of

the INNOCENT

Iraq Body Count:

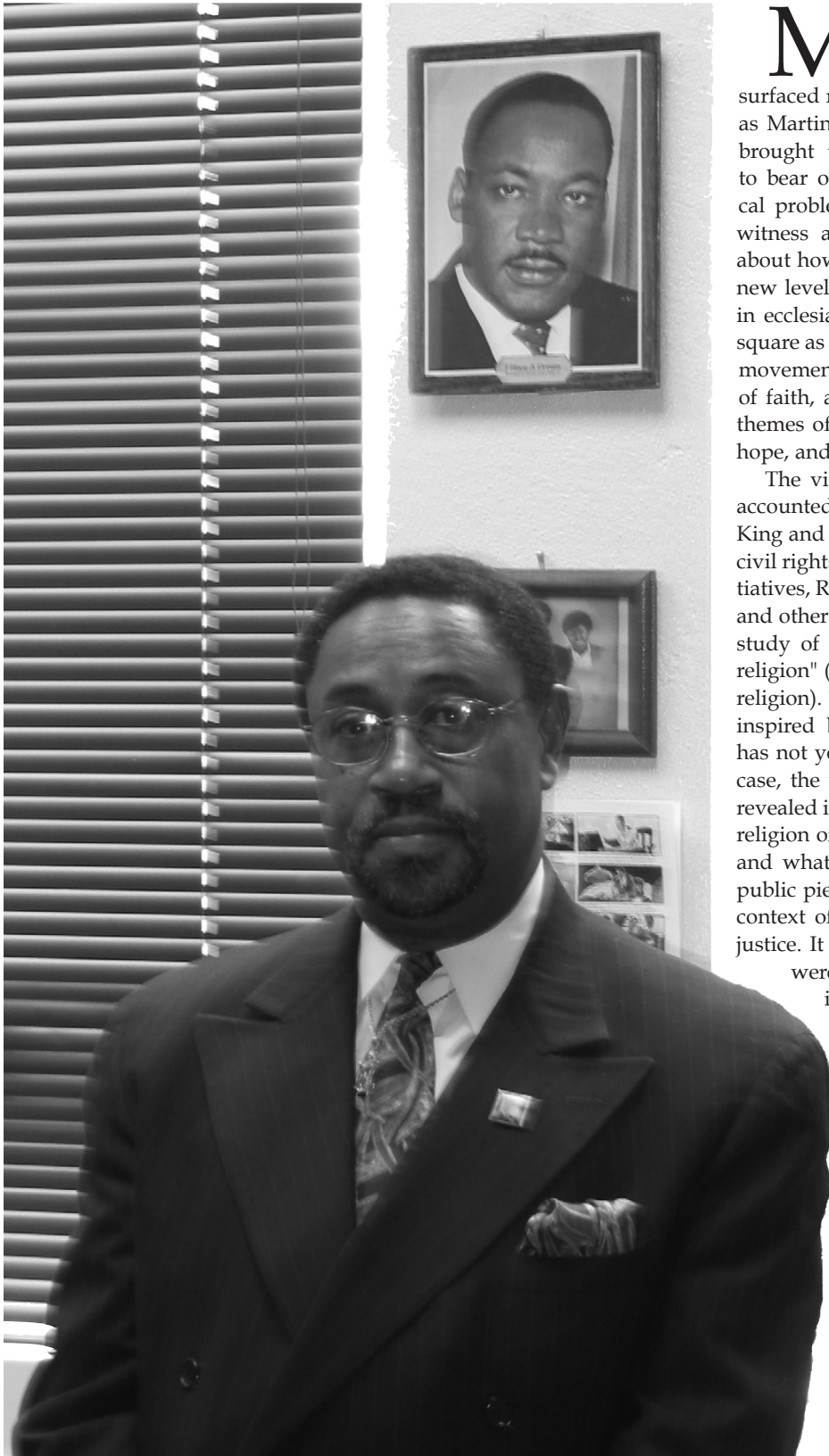
37,895

The Perversion of Public Religion

Religious studies professor Lewis V. Baldwin explores the evolution of religion in politics, from MLK, Jr. to the Religious Right

By Lewis V. Baldwin, Ph.D

GUEST WRITER



Much has been said and written over the last half century about the role of religion in the public domain. The issue surfaced repeatedly in the late 1950s and the 1960s, as Martin Luther King, Jr. and other liberal clergy brought the resources of the Christian tradition to bear on issues of public policy and the practical problems of daily life. King's prophetic social witness and activism advanced the conversation about how religion should function in public life to new levels of sophistication and intensity, not only in ecclesial and academic circles, but in the public square as well. Moreover, the church-centered social movement King led encouraged public expressions of faith, and also reintroduced, in powerful ways, themes of freedom, sacrifice, redemptive suffering, hope, and deliverance into the nation's public faith.

The vitality of religion in public life should be accounted as a fundamental aspect of the legacy of King and the civil rights movement. In the 1960s, as civil rights activism translated into public policy initiatives, Robert N. Bellah, Peter Berger, Sidney Mead and other scholars made significant advances in the study of that phenomenon called "American civil religion" (also known as public, political, or societal religion). The extent to which their scholarship was inspired by King and the civil rights movement has not yet been sufficiently acknowledged. In any case, the work of Bellah, Berger, Mead and others revealed important points of continuity between the religion of institutionalized, ecclesiastical structures and what might be termed politicized religion or public piety, both of which found expression in the context of the struggle for equal rights and social justice. It was in this context that many Americans were compelled to revisit the question: "What is the relationship of the church and religion to society?"

Perhaps more than any other social movement in modern times, the civil rights crusade reflected the divide between those Americans who embrace public religion and those who believe that religion is a private indulgence that should never invade public space. This divide was prominently revealed in the 1950s and 1960s in the conflict between King and fundamentalist leaders in the white church. Clearly, King supremely symbolized and epitomized an alliance between radical public piety, morality and politics that respected church-state boundaries and that permeated virtually

every aspect of American life. Also, the civil rights leader consistently critiqued those Christians who avoided political struggle or who insisted that personal piety and an apolitical posture are more consistent with the biblical faith.

On the other side of the spectrum, there were fundamentalist pastors like Bob Jones, Jr. and Sr., Wallie A. Criswell and Jerry Falwell, all of whom rejected categorically King's understanding of public religion or radical public piety. Convinced that religion is a private matter rooted in a concern for individual or personal salvation, they insisted that the proper role of the church and its leadership is to preach the gospel and convert the unsaved, not to get tangled up in transitory social, political, and economic problems. When it came to the question of the role of religion in public life, then, the debate, as it unfolded in 50s and 60s, was largely between theological liberals like King and biblical fundamentalists like the Joneses, Criswell and Falwell.

