



VERSUS: Check out the exclusive Q+A with singer-songwriter Brett Dennen. COMPLETE SECTION INSIDE

POYTHRESS: Read this column about the importance of reading just about anything. SEE PAGE 4

Vanderbilt prepares for flu season



BRYAN CANDELARIO / The Vanderbilt Hustler

VSG in partnership with Student Health Center for flu shots



BRYAN CANDELARIO / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Graduate student David Scoville receives a free flu shot at the Student Health Center on Monday October 13th.

by **LILY CHEN**
Leadership Specialist

In anticipation of the upcoming flu season, Vanderbilt Student Government Services and Technology Committee partnered with the Student Health Center to provide flu shots for students.

The committee, headed by Senator Jean Xiao and Co-Chair Tommy Obenchain, worked to inform the student community to take advantage of this free service.

"This is a great opportunity to get VSG's name out and it's a partnership (with the Health Center) to make sure students are informing students of this service," said VSG President Joseph Williams.

Members of the SST Committee set up tables with signs and candy in places around campus, such as at The Commons Center, recruiting students and urging them to go upstairs to get shots.

"Students took shifts in working the tables and dealt with signing consent forms," Williams said.

According to Director of Student Health Louise Hanson, a wellness clinic held Monday night in the Health Center was very successful. The clinic gave out 200 flu vaccines to undergraduate and graduate students within the two hours in addition to 40 HIV screenings.

The partnership between VSG and the Student Health Center began last year. ■

CAMPUS LIVING

Students stand up for Nashville taxi drivers

by **CALLIE JONES**
News Contributor

Vanderbilt Students of Nonviolence has embraced the plight of Nashville's taxi drivers that has, until recently, gone relatively unnoticed.

The student group is gaining first-hand accounts from the drivers and using that knowledge to try to help them stay organized, inform the student body and pressure the university to use their leverage in the city.

"We've been going out to the airport and talking to the drivers waiting in line to get passengers" said sophomore Josh Rogen. "We listen to their stories and encourage them to keep a high morale despite no tangible gains yet."

The city's drivers have formed the Metro Nashville Taxi Drivers Association to end what they view as unfair wages and working conditions, and held a strike in early August to protest these issues.

A preliminary report to the Nashville-Davidson County's Transportation and Licensing Commission by MTSU Assistant Professor of Political Science Sekou Franklin found that after operating costs, taxi drivers make just over \$2 an hour, making them some of the lowest paid workers in the nation.

Franklin's study found that most drivers are responsible for gas, car insurance and service fees in addition to their licenses. The average gross income of a taxi driver is around \$100 a day and the net income is only about \$32 for a 14-15 hour day.

"When a driver wants to take a vacation, or even if he gets sick, he would have to pay the cab company \$400 per week to cover licensing fees and insurance," Rogen said.

"They already own the cars — most of them have thousands invested in the business — and were suckered in by companies that don't require the drivers to pay the license the first few weeks" said senior Braden Clark.

The licensing issue was placed on the Metro council's agenda in response to the strike held in August. Although the Vanderbilt community was largely absent during the strike, Vanderbilt students are hoping to help bring the drivers' issues to campus.

"When talking to the drivers, we've found that especially compared to other cities, the Nashville system is backwards," said sophomore Benjamin Eagles.

While Vanderbilt Students of Nonviolence and the Nashville Movement, an organization that works to benefit Nashville's poorest workers, work to increase fares for the city's taxi drivers, the students agreed it is important for the Vanderbilt community to be aware of the realities facing the drivers.

"Talk to them, find out about their lives and their families," said Matt Leber, an organizer with the Nashville Movement. "If nothing else, members of the Vanderbilt community should be kind to their drivers." ■

by **ALLIE MORRIS**
Science and Medicine Specialist

Vanderbilt Student Health has begun to offer free flu shots for students this month in an effort to prepare for a severe influenza season, as anticipated by health officials.

"The last three years, there has been a relatively mild influenza season," said Professor of Preventative Medicine and Medicine Bill Schaffner. "This year, the crystal ball is cloudy, but we anticipate a more severe influenza season."

According to Schaffner, influenza experts anticipate this flu season, we will be hit with a new strain of influenza.

"It changes a little bit year to year, some year the (influenza) virus appears to be more aggressive than others," Schaffner said.

According to Schaffner, it is important to get vaccinated

every year because each year the vaccine is modified to keep up with the changing influenza virus.

"This year, we have manufactured a completely new vaccine," Schaffner said.

Director of Student Health Louise Hanson reported the health center has already given 1,000 vaccinations of the 3,000 vaccinations in their possession.

"The more vaccines we give, the better it is for everybody," said Hanson.

Hanson said during the flu season, between fall and early March, the health center generally sees five to six patients a day who have influenza or an influenza-like illness.

"We typically start seeing the flu around Thanksgiving ... it knocks people out for days and leaves you flat on your back with a fever, unable to do anything fun or work-related," Hanson said.

Schaffner warned that even

students who are young, strong and healthy are still susceptible to the virus.

"The flu is very contagious ... You share breathing space within three feet and that is the way the virus is transmitted ... The notion to avoid everyone who is coughing won't work because people excrete the virus for 25 hours before they get sick," Schaffner said.