King and the civil rights movement's legacy of Christian social activism forced many white Christian conservatives, who became associated in the 1970s and 1980s with the Religious Right, to confront their own spiritual and moral impotence when it came to the issue of religion's place in the public arena. Religious Right figures such as Falwell and Pat Robertson, who opposed the civil rights movement, became increasingly mindful of the absurdity of divorcing religion from public life and of establishing too much of a sharp dichotomy between the mission of the church from the affairs of the state. With the founding of his Moral Majority, Inc. in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1979, Falwell openly denounced his previous pronouncements about the false prophecy of King's social gospel and of public or politicized religion, while declaring that Christians could not possibly address the evils of this world by isolating themselves from them.

Politically oriented preachers like Pat Robertson, James Robison and others echoed these sentiments, and numerous political-religious coalitions (i.e., Religious Roundtable, Christian Voice, "700 Club" etc.) and programs of the so-called "electronic church" emerged, all with the goal of reforming America morally by influencing political elections and shaping the national agenda on a range of domestic (i.e., school prayer, abortion, pornography, gay and women's rights, etc.) and foreign policy issues (i.e., war, nuclear weapons, pro-Israeli politics, etc.). The irony here cannot be overstated, especially considering the animosity that had previously existed between the white fundamentalist churches

and the civil rights movement.

The 1970s and 1980s have been labeled the age of the public resurgence of the Christian or Religious Right. Fundamentalist and evangelical churches grew substantially, and so did the colleges and seminaries they supported. Televangelism, mega churches and the electronic church flourished, and books by conservative Christian authors rated high on best seller lists. Jimmy Carter, a Christian conservative, was elected the nation's president in 1976, and, by the 1980s, an alliance had been formed between the

Religious Right and the Political Right. All of this would have far-reaching consequences regarding the role of religious convictions in politics or public service. The debate over public versus private religion was rekindled, as Americans reconsidered the meaning of faith in light of the multitude of problems and challenges of the times.

With the aforementioned developments, many of which extended through the 1990s up to the present, the sense of the proper role of religion in the public sphere was also transformed, becoming something other than what it was with King and the civil rights crusade. Although Falwell, Randall Terry, and other representatives of the Religious Right quoted Dr. King while raising the possibility of Christian acts of nonviolence and civil disobedience to promote their agenda for the moral reformation of America, they, unlike King and the civil rights struggle, have consistently ignored racism and

sexism while opposing affirmative action and federal expenditures for addressing poverty among the deprived and disadvantaged. Also, they, with some notable exceptions, support big military budgets and elitist monopolies while also sanctioning weak civil rights enforcement and cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and aid to poor children. In these and other cases, religion is clearly put to the service of disempowering instead of empowering people. It is even more difficult to avoid such a conclusion after witnessing the poverty and neglect so pain-

fully exposed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a tragedy about which most major Religious Right leaders have had so little to say.

The manner in which many in the Religious Right fuse piety and patriotism and God and country in contemporary America also suggests some conflict with the perspective of King and other liberal black and white clergy, who worked with both the civil rights and anti-war movements in the 1960s. King and his clergy associates in the movement often declared that the United States is not God or some messianic force in the world, and that obedience to God and a higher morality must always take precedence over even the most heartfelt loyalty to humanly contrived political and governmental structures and institutions. King himself, whose opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War put him on a collision course with the highest levels of government, frequently declared, in sermons and civil-religious speeches, that the Christian is often justified to resist the state in the interest of justice and the common good.

This is not what we have heard from the Christian or Religious Right in more recent times, especially when it comes to matters of foreign policy and the United States' involvements in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the minds of so many Christian conservatives, being "Christian" is too frequently equated with flag-waving and uncritical and unwavering support for the policies of government. Dissent and protest, which are clearly guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, are too often viewed as "un-American" and a lack of strong devotion to the faith. Apparently, the prophetic dimension that King brought to public expressions of faith is missing in the rhetoric of both whites and African Americans who identify with the values, agenda, and mission priorities of the Religious Right. To be truly prophetic is to be critical of the conventions of authority, especially when that authority is misdirected and exercised in ways that are inconsistent with the moral law of God.

Questions about the proper relationship of the Christian to the state are at the core of the current discussions and debate over the role of faith in public life. This should not be surprising in a country that claims values and traditions that are deeply grounded in the principle of the separation of church and state. But there is no consensus of opinion about what this principle means. Many feel that it establishes the completely separate spheres of religion and the state, while others hold that this was not the intention of the founding fathers of the nation.

Even so, there has been much talk in recent years about tying the way people worship and the way they vote. There are also a range of opinions about keeping the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, about allowing prayer and studying the Bible in public schools, and about the need to display religious symbols in public buildings. These issues have taken the debate over the role of religion in public life to perhaps an unprecedented level, suggesting yet another point of difference between what is occurring today and what transpired in the conflict between King and Christian conservatives

in the 1950s and 1960s. Especially noteworthy are the recent efforts of the American Center for Law and Justice, and especially of Religious and Political Right figures like the former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, to endorse such policies as the public display of the Ten Commandments in government buildings. The debate over this and other issues has clearly highlighted the variety of opinions regarding how the separation of church and state principle should be interpreted, and it has also established the lines between those who feel that religion has a place in the public domain and those who reduce it to the realm of the private.

This debate about how Christians might properly relate to the state or government actually began on a much more serious note during the presidential campaign of 2000, as the Christian Right marshaled its forces and devoted its resources in support of George W. Bush. That debate has continued and even escalated over the last six years, largely because of sharp differences over the Bush administration's faith-based policy agenda. Determined to stimulate and encourage more of an outpouring of private philanthropy, the administration has engaged in a sustained effort to eliminate government barriers to much-needed and effective faith-based action in the society. Steps have been taken to establish an Office of Faith-Based Action in the White House; to encourage faith-based solutions and to monitor efforts at reform; to create and provide federal matching funds for state offices of faith-based activities; and to expand "charitable choices" so faith-based charities can compete for government funding without compromising their distinctiveness as religious entities.

But there are lingering questions about the impact that these initiatives will have on faith-based institutions and the role of religion in the public square: will they make the churches and other religious communities more effective and productive in public affairs and in addressing matters of public policy (i.e., health care, welfare reform, affirmative action, homelessness, education, women's and gay rights, etc.)? What impact will they have on black churches and their capacity to sustain the type of prophetic voice and posture that was so evident during the King years? What effects will they have on the capacity of other ethnic and racial communities to fulfill their prophetic roles? And, more importantly for many, do they constitute a transgression of church-state boundaries?

The faith-based policy agenda of the Bush administration has been fully embraced by the Christian or Religious Right, which view it as an effort to mobilize communities of compassion (i.e., churches, ministers, charities, corporations, etc.) to save and change the lives of foster children, to strengthen the parenting skills of young single mothers, and to assist others who stand in need of empowerment. These mission priorities are noble and much-needed in a society where too many are victimized by vicious cycles of poverty and neglect. But this should not make us oblivious to the problems that usually result when the activities of government and religious institutions are too closely aligned in

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In the minds of so many Christian conservatives, being "Christian" is too frequently equated with **flag-waving and uncritical and unwavering support** for the policies of government ... Apparently, the **prophetic dimension** that King brought to public expressions of faith is **missing in the rhetoric** of both whites and African Americans who identify with the values, agenda, and mission priorities of the **Religious Right**.

Cooking your way into her heart

A Grins manager shares some scrumptious recipes and strategies to win over your date.

By Andy McFayden-Ketchum
GUEST WRITER

So you've got your eye on some cute progressive babe, eh? But you're down on your luck. You've got the Volvo hatchback. Your mother is a progressive in Congress. Al Gore's home phone is on your cell. And you've even got a pair of Birkenstocks somewhere in your closet in case of emergencies. You've done your homework. Needless to say, you've got all the right stuff. Right?

Well, maybe not so right. Unfortunately for you, you're just like the twelve other progressive guys at Vanderbilt, and while it's certain there is something special about you, let's face it, you don't have the ultimate solution for global warming, and you simply can't beat that kid with his own helicopter, even if your Volvo runs on bio-diesel.

So, you've got to do something drastic. Cook!

Yes, believe it or not, while many men claim the fastest way to a woman's heart is through the ribcage, forward thinking guys like myself have learned that the stomach is an efficient passageway, as well.

Vandy women are like all women; they believe they want a guy who will listen to them. A guy who will protect them. And, most of all, a guy who knows a little foreplay. Once again, your mother turned Congresswoman isn't gonna get the typical Vandy girl's heart pumping and your Volvo isn't exactly the prince of cunnilingus. *But*, the very simple culinary skills that any idiot like yourself can acquire will light fire in any young lady's tiny little heart.

Now, before we begin with a few key tips and a menu for love, you'll need a cooking/dining location. Remember, the idea here is not to impress but to romance. So I am a big believer in cooking and eating in the same location. Ergo, your first step is to find a kitchen.

The next most important step is to acquire a few vital pieces of equipment. The following list has been compiled with your menu in consideration but are must haves for any future culinary exploration. All of the following items can be purchased at the Harding Road Kroger: One large and one small non-stick sauté pan, one sauce pan with lid, one fourinch glass baking dish, one cutting board of reasonable size, one chef knife, one large whisk, and one rubber spatula. You may want to make a little jaunt down White Bridge Pike to Target to purchase a Chefmate Chef knife. This is a great knife and costs about fifteen dollars.

While you are at it, give Mr. Whiskers across the street

from Target a visit. Buy yourself two bottles of Cabernet Sauvignon and two bottles of Pinot Grigio. And don't you dare spend more than seven bucks per bottle; neither of you will know the difference, and if she's a white girl or a red girl, then your bases are covered. If you are too young to buy a bottle yourself, ask a favor of an older friend. If you live in the dorms, please don't reference me if you get busted. Moving on.

The final and surprisingly least important step is to come up with your evening's menu. There are all sorts of ways of going about this and there can be all sorts of problems: you may have a closet vegetarian for the evening, she may be lactose intolerant, or she may just absolutely hate an ingredient you've chosen to work with. Not to worry, the simple solution to this

problem is to create four independently delicious plates, all of which can either be altered to fit her dietary needs or can simply go uneaten. There's nothing more sexy than a progressive man

willing to adapt his tastes.

Believe it or not, if you google "Romantic Dinner Menu," you'll get some pretty good results. But, just for your sake, the following is a deceivingly simple four-course dinner menu:

- Baked brie with fresh crustinis
- A salad of fresh greens, braeburn apples, gorgonzola, and zesty balsamic vinaigrette
- Penne pasta tossed with fresh spinach, sautéed cauliflower, capers, and smoked salmon and, finally...
- Bananas Fosters.

When you go to Kroger to buy your cooking utensils, buy one medium white onion, one head cauliflower, two braeburn apples, a small bottle of olive oil and balsamic vinegar, two handfuls of fresh mixed greens, one handful of spinach, two bananas, a small bottle of minced garlic, one small bottle of lime juice, one small container of grated parmesan cheese, one small package gorgonzola cheese, one wheel of filo dough wrapped brie cheese, a small bag of brown sugar, one package penne pasta, one very small container of capers, a small package of smoked salmon, one loaf of ready to bake French bread, one stick butter, one small container of vanilla ice cream, and finally, salt and pepper.

Don't be intimidated by all these ingredients. Remember, you are starting from scratch here, but you'll see that most of these ingredients take care of themselves with little work on your end.

Now, a key ingredient to any successful adventure in cooking is preparation. Now that you have all your ingredients and a cooking/dining location, go ahead and set the table for two. On the counter next to the stove, set out two wine glasses; before the young lady arrives, pour a glass of both red and white wine.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and lay out all your

ingredients. When your date arrives, escort her to the kitchen and ask her if she would prefer the red or white wine, presenting the bottles to her like the skilled sommelier you are. Take the leftover glass for yourself, put on some quiet music and start cooking. She should feel comfortable standing at the counter near you so that she can watch you cook.

Place the filo wrapped brie in the center of the glass baking dish. Throw this and the loaf of bread in the center of the middle rack. The brie should take about fifteen minutes or whatever the packaging says, and the bread about seven and a half minutes. In the meantime, slice one of your braeburn apples into very thin, crescent shaped slices. Once the bread is a light brown color, take it out of the oven and slice it into ¼ to ½ inch thick slices. This might result in a bit of a mess but is worth it. By this time, the brie should be done. Pull it out of the oven and lay the slices of bread and apple around the brie.

As you munch on this delectable appetizer at the kitchen counter, fill your wine glasses. Very thinly slice your other braeburn apple laterally without removing the core so that you have large cross sections. Arrange two plates of mixed greens, three or four slices of apple and top that off with a pinch or two of gorgonzola. Set aside.