Hanson said getting vaccinated is an important part of avoiding influenza; however, she said good nutrition, enough sleep and washing hands frequently all help to prevent flu contraction. Student Health also offers preventative medicine to students who have been in contact with a person sick with influenza.

Free flu shots will continue through October at a variety of on-campus locations. More information is available at the student health Web site. ■

ACADEMICS

Learning from the horrors of the past

by **SARAH BILSKY**
News Contributor

In the face of current challenges, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and uninformed. It is therefore appropriate that the theme of this year's Vanderbilt Holocaust Lectures series is "(over)Sites of Memory," which examines both the locations of genocides and the most effective ways to honor victims' memories.

Lasting from Oct. 12 until Nov. 16, the series consists of lectures, documentary screenings and even a ballet.

"The series has not (just) been about what happened then and there. The series has been, and is about, the present," said Geller, associate professor of Modern Jewish Culture at the Divinity School, to explain the importance of the longest running continuous Holocaust lecture series at an American university.

Gellar said the present is a place, "in which genocide still takes place, where persecution still takes place, where ... dehumanization still takes place."

Michelle Peck, a senior and president of Dores for Israel, echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a connection to the past while keeping our eyes to the future.

"This year's lecture series may be one of the last times that students have the chance to hear a (Holocaust) survivor tell their story in person," said Peck. "Raising awareness is crucial to keeping things like this from happening again."

The next event of the series is a lecture by University of Minnesota Duluth Associate Professor of Spanish Maureen Tobin Stanley. On Oct. 23, she will share her examinations of Spanish voices of resistance, exile and deportation. ■

Vanderbilt women (and men) 'Take Back the Night'



GENEVIEVE GALE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Supporters gather under a tent on Olin Lawn to hear speakers before leaving for the official 'Take Back the Night' march to Centennial Park, an annual rally hosted by various student organizations to promote domestic violence awareness.

CAMPUS LIVING: Students organize a wide range of service options for spring break. SEE PAGE 3

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SNAPSHOTS

compiled by HANNAH TWILLMAN

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THURSDAY



HIGH **72**, LOW **56**
Showers

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SERVICE GUIDE

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BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available in Sarratt 124 during business hours.

NEWS BRIEFS

Bailout becomes buy-in as feds move into banking industry

WASHINGTON (AP)—Big banks started falling in line Tuesday behind a rejiggered bailout plan that will have the government forking over as much as \$250 billion in exchange for partial ownership — putting the world's bastion of capitalism and free markets squarely in the banking business.

Some early signs were hopeful for the latest in a flurry of radical efforts to save the nation's financial system: Credit was a bit easier to come by. And stocks were down but not alarmingly so after Monday's stratospheric leap.

The new plan, President Bush declared, is "not intended to take over the free market but to preserve it."

It's all about cash and confidence and convincing banks to lend money more freely again. Those are all critical ingredients to getting financial markets to function more normally and reviving the economy.

The big question: Will it work?

There was a mix of hope and skepticism on that front. Unprecedented steps recently taken — including hefty interest rate reductions by the Federal Reserve and other major central banks in a coordinated assault just last week — have failed to break through the credit clog and the panicky mind-set gripping investors on Wall Street and around the globe.

The Dow Jones industrials declined 77 points on Tuesday after piling up their biggest point gain ever on Monday on news of Europe's rescue plan and in anticipation of the United States' new measures.

Missing Fla. girl's mom indicted on murder charge after failed search

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The mother of a missing 3-year-old girl was arrested Tuesday and charged with killing her daughter, even though the child's body has not been found during an exhaustive four-month search.

A grand jury indicted Casey Anthony on charges of first-degree murder, aggravated child abuse, aggravated manslaughter and four counts of lying to investigators about the disappearance of her daughter, Caylee, State Attorney Lawson Lamar said. The mother is being held without bond.

If convicted of first-degree murder she could face the death penalty or life in prison. Prosecutors said no decision has been made on whether the death penalty will be sought.

Orange County Sheriff Kevin Beary said investigators' satisfaction that the indictment had been issued was tempered by what it concludes about the girl's fate.

"Speaking as a father, a day doesn't pass where I wish the evidence that we have gathered didn't add up to the painfully obvious," he said. "Sadly, I cannot change the facts surrounding the investigation."

He said investigators would continue doing "everything in our power to find little Caylee."

A few hours before the sealed indictment was issued Tuesday, the 22-year-old Anthony stood silently, sometimes crying, as her attorney told reporters she is innocent.

McCain proposes \$52.5 billion economic plan to cure financial woes

BLUE BELL, Pa. (AP)—John McCain, echoing both Barack Obama and Republican orthodoxy, proposed a \$52.5 billion economic plan Tuesday that would eliminate taxes on unemployment benefits and cut the capital gains tax. He warned voters about taking a chance on his Democratic rival.

"Perhaps never before in history have the American people been asked to risk so much based on so little," McCain said of his opponent during a speech at a community college in this Philadelphia suburb.

McCain also promised that as president he would order the Treasury Department to guarantee 100 percent of all savings for six months. Such a guarantee, above the \$250,000 now in force, would ease consumer fears of bank failures and restore "rational judgment to the choices of the market," he said.

The Arizona senator, who trails in the polls on economic issues, said, "The moment requires that government act. And as president I intend to act, quickly and decisively."

McCain said President Bush's \$250 billion plan to buy shares in the nation's leading banks — advance word of which helped stocks soar on Monday — should be short-term and last only until the institutions are reformed and put on a sound footing again.

Ringo Starr: No more fan mail

LONDON (AP)—Ringo Starr doesn't want to hear from you.

If you do write, your letter will end up in the trash.

That's the message from Richard Starkey, aka Ringo Starr. After 45 years of stardom, he doesn't want to spend any more time answering mail or sending signed photos back to fans.

The fan fatigue led the former Beatles drummer to post a sometimes angry sounding short video clip on his Web site telling fans that any mail sent to him after Oct. 20 will not be read or answered. British television stations broadcast the video on Tuesday.

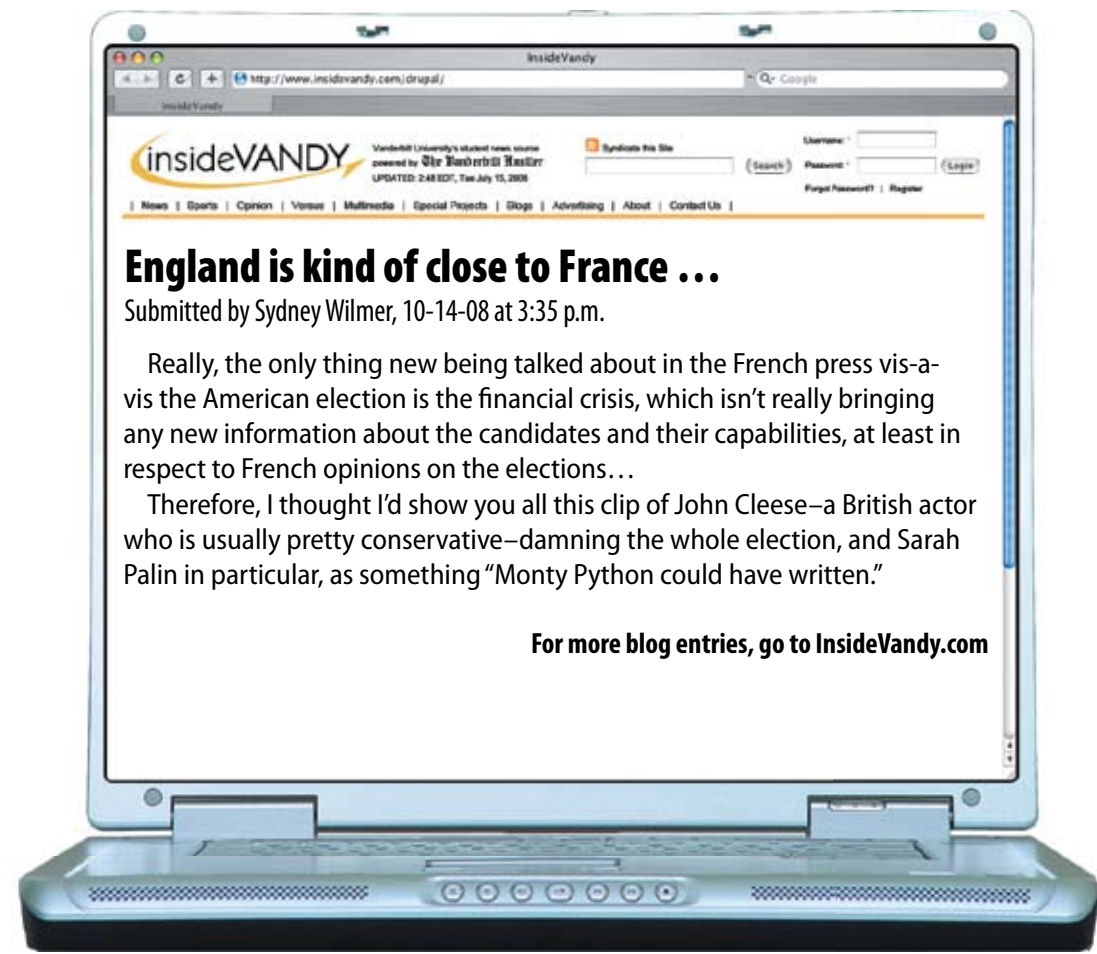
"It's going to be tossed," he says on the video. "I'm warning you with peace and love, I have too much to do. So no more fan mail. Thank you, thank you. And no objects to be signed. Nothing. Anyway, peace and love, peace and love."

The drummer and singer did not elaborate on the reason behind his decision to cut off a major point of contact with his many fans.

Starr, 68, has maintained a very active touring and recording schedule in recent years, drawing large crowds for performances with his All-Starr band.

The band plays a mix of old Beatles hits, Starr's many solo offerings, and other classics from the 1960s and 1970s. Starr usually serves as front man, though he sometimes plays the drums.

FROM THE BLOG



England is kind of close to France ...

Submitted by Sydney Wilmer, 10-14-08 at 3:35 p.m.

Really, the only thing new being talked about in the French press vis-a-vis the American election is the financial crisis, which isn't really bringing any new information about the candidates and their capabilities, at least in respect to French opinions on the elections...

Therefore, I thought I'd show you all this clip of John Cleese—a British actor who is usually pretty conservative—damning the whole election, and Sarah Palin in particular, as something "Monty Python could have written."