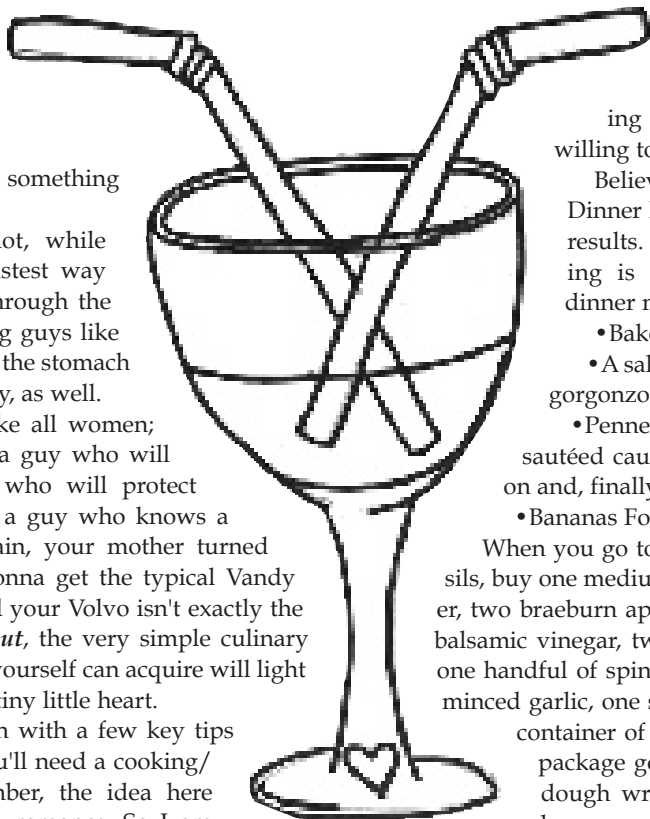
Dice half of your white onion and put about ¼ cup of olive oil in the large sauté pan over medium heat. Once the oil steams ever so slightly, drop your onions into the oil. They should immediately start sizzling. Add about a tablespoon of garlic to this and sauté until garlic just starts to turn a grayish color. Drop in your cauliflower florets (they should be about the size of the tip of your thumb). Turn the heat down a bit and stir this mixture every now and then, making sure nothing sticks to the pan. After about five minutes, add a generous portion of parmesan cheese and let the mixture simmer long enough so that the cauliflower is soft and the parmesan clumps and sticks to the vegetables. At this point, add about a teaspoon of pepper, two handfuls of smoked salmon cut into long strips. Then add two cups of precooked penne pasta and stir.

As the penne pasta heats, go ahead and prepare your balsamic vinaigrette. In a small bowl, whisk ½ cup olive oil, ½ cup balsamic vinegar, ¼ cup brown sugar, with just a dash of salt, pepper, and lime juice. Place this in the center of the table and place the salads in their proper spots. Present the lady's chair to for her and fill her glass again. Inform her diner is about to be served.

Toss a handful of spinach into your penne, and stir for about 30 seconds or until spinach is just a bit wilted. Portion the dish into two large bowls and top off with a garnish of capers and dust with parmesan for effect.

Return to the table. Eat! Converse! But don't make your move just yet!

Keep her glass full if she is interested and don't you dare let her dress her own salad. Simply explain that the vinaigrette is a bit strong and ask her to say "when" as you slowly pour it onto her salad.



Art by Kyla Achard/Orbis

Don't forget about Sudan

Two events in Nashville reinforce the moral necessity of comprehensive action in Darfur to prevent further genocide and to stabilize the region.

By J. Mark White
STAFF WRITER

Darfur, Sudan, has been off and on the radar of the national media and the progressive movement for more than three years. And yet, even now, the people of Darfur are more desperately in need of solutions than they ever have been. This fact is dawning on policymakers such as President Bush and Senator Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), as well as among certain media outlets (particularly the print media) such as Reuters. Even Stephen Colbert, on his renowned Comedy Central program, routinely brings up the crisis in Darfur, usually in terms of the moral hypocrisy it exposes in a supposedly "Christian" administration. Finally (and crucially), the dire nature of the crisis in Darfur continues to be widely known among the progressive movement. The progressive movement must press policymakers and the American polity to make Darfur (and other genocides and humanitarian disasters) important policy issues.

Possessing the knowledge of the crisis's urgency is important, but are we as a country willing to do what it takes to change the situation in Darfur for the better? Are we even willing to make an effort of any kind to change the conditions? Historically, this has not been the case. When "ethnic cleansing" became a clear policy in Bosnia, the rest of the world knew what was happening but did not respond in a timely manner. Genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s was clear to the rest of the world, but no decisive action was taken to stop the killing of 800,000 people. (I urge you to stop for a moment to focus on that number, and just try to comprehend how horrific that is. The crisis in Darfur is getting there, at roughly 400,000 dead and over 2.2 million in refugee camps.) And even during World War II, the Allies were fully aware of Hitler's "final solution" but refused to bomb targets which would have hindered the Nazis' tragically efficient genocidal methods. The point here, then, is this: yes, we (the United States, the United Nations, the West generally, etc.) finally realize that without some type of action, the killing of black Africans in Darfur by the ravenous and racially-motivated janjaweed will continue unabated, even to the

point of threatening the very existence of dozens of black African tribes in Darfur. But are we willing to act, to devise a potentially effective strategy, and put it into place? The political process in the United States will not respond to the situation in Darfur out of pure moral obligation; it should be clear to all by now that our policies are based upon perceptions of national interest and political interest. The moral obligation, then, lies with the American people. We must make this issue integral to the political interest of policymakers, particularly President Bush, who has the means as President of the United States to place Darfur high on the international agenda (i.e. in NATO, the UN, among others). Since our policymakers will not act out of conscience, we (through our consciences) must change the political climate so that reacting against genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other humanitarian crises is a natural and logical political act for our policymakers.

On March 21, a former marine named Brian Steidle spoke at the Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville. He was one of three United States military advisors/observers (their exact role was unclear) to the African Union peacekeepers in Darfur in late 2004-early 2005. Having taken hundreds of high-resolution photographs while in Darfur, he presented to a crowd of about 200 the atrocities that are still happening in Darfur. He is a leading proponent of the Million Voices for Darfur campaign, which is attempting to gather 1 million postcards, signed by individual Americans, which asks President Bush "to support a stronger multinational force to protect the people of Darfur." This is an important step, and politicians must know that the American people demand that basic security be ensured on the ground in Darfur. But this is only the first step.

Indeed, as discussed by a number of thoughtful attendees of a Darfur seminar at the C.O.O.L. Conference at Vanderbilt in early March, solutions in Darfur go far beyond the basic provision of security. because of the massive loss of life, lack of crop planting (resulting from the deteriorating security situation), and the burning and looting of hundreds of villages, providing security only keeps people alive in their refugee camps—if in fact there is enough food to keep them alive. Long-term solu-



Courtesy of Brian Steidle, www.usmmm.org/conscience/alert/darfur/steidle

Former marine Brian Steidle traveled to Darfur as a military observer, documenting his journey with incredible photographs. Here, a bulldozer razes Al Geer, a displaced persons camp.

tions must address rebuilding, recovery, and restructuring the economy, society and polity of Darfur. Development efforts to build new huts, rebuild villages, recreate social and political relationships in the villages, provide clean water (the janjaweed throw dead human or animal corpses into wells when they attack the villages), work out new methods of irrigation and more, must all be part of the solution for the people of Darfur.