For more blog entries, go to InsideVandy.com

SNAPSHOT

THE LAST DAYS OF INDIAN SUMMER



BRETT KAMINSKY / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Students enjoy one of the last warm days of fall by eating and reading outside on Rand Terrace.

JESUS, MARY MAGDALENE, AND DA VINCI

What We Know
and How We Know It

ELAINE PAGELS

Harrington Spear Paine
Foundation Professor of
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Elaine Pagels is the Harrington Spear Paine Foundation Professor of Religion at Princeton University. Her influential and controversial works such as **The Gnostic Gospels, Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, and Reading Judas** have achieved international recognition for their recovery and reclamation of the lost vestiges of early Christianity, presenting it not as a monolith, but as a diverse, multi-voiced movement in a dynamic process of formation as one of the world's great wisdom traditions.

This lecture begins at 6 p.m. and is preceded by a complimentary reception at 5 p.m. in Ingram Hall, Blair School of Music. During the reception, Professor Pagels will sign copies of her book **Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas**, which will be available for purchase. Parking is available in South Garage (24th Avenue South at Children's Way).

This event is free and open to the public. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-seated basis.

For more information, please visit www.vanderbilt.edu/chancellor/clc, e-mail cls@vanderbilt.edu, or call 343-2574.

**CHANCELLOR'S
LECTURE SERIES
2008/2009**

CAMPUS LIVING

Campus groups plan spring break service options

by **JENNIFER DENNARD**
News Contributor

Each year, while many Vanderbilt students spend their spring breaks lounging on beaches, traveling or spending time with family and friends at home, more and more are electing to forgo a relaxing vacation in favor of extended service projects. And as more students choose to become involved with these service trips, more organizations are deciding to sponsor them.

Last year, senior Sarah Scott traveled to Harvest Farm in Wellington, Colo. The farm is a part of the Denver Rescue Mission, which tries to rehabilitate and reintegrate men with addiction problems into society. "We worked six-plus hours a day lifting railroad ties, scraping paint, digging

irrigation ditches, doing dishes, tending to animals," said Scott. More importantly, Scott said she and the other students learned a lot about the men they worked with. "These men are not simply addicts, they are people" Scott said.

Junior Lucas Deloach traveled to Brunswick, Ga., last year as a part of Habitat for Humanity's spring break trip. Habitat for Humanity builds houses for those who cannot afford a down payment and provides them with an interest free, low mortgage option.

"It opened my eyes to income inequality. We would drive to our build site in an area hit hard by poverty, and head to the beach afterward, where we saw million dollar homes," said Deloach. "(The homeowner) was so happy that volunteers had started on her future home;

I'll never forget how grateful she was," Deloach said.

All the spring break options provide students with the opportunity of volunteering and connecting with other students for a week. Vandy+Catholic will be doing their first spring break trip this year to Honduras, where they'll work with Franciscan nuns in an orphanage.

"This will be a beautiful chance for students to deepen their faith while serving others in a foreign country," said senior Geoff Smith.

Other groups that will sponsor spring break service trips this school year include Manna Project, which will send students to places like Nicaragua and Ecuador, and Best Buddies, in which students and their buddies with intellectual disabilities will do service together. ■

IMPORTANT TRIP INFORMATION

Organization	Location	Application deadline	Contact/Web site
Alternative Spring Break	Within the U.S., Mexico and Guatemala	Friday, Oct. 17	http://vandyasb.wordpress.com
Best Buddies	Knoxville	E-mail contact by Friday Oct. 17	jessica.solomon@vanderbilt.edu
Habitat for Humanity	Within the U.S.	Site leaders: Friday, Oct. 31 Participants: Friday, Nov. 14	http://www.vanderbilt.edu/h4h
Manna Project	Latin America	Friday, Oct. 24 and Monday, Nov. 12	jessie.w.bullock@vanderbilt.edu
Vandy+Catholic	Honduras	E-mail contact by Friday, Oct. 24	cristina.a.villarreal@vanderbilt.edu

ACADEMICS

Noted New York Times writer, editor comments on media's election coverage

by **ABRAHAM HANSON**
News Contributor

Seeking to navigate the media's electoral ruckus, the Communications department hosted New York Times writer and editor Peter Applebome on Monday night as part of their presidential campaign lecture series.

The lecture, entitled "All the News that's Fit to Blog: Old Media, New Media and the Brave New World of Election 2008," explored the evolution of political media in presidential elections.

According to Applebome, the 2008

election is perhaps the most extraordinary and hyperbolic of them all.

Applebome said he found plenty of historical roots in the 2008 election and media behavior.

As evidence, he cited two personal journalistic experiences. According to Applebome, the 1988 Presidential race between Michael Dukakis and George H.W. Bush was characterized by "a changing of rules."

Applebome said political strategist Lee Atwater was a pioneer in modern negative campaigning. Atwater was able to transform the dynamics of elections by

using cultural preferences to drive wedges into the electorate.

The Clinton campaign then changed the pace of politics, according to Applebome. The 24-hour news cycle quickly accelerated into a minute-by-minute media contest. The growing popularity of cable news channels and accessibility of the Internet challenged the cemented institutions of print media.

The Applebome lecture was a joint effort sponsored by the Vanderbilt Communications department and the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. ■

A Major Affair



ERIC GLASSER / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Students peruse the majors fair at Sarratt Student Center on Tuesday. Representatives of all the Departments from the College of Arts and Science were on hand to discuss major options with undeclared students.

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OPINION

Why won't you read?



JUSTIN POYTHRESS
Columnist

For the most part — mainly because of the inevitable replies of “You went to Vanderbilt to do that?” — I try to avoid mentioning my major of Elementary Education. However, there are those times when it comes in handy, such as supplying an emergency pack of crayons for placemat coloring or constructing a musical instrument out of beans and a cardboard tube.

But it's not all fun and games. Some of my requirements include reading picture books to children. It is in this process of reading instruction that I've made some observations about reading I think are valuable for some long-winded, opinionated droning. Pretty much all of us, except those intellectual snobs who walk around holding a framed copy of their subscription to *The Economist*, have lost interest in reading.

It isn't because we don't think there are good things to read: Some of us even have “Stuff White People Like” as one of our Internet bookmark tabs. The main excuse for not reading anymore is the same one we use for why we haven't been to a women's soccer game: “It might not be a total waste of time, but I'm just really busy.” Believe me, I'm among the first to accept blame on this issue. How could I possibly emphasize the value of literacy if I can barely focus on Harry Potter?

This raises some general concerns. Where did we lose our way? What was the last book of which I actually read more than two chapters that weren't covered on a test? And how

old will I be before my social life dwindles away to the point where reading a book becomes an acceptable use of my evening?

For most of us, I would conjecture reading motivation began to slip away sometime in high school. It was the combination of discovering CliffsNotes and having to read books like “Walden,” “The House on Mango Street,” or “The Old Man and the Sea.” You know who I blame? Society. And MTV. But seriously, this is our own problem, and I have yet to meet somebody who says, “You know, I think I really need to read fewer books.”

So what's the obstacle here? I think the biggest step is just getting started, and although it's OK at first, don't always just go for the quick and easy fixes, like “Green Eggs and Ham,” the Sunday cartoon section or *The Slant*, which has already matched its publication quota from last year. You don't want to totally rule out Vanderbilt publications. The Torch makes reading the Vanderbilt opinion section fairly redundant, while *Orbis* always comes in handy for mopping up those messy spills around your dorm. Meanwhile, *The Slant* does still offer a great forum for its editor to try to get a date with staff from *Versus*, complemented by clever, sophisticated quips about underage drinking, statutory rape and feminine hygiene products. The point is reading is good. Just thinking about reading over fall break would be a start. There are plenty of ways you can get back in the game: graphic novels, choose your own adventure, even Stephen King books are still technically considered reading.

—Justin Poythress is a senior in the College of Arts and Science. He can be reached at j.poythress@vanderbilt.edu.

EDITORIAL

Students must be aware of crime

As reported on InsideVandy.com, two suspects from the Sept. 29 armed robbery near Kensington Garage have been arrested by Metro Police. The two apprehended suspects have also been accused of a slew of robberies in and around the western part of Vanderbilt's campus. According to Metro Police, more investigation into these and other crimes is expected to lead to more arrests.

Vanderbilt community members should realize the danger of gang violence in our neighborhood. Too often, we feel insulated by our well-lit, well-patrolled campus and our excellent police department. While the university has done much to keep its community safe, there are so many important steps individuals can and should take to keep themselves secure in their persons and their possessions.

Students should always be smart when traveling off campus. This means walking to shops and restaurants in groups, particularly at night, and staying in well-lit areas. Lock car doors in parking lots, avoid parking far away from your destination and take a cab rather than unnecessarily walk long distances.

On campus, fraternities and sororities should keep their doors and windows locked, and cars should always be locked, particularly in garages

and peripheral F lots. Students and faculty should avoid walking on the edges of campus late at night without someone else. Women should always carry some sort of self-defense tool, like pepper spray, but always be aware that a robber or rapist may be carrying a firearm.

Take Back the Night, despite its radical beginnings in San Francisco, is a positive force to reinforce the dangers of violence against women. The annual rally at Vanderbilt, held Monday night, focused mainly on domestic and sexual violence, but as recent events have proven, violent crime can happen to anyone. There should be a greater effort by the university, VUPD and student organizations to educate community members about the reality of gangs and the violent crimes they commit.

Before the police, streetlights and friends, the first line of defense against violent crime is the individual. Vanderbilt community members have a responsibility to make sensible decisions about their actions. While there may always be violent crime in the world (and that includes around Vanderbilt University), individuals can take the first step in prevention by avoiding bad situations and looking out for themselves and their belongings.

Some things are more important

IMA PAYDAR
Guest Columnist

Medical school. My suitemates will tell you I think about it all the time. I panicked in September as I waited for my MCAT score and completed 18 applications. Now, I panic every time I imagine the admissions committee snickering at my misplaced commas and run-on sentences. Adrift in my thoughts, I sometimes feel like an island, entirely to myself.

I sense that other islands do exist — that other seniors panic like I do. A friend of mine felt it the day before the LSAT. The finance kids felt it the day Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy and the day fear spread on Wall Street as the House failed to pass the rescue bill. That day the Dow dropped 778 points. Gazing at the cover of *The New York Times*, I shuttered, and I know I was not alone.