This may seem aggressive to some, since we can't even get the West to go in to stop the killing and guarantee security. But the guarantee of security will ring hollow for Darfur if they are destined to starve to death in the next famine (which may be this

year: the World Food Program estimates that more than 2 million people in Darfur and eastern Chad are in danger of starvation), drown or die of exposure during the next rainy season, or die from water-borne diseases in their wells. The problem of the killing is the most important one to solve, and must be solved at once, but an American political culture of concern about situations like Darfur must not let politicians stop with ending the killing. Such a political culture, if we can indeed develop it, absolutely must work tirelessly to ensure that other threats to the survival of the black African peoples of Darfur are addressed by the leaders of the United States and the international community.

Cooking for love Continued from Page Fourteen

Now, for the dessert. Even if it is not true, inform her that you are not a connoisseur of sweets, and that you might need a little help with the final course. You may or may not want to make some sort of lame, prepared comment about how's she's sweet and you could use some of that sweetness...etc etc...Okay, back to cooking!

I have suggested bananas fosters here because it is very simple and creates an ideal wooing situation. In your small sauté pan, melt half the stick of butter and add ¾ Cup brown sugar. Cut the bananas in half and lengthwise and add to pan once sugar has melted into butter. Portion a scoop or two of ice cream onto a plate and add bananas once soft.

You might notice that the dessert for two comes on one plate. This should bring the two of you closer. If need be, go ahead and pull the Al Gore card, but, if you've played your culinary cards correctly, you shouldn't have to.

"Many men are no longer comfortable with the traditional male role. Emotionally adrift, they are searching for a new identity; yet they find few viable alternatives to traditional masculine behavior." - National Coalition of Free Men

The diverse and growing men's movement: A fight against feminism or traditional notions of masculinity?

By Haley Swenson
FEATURES EDITOR

For years the men's movement has developed quietly in the shadow of the women's rights movement. Recently, more than ever before, men's issues are making headlines in the mainstream media. Although American culture has focused its gender analysis and discourse almost entirely on the oppression, nature and state of women, a growing number of men's organizations are actively exploring the status of men in today's society. The goals of these groups range from ensuring fair treatment in child custody trials to protection from domestic violence to addressing negative portrayals of men in the media to analyzing the declining success rates of boys in schools.

The men, calling themselves "masculists" or men's rights activists, also have a wide range of positions in regard to the women's movement, ranging from calls to destroy feminism and all its advancements (Tom Smith, American Union of Men) to acknowledging that the women's movement has

brought important power dynamics to society's attention, but that a men's movement is equally necessary to improve the lives of everyone in our society.

Tom Smith, of the AUM, one of the first anti-feminist men's groups places most of the blame for men's lack of opportunities and rights on feminism's rejection of traditional roles. In his outline of what he views as the most important goals of the men's movement, "The Masculist Manifesto," he claims that masculism should seek to abolish "political and cultural assumptions of equality between the sexes," assumes that we now live in a matriarchy and "supports the establishment of a modern patriarchy."

The National Center for Men also focuses mainly on women as men's oppressors, noting injustices like false accusations of abuse and domestic violence against men. But the Center also works to fight the legal system's oppression as well, like the lack of opportunity for men to decide when to become and when not to become fathers, an issue that has recently entered public debate in the so-called "Roe v. Wade for Men suit," which seeks the legal opportunity for men to refuse paternity in the case of an unintended pregnancy.

Most men's groups assert that just as society expects women to perform particular roles, some negative and some positive, society also constrains men to fulfill certain gender roles. According to the National Coalition of Free Men (NCFM), a self-defined civil rights and educational organization, society expects a "real man" to be "strong, courageous, knowledgeable, disciplined, level headed, competitive, successful, in control, unemotional, heterosexual, sexually aggressive, sexually competent, and silent-suffering." The NCFM seeks to educate men and to support them as they try to form a society where men can reject the roles they are "expected to fulfill, regardless of their abilities, interests, physical/emotional constitutions or needs."

The NCFM argues that in recent years, women have won many choices including the choice to have children, not to have children, to work full time, to work part time, to be housewives, etc. Though the NCFM does not acknowledge that only an elite class of women in American society actually has the privilege to make such choices, they conclude that the choices women have greatly outnumber the choices men have. As an example, they argue that men have only one choice regarding work: full-time work outside the home.

Though the NCFM is among the most feminist-friendly men's rights organizations, Pradeep Ramanathan, National Vice President of the NCFM, cites chivalry and feminism as the institutions "that subordinate the needs and nature of men to those of women, while promoting special entitlements, privileges, and protections for women."

The NCFM believes the feminist movement has promoted negative images of men that permeate our culture, including the deadbeat dad, the man as a potential rapist, the man as a potential wife beater, the man as an animal, whose testosterone makes him less human or less civilized than woman, and the oppressive patriarch. Many men's groups argue that the notion of the oppressive patriarch is often blown out of proportion by feminists, and that in reality very few men actually have any power at all within a patriarchal system.

They also point out pop culture trends that perpetuate these and other degrading images of men. They note the frequent portrayal of sexual violence and domestic violence against men as comical, like prison rape scenes featured in many comedies, whereas the mainstream media's portrayals of violence against women are almost always without humor, as serious as the issue itself actually is.

Many of the concerns of men's rights groups stem from what they perceive as the great social value placed on the lives and experiences of women today and the lesser value society gives men. Masculists argue that the media give little attention to men's issues, that the criminal justice system favors female defendants, that breast cancer research receives far more public funding than research on prostate cancer and that the average man's life is expected to be four years shorter than the average woman's, suggesting that the women's overall quality of life is better than men's.

The list of rarely discussed men's issues goes on and on. As the NCFM says, "For every women's issue there is a men's issue."

The feminist discourse frequently identifies injustices against women that are perpetrated by men, while the masculist discourse, with varying degrees of hostility, often cites the women's movement as the source of men's oppression.

With debates raging over abortion, men's reproductive rights, women's continued absence from political and economic positions of power, and what many view as a boys' education crisis, the media's attention to gender issues appears to be progressing into a full-blown gender war.

But the NCFM, while maintaining that they refuse to accept blame for the oppression of women, does provide some hope for progressives who may support efforts to free men from the constraints of gender roles but who strongly believe in the importance of the feminist movement. They proclaim that one of their objectives is to free men "from the notion that as a class they oppress women any more than women as a class oppress them, or than society in general oppresses both sexes through stereotyping."