Pondering the highs and lows that have marked the past month, it is easy to let the applications mire us with anxiety. It is possible all 18 medical schools will reject me. Someone might fall through the cracks, and it might be me. And as I bow down to the establishment, in this moment of unparalleled vulnerability, the potential for failure has never been greater. The stakes have never been higher.

But it is also in this moment that I look to the invaluable lessons of Vanderbilt. For it was in General Chemistry where I learned you could earn a 60 on the first exam and still ace the class. Greek History taught me that a loss at the Battle of Thermopylae does not prevent victory in

the Persian Wars. In research lab, I learned the importance of failure as a part of the learning process. The zebrafish will probably mate tomorrow, and the protocol will probably work the fifth time ... or the sixth time.

And I learned through Alternative Spring Break the most important lesson of all — the value of human life and its preservation through service. I attended the ASB retreat this past weekend as this year's 70 site leaders met their partners and found out their sites. In the words of an ASB member, it was like Christmas, except I was opening 70 presents. It was like bid day, except people were screaming about service. In this moment, I realized how foolish I had been all along, fretting about medical school when the grander purpose of life had been standing in front of me.

I hope not all seniors fear rejection letters the way I do. And as I cruise through senior year, I urge all seniors to remember the lessons we have learned in the past three years. In the world of adulthood, the potential for failure will manifest itself at all times. And yet we keep fighting because Vanderbilt taught us to do so. We contribute to humanity in our own way, we value honesty and hard work and we build careers that empower the men and women who surround us and who we love. That is, after all, the great lesson of Vanderbilt.

—Ima Paydar is a senior in the College of Arts and Science. She can be reached at ima.paydar@vanderbilt.edu.

A call for selfless voting



CAROLYN PIPPEN
Columnist

The democratic system of election in this country is pretty simple. Everyone gets one vote, everyone chooses the candidate who best represents their own personal interests and, at the end of the day, majority rules. Sounds fair, right?

The glaring hole in this theory no one seems to address is the fact that, despite almost universal suffrage in modern day America, not every citizen gets a vote. There are small demographics for which it is overwhelmingly difficult, if not impossible, to make their voices heard. For some of these groups, the upcoming election carries phenomenal weight, but unfortunately neither party can afford to champion their causes too loudly as the most direct beneficiaries of these issues will most likely never step up to the voting booth.

One such group deprived of their ability to influence this election by the technicality of age requirements is our children, namely those children being subjected to the abysmal decline of the education system. John McCain's education policy is based on the notion that families should be empowered to choose what schools their children attend, an idea appealing to voting parents concerned about their own children's future, but with exactly zero potential for the fundamental change needed to rectify the system. Barack Obama has focused his own platform on the improvement of school assessment techniques and efforts to support, rather than abandon, failing institutions.

While the economy has grabbed a fair amount of spotlight over the last few weeks, the demographic perhaps least advocated by voters is that which financial disparity had devastated long before Wall Street's demise. It may be legally permissible for a homeless American to cast his vote, but the technical difficulties of registration and education make this fundamental right a nearly impossible feat. Obama has responded to poverty as many do, by proposing to throw imaginary money at the problem through a billion dollar investment in “career pathway programs” and a raise of the minimum wage that would be impossible for already flailing small businesses to uphold. McCain has developed more creative and financially feasible options such as the “Urban Homestead Act,” which would transfer unoccupied, federally owned housing to communities for their more effective distribution.

The final two groups of citizens unrepresented in the voting booths are those who have the most to lose: their lives. Unborn children subject to legal abortion and convicted criminals facing capital punishment have no means through which they can make their voices heard this November, except through the informed decisions of their fellow Americans. Obama may not have the political gumption to oppose the death penalty altogether, but he has made strides in reforming the way in which it is implemented, leading efforts to require the videotaping of interrogations and confessions to ensure the guilt of those convicted in extreme cases. In the case of abortion, however, the only thing the Democratic ticket will fight for is the right of a woman to choose death for her unborn child.

Come Nov. 4, the ultimate choice of what button is pushed or which lever is pulled remains your own, and the electoral system will play out the way it was meant to be played. Just keep these often overlooked issues in mind, along with the knowledge that your decision affects more than just yourself, and the memory of those whose vote will most likely never count.

—Carolyn Phippen is a senior in the College of Arts and Science. She can be reached at carolyn.m.pippen@vanderbilt.edu.



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Letters must be submitted either in person by the author to the Hustler office or via e-mail to opinion.vanderbilt@gmail.com. Letters via e-mail must come from

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 - Old card game
 - Worship
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 - Pentium makers
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 - Of one's mate
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 - Weaver's need
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 - Flower holder
 - Agatha's contemporary
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 - Lilly or Wallach
 - Cavalry sword
 - Max or Buddy
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 - Cash drawer
 - Neptune's spear
 - Promotes heavily
 - "...Maria"
 - Macabre
 - Jaw, Saskatchewan
 - Dance type
 - Bacon unit
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- Eyes, in poems
 - Patriot Nathan
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10/15/08

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- Election selection
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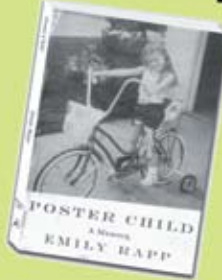
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SPORTS

MIDSEASON REPORT CARD

Compiled by Hustler Sports Staff

With a 5-1 start, No. 22 Vanderbilt has far exceeded pre-season expectations and is in a first place-tie in the SEC East. The Hustler Sports Staff grades them on all aspects of their performance to date.

Quarterbacks, B-

Redshirt senior Chris Nickson was solid through the first four games of the year, more with his legs than his arm, rushing for five touchdowns and throwing for three with no interceptions. However, he never threw for more than 91 yards in a game, accounting for Vanderbilt's 116th-place rank in passing offense out of 119 teams. After injuring his shoulder against Ole Miss, Nickson struggled greatly against Auburn and Mississippi State, tossing two interceptions and passing for only a combined 19 yards. Redshirt junior Mackenzi Adams came in relief the last three games and played very well, especially in rallying the team to victory over Auburn with two touchdown passes. As a result, Adams has been named starter for the foreseeable future at quarterback.



NICKSON

Running backs, B-

Redshirt junior Jared Hawkins has taken on the role of the featured back and was great through the first four weeks. However, he has been rendered obsolete over the past two weeks, as opposing defenses have stacked the box to stop the run and force the Commodores to beat them with the pass. Redshirt senior Jeff Jennings has struggled with injuries for much of the year and could be considered a disappointment thus far in the season. He showed some flashes of good production in Saturday's loss to Mississippi State, but needs to build on that performance. Redshirt sophomore Gaston Miller has fumbled twice on limited touches and needs to work on his ball security.



HAWKINS

Wide receivers, C+

Limited production from the receivers has been partly due to the fact that the unit has been decimated by injuries. From here on however, the team will have back redshirt seniors Andrew Diomande and George Smith and redshirt junior Alex Washington. Another issue is that there has not been much for the receivers to do, as Vanderbilt is last in the SEC in passing attempts. Redshirt freshman Jamie Graham and redshirt senior Sean Walker have been used very effectively on many receivers runs this season, junior Justin Wheeler has developed a rapport with Adams, and redshirt freshman tight end Brandon Barden has been a pleasant surprise leading the team with two TD catches. Still, if the Commodores want to win the SEC East, the receivers will need to step up production.



WHEELER

Offensive line, B

The offensive line has been a pleasant surprise for this team, as no one expected a unit that was replacing all five starters to have much success early in the season. Redshirt junior Bradley Vierling has been the glue that has kept them together and redshirt sophomore Reilly Lauer has performed admirably against top-flight SEC pass rushers despite consistently being outweighed by his opponents. The line has only given up 10 sacks through the first six games, but needs to cut down on giving opponents free shots on the Commodore quarterbacks. They also need to go back to the drawing board after struggling to open up holes in the running game in recent weeks.



VIERLING (60), LAUER (68)

Defensive line, B+

The Commodores' defensive success this year begins with their front four, which has amassed nine sacks and 18 tackles for loss so far in the first half of the season. The Commodores lead the SEC in sacks so far this year. This unit has been led by the stellar play of junior tackle Greg Billinger, who also has a blocked kick on the season, and junior ends Broderick Stewart and Steven Stone. The defensive line has also received excellent contributions for some of the younger members of the unit such as sophomore tackle T.J. Greenstone and ends sophomore Theron Kadri and redshirt sophomore Terriall Brannon. In the second half, the Commodores are going to have to do a better job of stopping the run, as their last three SEC opponents have been able to run the ball almost at will against the Commodores' defense.



BILLINGER

Linebackers, A-

Redshirt freshman Chris Marve has been outstanding in his first season, getting 44 tackles, 22 solo and also the most important forced fumble of the year when he saved a go-ahead Ole Miss touchdown. Marve's size, speed and smarts on the field have made him ideal at the middle linebacker position. Also, junior Patrick Benoist has been among the league leaders in tackles all season and has twice been named conference Defensive Player of the Week. The decision to bring junior Brett Trice from safety to linebacker has also paid off. Though this unit has performed beyond expectations after the loss of Jonathan Goff and Marcus Buggs to the NFL, improvement is needed in run defense.



BENOIST

Secondary, A-

The Vanderbilt secondary has been as good as advertised, tied for third in the nation with 11 interceptions. Hard-hitting safeties redshirt junior Ryan Hamilton and redshirt senior Reshard Langford have five interceptions between them, including three in one game by Hamilton in a remarkable defensive effort against Ole Miss. Also, junior cornerbacks D.J. Moore and Myron Lewis have each picked off two passes, and redshirt seniors Jared Fagan and Josh Allen have provided solid relief for injured nickelback Darlron Spead. It's not surprising that the only game this season that the Commodores didn't pick off a pass, they lost.



HAMILTON (2), MOORE (17)

Special teams, A-

The Special Teams has arguably been the best unit for the Commodores thus far. Junior punter Brett Upson has been magnificent, especially with his ability to pin opponents inside their own 20-yard lines. Senior kicker Bryant Hahnfeldt looks as if he has fully recovered from the injuries that plagued him in previous seasons. Returner Moore leads the SEC in punt returns so far, and has been vital in giving the Commodores great field position with many of his returns. For the rest of the season, Vanderbilt is going to need its special teams to continue its great play and hopefully find a spark on kick returns as the Commodores rank 10th in the SEC in that category.