Though support for feminism is scarce within today's men's rights groups, and vice-versa, the men's movement has highlighted the fact that men too face gender-based discrimination and the burden of social roles. The men's movement also reveals, however, that rejection of traditional and oppressive gender roles stands as a common ground on which feminists and masculists can unite.



Art by Kyla Achard/Orbis



A man's right to choose?

Opting out of child support payment

By Emily Burrows
ASSISTANT CULTURE EDITOR

On March 9 the National Center for Men filed a lawsuit in a U.S. District Court in Michigan on behalf of Matt Dubai, a 25 year old computer programmer who contends that he should not be forced to pay child support for the daughter of his ex-girlfriend. The case has caused an uproar in the law and gender rights community and has already been nicknamed "Roe v. Wade for Men."

Dubai maintains that his former girlfriend, Lauren Wells, knew that he had no interest in having children with her and that she repeatedly assured him that she could not become pregnant due to a physical condition. Dubai is now forced to pay \$500 a month in child support.

The premise of the plaintiff's case is that the lack of male reproductive rights violates the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause. The argument is that if a pregnant woman can choose among abortion, adoption and raising a child, a man should have the option to decline financial responsibility if the pregnancy is unintended.

The National Center for Men holds

that "women now have control of their lives after an unplanned conception. But men are routinely forced to give up control, forced to be financially responsible for choices only women are permitted to make, forced to relinquish reproductive choice as the price of intimacy." The director, Mel Feit, adds that he does not advocate an unlimited fatherhood opt-out, but rather a brief time period in which a man could decline parental responsibilities if an unplanned pregnancy occurs. Dubai expects the lawsuit to fail, but he says that "just to create awareness would be enough, to at least get a debate started."

Opponents contend that it is misleading to compare this case to Roe v. Wade. Jennifer Brown of Legal Momentum, a women's rights advancement group, said, "Roe is based on an extreme intrusion by the government -- literally to force a woman to continue a pregnancy she doesn't want, there's nothing equivalent for men. They have the same ability as women to use contraception, to get sterilized."

Men do have an increasing number of options for contraception. For example, RISUG (Reversible Inhibition of Sperm Under Guidance) is similar to a vasectomy but it is reversible

because in RISUG the vas deferens is blocked by an injected polymer rather than permanently cut. Meanwhile, an Australian drug therapy recently proved to be 100% effective. The treatment involves combining injections of progesterin (the synthetic version of the female sex hormone progesterone that is found in birth control pills) with the implantation of testosterone, the male sex hormone.

However, these advances are not comparable to the numerous options women have, including the birth control pill and intrauterine devices. The issue lies in determining who has the ultimate responsibility for unwanted pregnancies. It would be naïve to assume that a man and a woman in an intimate relationship would always agree on the "right" course of action. Nevertheless, should the man really be financially punished for the moral choice of the woman? As the National Center for Men says, "fatherhood must be more than a matter of DNA: A man must choose to be a father in the same way that a woman chooses to be a mother." Dubai's effort will likely fail in the courts, but it may draw attention to the need for equal reproductive rights.

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Isn't it strange that, despite all this talk of a capitalist American work ethic, people are so obsessed with getting free stuff? Type "free" into a search engine and you'll get barraged with advertisements from promotional services offering "free*" software, ring tones, samples and other garbage. Online scams aside, "free" can also be a great thing in that you can get stuff without paying for it. Here are but a few little-known ways in which you can get in on the (real) free fun, right here in Nashville.

Heard is the word. Undergraduates can check out up to 150 books at one time from the Central Library. Graduate students, 250. Faculty, 500.

And we shall all be free. Find out what people are giving away for free in Nashville, or a million other cities around the world, by signing on (for free) to the Freecycle Network (www.freecycle.org). This non-profit, grassroots online forum was created to reduce waste and encourage communities to "recycle" their wares, and consists of local Yahoo! groups where people post whatever it is they want to give away, be it cars, pianos or books.

Sharing that feminist love. The Women's Studies Department totally offers free copies of BUST magazine - current AND last month's issue - in its office on the second floor of Garland. Why you weren't informed of this earlier, I don't know.

It never hurts to ask. Rumor has it that the Marriott Hotel gives away surplus sheets for free if you just ask at the lobby desk. Even if it doesn't work, the weird looks you'd get would be worth the trip.

Superheroes like free stuff, too. In 2001, DC Comics christened May 6 Free Comic Book Day, on which comic book stores around the country give away...you guessed it, free comic books. Check out www.freecomickbookday.com for store locations in Nashville.

Bike me, baby. Need help fixin' your bike? The superfriendly volunteers at Nashville's brand-new Bike Co-Op, an informal community organization which aims to make bicycles easier for everyone to acquire and to maintain, will help you out for free. If your bike's beyond recovery, they can also supply free recycled bike parts and help you learn how to assemble a new one; all you'll have to buy is the frame. Contact roanmarion@riseup.net for more information.

GREENING VANDERBILT! *for staff and students*

Earth Day is Coming! (April 22)

Design a Poster

What will the Vanderbilt of tomorrow look like from an environmental point of view? Will we be a Green Campus? Dream aloud about your vision for an environmentally responsible future. Let your imagination off the leash. Be wild! Or be very practical. **Students prizes: \$100/\$75; Staff: prizes \$100/\$75; Poster deadline: 3pm Wednesday, April 18**

***Posters will be exhibited at Rand Friday/Saturday April 21-22

Green Box

Do you have an idea (or many ideas) for making Vanderbilt more eco-friendly? Send it to Greenbox@Vanderbilt.edu. Or find a Green Box on campus. Or post on our Green Wall on Earth Day. We welcome both quick fixes, and longer term suggestions. Prizes for the best ideas each month. Let's make it happen!

Summer Projects

Time to kill over the summer? Make a 5-15 min video on Greening Vanderbilt or another environmental topic. Or record a song. Or a research project. Or an artwork. **Prizes: \$250/\$150/\$75. Deadline: September, 1 2006**

Sponsored by the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture's Ecology and Spirituality Research Group. All entries should be sent to: CRSC (Earth Day Challenges), 132 Buttrick. Details from: david.c.wood@vanderbilt.edu or annabeth.headrick@vanderbilt.edu
Judging panels will be made up of students, staff and faculty.

Civil Religion Cont. from Page 13

the effort to address human needs and public policy matters. In such arrangements, the prophetic voice of religious leaders and institutions that benefit from federal funding is usually silenced, and there is not the kind of healthy tension that Martin Luther King, Jr. felt should always exist between communities of faith and the "powers that be" (i.e., government). This explains why it is so difficult to find critics of federal domestic and foreign policies even among the most powerful and visible religious leaders in our society today. King stood at the center of the peace movement, protesting and making dynamic speeches against U.S. policy in Vietnam, but there is no religious-moral leader of his stature today who is willing to make the same commitments in relation to the war in Iraq.

Perhaps the most disturbing development is that black churches and their leadership have lost their sense of the power of radical public faith, and especially the importance of prophetic social witness. Black churches have historically been the conscience of this nation, and African American religious leaders have always considered it a moral obligation to speak to the evils of government and to the social ills of society. But in contemporary America, conservative black preachers, especially those in the mega churches, have aligned themselves closely with the Bush administration and the Religious Right, and many prophetic voices have been coopted and marginalized. The mega church phenomenon, with its powerful, flamboyant, and gifted televangelists, is now being used as part of a strategy to redefine black leadership, to attract more black voters to the Republican Party and to gain more black support for the highly conservative moral agenda of the Christian Right. Prophetic voices which once denounced bigotry, poverty, and war in the strongest possible terms are seldom heard in the public square, and they have been replaced by status-quo preachers whose moral appeal is too often limited to opposing abortion, pornography, teenage pregnancy and gay marriage. Obviously, this sense of how religion can best be a prophetic force in the public domain has shifted significantly, even in African American church and religious circles.

Many Americans feel that the current wave of Right wing religion and politics has led to the kind of dramatic and unprecedented change in national policy that will only threaten civil liberties at home and human rights policies abroad. Many so-called liberal churchpersons and politicians lament the overt and unprecedented alliance of church and state, of religion and politics and they warn of the dangers of a church or religion-based political machine or system. Christian conservatives continue to advance a different perspective as they pursue their moral mandate for America. These trends, often referred to as a dimension of the "culture wars," are not likely to abate in the near future, but this is not necessarily unfortunate. Healthy debate is always good for the soul of persons and of a nation. Both the academy and the church need to become more instrumental in bringing people of different religious and political persuasions together for constructive conversation about the role that religious convictions should play in matters of public consequence. We need more discussion and debate about the proper role of religion in our nation's electoral politics, about church-state boundaries, about the recognition of the Supreme Being in our democratic processes of government and about appropriate partnerships between religious communities and government to address issues of public policy. This is not about developing a coherent voice on the role of faith in the public arena. It is about preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Soldiers complicit Continued from Page Nine

that the troops are honorable for "just following orders" rings an ominous bell when one listens to the testimony of the Nuremberg trials, and sees the extremes to which that notion can be taken.

Furthermore, when the specific moral circumstances under which one is asked to risk their life are not of paramount importance, they are damning themselves to the moral and ethical consequences of their orders. In this sense, they are not simply following orders, but also implicitly agreeing with any order that they will receive. In joining the military they are complicit in everything that they are sent to do because they joined the institution knowing both its purpose and its potential.

The argument can be made that these men and women are brave heroes because they are risking their lives not only supposedly to protect ours, but also to improve the lives of their families. Many people join the army simply to pay for college or because there is no other viable career option for them to pursue. Many mistakenly refer to this as a sense of duty or courage. It is not this. What these soldiers are doing is bargaining with the Devil. Their decisions are straight out of Faust and are no less reprehensible. To accept the military's bargain is to mortgage one's moral being. While this may be inevitable due to the circumstances of the individuals, it in no way entitles them to unwavering support on a moral level. There is a large distinction between recognizing that the career options of many

soldiers are limited and axiomatically supporting our soldiers. It is possible simply to recognize the situation as no-win. For example, suppose you are married and a terrorist kidnaps your spouse. You are given the ultimatum of either giving the terrorist \$100,000, which will be used to buy weapons, or your spouse will be killed. Does one "support the financiers"? Certainly not. Does one "support" those who knowingly allow the death of their spouses? This again poses its own set of difficulties. This situation, much like that of those who join the military for financial reasons, is no-win. Situations like this simply demand our recognition, not our irrevocable support.

To not support the troops is not to be necessarily against them; rather, it is simply to disagree with their presence in Iraq. It also is not an endorsement of violence against the troops, or of personal attacks against them. It simply says that one does not mechanically agree with all of the implications of supporting the troops. To do so is to say a lot more than simply wishing the troops well and hoping for their safety. It is to also agree with their presence in Iraq and the administration's reasons for the war. We can pray for the security and safe return of our friends, classmates and relatives without agreeing with or supporting their presence. We should at all times hope for the well being of the troops, but supporting their role as troops in this unjust war should not be an unthinkingly accepted maxim.

Culpability is on admin. Continued from Page Nine

administration that made the erroneous decision to fight in Iraq, and that is ultimately where our ire and dissatisfaction should rest.

It was the Bush administration that was responsible for the misrepresentations and fabrications regarding our case for war, and it is they, not our troops, who we should not support. As demonstrated earlier, the soldiers in Iraq did not make the decision to be there, nor are they necessarily in the position to simply fight when it suits them. Yet, the Bush administration's incompetence and idiocy in advocating and managing the assault involving those soldiers rests solely with itself.

As patriotic and sensible Americans, we owe our troops nothing less than our full support. However, it is equally patriotic and sensible of us to hold the Bush administration accountable for its wrongdoings in this matter. As Thomas Paine and many others have remarked in various ways throughout history, let us not hold the son responsible for the sins of

the father. If we are going to express our anger about the war in Iraq, it should be directed at the Bush administration rather than soldiers in an already difficult situation.

If we as Americans feel victimized by a government that began a war without our full consent, imagine how those actually sent to fight have felt. Horrific military actions such as the My Lai massacre in Vietnam and the wedding bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve no support whatsoever, but shame on those who would decry all our troops as blood-thirsty butchers who warrant only resentment and hatred. We often make the mistake of castigating all soldiers for the actions of a few, and such blanket assumptions do a grave injustice to those serving with restraint and honor.

Without the continued presence and steadfastness of many of our brave men and women, the situation in Iraq could have devolved into an even larger debacle. Even if we could hold the soldiers accountable for the start of the war, com-

mon sense should tell us that having the soldiers there now to stabilize the country is in everyone's best interest.

Not supporting them now and demanding their insubordination in exchange for our moral approval harms our troops and possibly many Iraqis as well. Because of their resilience and fortitude in the continuation misguided conflict, our soldiers deserve every shred of gratitude we can offer.

Some of the purest outpourings of American charity are the drives organized to send care packages and other items to our soldiers abroad, and even those opposed to the war should be willing to lend a hand to such efforts. The commonly uttered mantra, "You can oppose the war but still support the troops" is not simple political drivel or some fallacy of logic.