MOORE

Coaching, B+

The Commodores have gotten to where they are today on the strength of great coaching by Bobby Johnson and his staff. This team is very disciplined and knows how to get the job done. Critics may point to Saturday's loss to Mississippi State as Johnson showed too much dedication to an injured Nickson. The Commodores did not come to play offensively last week and had a poor offensive game plan under Ted Cain, but that should be the anomaly this season as they won't overlook another team like they did with the Bulldogs. Expect Johnson to get serious consideration for Coach of the Year, as he has built this program almost from scratch and brought it to national prominence.



JOHNSON, ADAMS (9)

SEC POWER RANKINGS

Compiled by Geoff Hutchinson

	1. Alabama 6-0 (3-0 SEC) The Crimson Tide are coming off a bye week and have an intriguing matchup on Saturday with unpredictable Ole Miss. They were leapfrogged by Texas for the No. 1 ranking in the country.
	2. Florida 5-1 (3-1) Tim Tebow and the Gators looked awfully impressive in their rout of LSU 51-21 Saturday night in the Swamp.
	3. Georgia 5-1 (2-1) Georgia handled the Volunteers more easily than the score showed on Saturday, but their next three games will not be as easy, starting with Vanderbilt this weekend.
	4. LSU 4-1 (1-1) LSU's vaunted defense was exposed against the Gators, as Florida was able to move the ball at will against the Tigers.
	5. Vanderbilt 5-1 (3-1) Vanderbilt's offensive ineptitude against Mississippi State caused the Commodores to suffer their first loss of the season and make a change at quarterback.
	6. South Carolina 5-2 (2-2) Besides Alabama, the Gamecocks may be the hottest team in the SEC right now, reeling off four straight wins after starting the season 1-2.
	7. Kentucky 4-2 (0-2) Week after week, the Kentucky defense keeps showing it's among the best in the SEC. However, their offense not so much.
	8. Ole Miss 3-3 (1-2) You never know what to expect for the Rebels, who head into Tuscaloosa this week in a very tough road game. They have beaten Florida on the road, but have blown games against Vanderbilt and South Carolina at home.
	9. Auburn 4-3 (2-3) One week after firing their offensive coordinator, Auburn proceeded to have their worst offensive display of the season. Somewhere, Tony Franklin is laughing.
	10. Mississippi State 2-4 (1-2) The Bulldogs have played better as of late, and that showed in their win over the Commodores in Starkville on Saturday in a sterling defensive effort.
	11. Arkansas 3-3 (1-2) Arkansas's upset over Auburn gave the Razorbacks their first SEC win of the season after getting blown out of their first two conference games.
	12. Tennessee 2-4 (0-3) The Vols played much better against Georgia, but still have major issues that must be addressed if they hope to finish with a winning record. Tennessee is off to its worst start in 20 years.

Swimming team heads to UT after first win in 2 years

Hustler Staff Report

After their first win in dual-meet action since 2006, the Commodores' swimming and diving team will travel to Knoxville on Friday to face Tennessee and Arkansas.

The Vanderbilt swimming and diving team defeated Centre College 127-106 and Rhodes College 176-43 in a double-dual last Saturday at the Centennial Sportsplex in Nashville. It was the program's first win in dual-meet action since starting the program up again almost two years ago.

"It is exciting for us," said head coach Jeremy Organ. "It is good to do it at home and have the girls see some success with our fans here."

Sophomore Leigh-Ann Axt set



AXT

the tone for the Commodores Saturday as she cruised to a first-place finish in the 1,000-yard freestyle with a time of 10:32.84, 40 seconds faster than the second place finisher.

The Kingwood, Texas,

native also placed second in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 59.80. Five events later, Axt added to her list of achievements as she cruised to the 500-yard freestyle title with a time of 5:12.49, nearly 11 seconds faster than the second place competitor.

Sophomore Jennifer Molchan followed Axt's first-place finish with one of her own as she swam to finish the 200-yard freestyle with a time of 1:57.64.

Later in the meet, freshman Kelly Obranowicz picked up her second-straight 100-yard butterfly title with a time of 55.06. Obranowicz continued her strong fall season as she placed third in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 25.62. Freshman Zoe Cooper-

Surma finished right behind Obranowicz with a time of 25.77.

Freshman Laura Dillon picked up where she left off two weeks ago as she placed second in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:16:25.

Freshmen Nicole Woodworth and Liz Asche swept the 1-meter dive as they finished first and second overall with scores of 239.40 and 198.08, respectively. The duo also picked up the top two finishes in the 3-meter dive, with Woodworth claiming the top honor with a score of 227.33.

Freshman Allie Voss picked up a first-place finish of her own in the 100-yard breaststroke by swimming to a time of 1:08.49.

The Commodores' 200-yard freestyle relay team of

sophomore Christina Chao, sophomore Anna Fargo, Molchan and Obranowicz picked up the gold medal after recording an impressive time of 1:41:48.

After the meet, the Commodores' coach talked about how this can help the team gain some momentum heading into the conference season.

"Hopefully, it is the first two of many, many more," Organ said. "We've got a long road ahead of us, and we have to keep the focus on the end of the season and doing our best at the (Southeastern Conference meets) and getting better each week. It is a nice stepping stone, but we've definitely got a long way to go yet." ■

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