Rather, it is a statement that we should all take to heart, as it can drive us to seek accountability from decision makers and offer support to those compelled to carry out those decisions.

STUDENT MEDIA ★

Elections

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- **All applications must be turned in by Noon, Thursday, March 30 to Sarratt 135 or via campus mail at Station B, Box 1669.**
- **Interviews and elections for these positions will be held at 4:00 p.m., Monday, April 3 at the regular VSC, Inc. Board of Directors meeting to be held in Sarratt 363.**

VSC, Inc. and its divisions actively seek to be diverse student organizations and welcome applications from all members of the student community.

10 WAYS TO USE YOUR VOICE ON CAMPUS

Should progressives support Hillary Clinton for president in 2008?

Progressives need to support a more moderate candidate for president

By Robin Arnett
ISSUES EDITOR

Hillary Clinton's 2006 re-election campaign for her Senate seat is widely considered to be a possible preview of her bid for the presidency in 2008. Hillary presently appears to face no strong opponent in the Democratic party. With politics in mind and in spite of her history of unwavering liberal ideology, Hillary is now attempting to take more centrist stances on issues like the war in Iraq. Her recent behavior has lost her some support from ardent liberals, especially those heavily involved in the anti-war movement, but has gained her a bit more support from moderates. With all of this in mind, the time is approaching in which we may have to decide whether or not Hillary is a candidate that progressives should support. I believe the answer is yes.

In the current political climate, liberals must act in a politically intelligent way. The idealism that we often pride ourselves on is only appropriate to a certain point. A hardcore liberal is not going to win the presidency in 2008. In the upcoming election, it is extremely important that a liberal get into office after such a long time of failed conservative leadership. If that is going to succeed, far-left progressives must be open to supporting a liberal who retains moderate views on some issues.

Hillary's recent remarks regarding the war in Iraq have, as mentioned above, angered many hardcore liberals. She has been steadfastly critical of Bush's handling of the war, but refuses to accept the rigid time-tables and quick exit strategies that many Democrats advocate. This approach may appear wishy-washy or politically motivated, but it is actually a wise approach. The goal at this point is, obviously, to remove our troops from Iraq as soon as possible. However, taking the troops out too quickly could prove disastrous for the Iraqi people. If Clinton is elected president and the war is still going on, it will be her responsibility to clean up Bush's mess. As a potential presidential forerunner, Hillary is wise to not make any concrete promises or to push for solid plans with regard to a situation that is so volatile.

For the most part, Hillary Clinton has proved herself a dependable Democratic leader. She takes a firm stance on women's rights issues, education, children's issues, immigrant rights, healthcare, the environment and the economy. She has shown herself to be a highly competent leader at many different levels and would serve the progressive cause well if elected to office. Hillary may not be the ideal candidate; realistically, she has little chance of being elected against a strong conservative candidate, especially one that is more moderate, like John McCain. However, if Hillary continues to be the strongest Democratic candidate, progressives should feel comfortable supporting her. If we, as liberals, place our ideology so far above practicality that we can't win an election, we will never get anyone into office that is able to implement that ideology. Right now, conservatives are outdoing us embarrassingly at playing the game of politics. It's time to catch up.

Progressives should not compromise their ideals for moderation

By Tyler Zimmer
COMMENTARY EDITOR

Although Hillary Clinton has an impressive record on many progressive issues, she is not a candidate true progressives should rally behind for a presidential bid in 2008. Unlike many of her Democratic colleagues who initially voted to give Bush the authority to take the country to war with Iraq, Sen. Clinton has stubbornly refused to repudiate her original decision. America does not need someone in office who is every bit as obstinate as President Bush is when it comes to revising a position or admitting a serious mistake.

It's not clear whether Clinton remains ardently pro-war as a political move to try to bolster a presidential run or because she actually believes that it is the right thing to do. Nonetheless, contributing to the drum-beat of dogmatic support for the war that is rampant on the right is not the way to get votes. What progressives need is a candidate with guts that has no qualms about challenging our participation in a senseless, bloody, and extremely costly conflict.

Just because John Kerry's seemingly amorphous position on Iraq failed to garner enough votes to propel him into the White House, doesn't mean that adopting Bush's war-mongering foreign policy is the way to win elections. Self-respecting progressives must acknowledge the Clinton positioning herself alongside the neoconservative architects of the war is the wrong way to begin a run for the White House.

Those who were fortunate enough to see former Sen. John Edwards speak at the Impact Symposium saw a legislator who

wasn't afraid to admit that he made the wrong choice in voting to go to war in Iraq. In light of the revelations that there were no WMD and that the Bush administration distorted and stretched extremely suspect and thin evidence to build a case for unilateral and preemptive war, Edwards has rightfully come to the conclusion that we have made a terrible mistake.

Rather than admitting the obvious, Clinton has chosen to move in the other direction: calling for more troops and a heavier investment of human and economic capital in what has proven to be a disastrous conflict. Rather than reflecting back on the disastrous Vietnam War which she actively opposed as a college student, Clinton has abandoned some of her progressive values in favor of what is either a calculated plan to pander to pro-war voters or, even worse, an ideological commitment to this awful conflict.

The last thing progressives need in 2008 is more "triangulation" or "moderation" (which ultimately means giving in to the administration's position on Iraq). The Iraq War is one of the most contemptible policies that America has had to bear during Bush's presidency. Even many conservatives and libertarians have joined those on the left in actively opposing the costly and unnecessary war effort; it's not just progressives that are frustrated with our involvement in Iraq.

So with this in mind, there is no reason for true progressives to support Hillary Clinton's bid for the Democratic nomination. If she is so committed to seeking support from those on the other side of the Iraq War debate, perhaps she should seek nomination from the party whose position she is trying to emulate.



Art by Noelle Janka

Is Hillary Clinton a good candidate for Democrats to support in 2008?

Gustavo De Pena

Freshman



"No. She is the senator from my state and, in my opinion, she is very inconsistent in her ideas. I do not think that she is active enough to gain the Democratic seat and I believe they should pick someone more moderate if they want to win. She is very liberal, even if she is hiding her ideals right now. She is a great senator. I voted for her, and I will vote for her again. I just don't think she is ready."

Brent Fitzgerald

Freshman

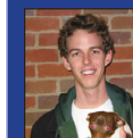


"No. I think that she would be a poor choice for the first female president because she is too controversial. The

right despises her on issues like abortion and social security, among other things. I would rather have the first female president be someone that is welcomed with open arms."

Russell Helsabeck

Junior



"No. She might do a really good job as president, but she will not be able to rally enough bilateral support to win the election."

Thallen Womack

Senior



"Yes. I think she would be a good president. She is qualified, prepared, and has a lot of experience."

— Compiled by Robin Arnett