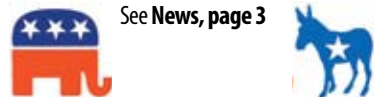


The freshmen step up against South Carolina...
See Sports, page 6

How will the election change after NH?
See News, page 3



Traffic and Parking just can't catch a break...
See The Rant, page 5



TODAY'S WEATHER



Partly Cloudy, 48/34
Extended forecast, page 2

The Vanderbilt Hustler

THE VOICE OF VANDERBILT SINCE 1888

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2008 • 120TH YEAR, NO. 2

THE WALL

compiled by LAKENDRA SCOTT

TODAY Swim Meet

Vanderbilt will host its first home meet since the program was reestablished. The event begins at 1 p.m. at the Centennial Sportsplex.

TODAY Human diseases mini symposium

Vanderbilt will host a mini symposium entitled "Mouse Models of Human Diseases" in the Student Life Center Lower Meeting Rooms from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

THIS WEEKEND Original Cast auditions

Vanderbilt's premier Broadway revue troupe will hold auditions today at 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 4 p.m. in the Branscomb Rec room.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12 VU Theatre callbacks

Callbacks for "The Last Five Years" will be held at 10 a.m. in Neely Auditorium. Callbacks are posted on the VUT Web site.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12 CD release party

Come celebrate the variety of artifacts collected in the "God in Music City" CD in the Commons Center at 7 p.m.

MONDAY, JAN. 14 Harry Belafonte lecture

Belafonte will speak as part of the Chancellor's Lecture Series commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. The lecture will be at 6 p.m. in the Student Life Center Ballroom with a reception at 5 p.m.

SUNDAY 'Somewhere in Between: Recent Prints by Xiao Xin Lu'

The Fine Arts Gallery is hosting an exhibit of works by Xiao Xin Lu, a 2006 Vanderbilt alumna and recipient of the of the Hamblet Award. Lu's works will be on display until Jan. 31. Gallery hours are noon-4 p.m. Monday-Friday and 1-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

See <http://calendar.vanderbilt.edu> for more events.

Bennett forgoes senior season, declares for NFL Draft

by WILL GIBBONS
Senior Sports Reporter

The Southeastern Conference's all-time leader in receptions will not be adding to his record next fall. Earl Bennett announced he would forgo his senior season to enter the 2008 NFL Draft at a press conference Thursday afternoon.

It was the end of a long decision-making process for Bennett, who consulted many close to him.

"After thinking for weeks and weeks about the situation, talking with my family, talking with my coaches, my friends and close relatives, mainly talking to God to guide me through this process...I decided to skip my senior year

and make myself eligible for the NFL Draft," Bennett said. "There is no other place I would've rather been these three years. I just thank coach Johnson and his staff for continuing to recruit me even

when I was committed to Kentucky, and I thank them for allowing me the chance to come in and help this program and continue to build on it." Bennett had an extremely productive career for Vanderbilt, finishing with 236 career receptions, 2,852 yards and 20 touchdowns. In 2007, the Biltetnikoff Trophy semifinalist

caught 70 passes for 830 yards and had five touchdowns to earn first-team All-SEC honors.

Please see **BENNETT**, page 7

—To listen to a podcast of Bennett's announcement of his decision, go to:



January mAdNeSS

VANDY GAMEDAY: 13 VANDERBILT 80 SOUTH CAROLINA 73



OLIVER WOLFE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Senior Shan Foster and the rest of the Commodores (16-0) were all business during their 80-73 victory over South Carolina on Wednesday.

Business as usual for undefeated Commodores

by ANDREW BARGE
Senior Sports Reporter

Coach Kevin Stallings said he had never seen South Carolina play better. Against the still-undefeated Commodores, however, even its best wasn't enough.

Vanderbilt (16-0, 1-0 Southeastern Conference) displayed tough defense and clutch shooting down the stretch to beat the Gamecocks (8-7, 0-1 SEC) 80-73 at Memorial Gym on Wednesday night.

The game was close throughout, and South Carolina had cut the lead to two with 2:35 remaining when senior Alex Gordon responded with an NBA-range 3-pointer, and the Dores never looked back.

Please see **SEC OPENER**, page 7

Free Foster jerseys highlight of inaugural pep rally

by JARRED AMATO
Editor in Chief

Senior Shan Foster smiled as he watched Vandy Fanatics and Vanderbilt Student Government members handle his replica jerseys following Tuesday's practice. The next day, students waited up to two hours to ensure they were one of the fortunate 500

to receive them.

The long lines outside of the Memorial Gym student entrance highlighted the first ever Memorial Madness, a pep rally that preceded No. 13 Vanderbilt's 80-73 victory over South Carolina

Please see **MEMORIAL MADNESS**, page 3

—To view a slideshow of the game and the pep rally, go to:



CHRIS PHARE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Fans waited in line for up to two hours for a chance to receive one of 500 free Shan Foster jerseys.

School schedules stymie sorority recruitment

by SARA GAST
News Editor

ELIZABETH MIDDLEBROOKS
Managing Editor

Freshman and upperclassman women going through recruitment have enough to do this week — and that's before they consider classes.

Panhellenic recruitment resumed Thursday evening as prospective members visited up to five houses in the entertainment round.

For the upperclassmen, this was one of the most time-consuming rounds to prepare for — and it came two days after school started.

"(Starting classes in the

middle of rush is) difficult because I feel like I start the semester already behind. I have to play catch-up from day one," said junior Laura Layton, a member of Kappa Delta sorority. "It's difficult, but it's manageable; the most difficult part is the lack of sleep."

The behind-the-scenes work required women to

spend extra hours at their houses preparing.

"A lot more prep work goes into rounds than most people realize," said junior

Please see **SORORITIES**, page 3

—To view a slideshow of sorority rush rounds, go to:



As political races heat up, attack ads in question

by JARRED AMATO
Editor in Chief

Sen. John McCain may have a problem with negative campaigning, but he shouldn't, according to Vanderbilt political science professor John Geer.

With heated races for both the Democratic and Republican nominations underway, both candidates and voters will benefit from the expected increase in political attack ads, since negative ads contain more substantive information than positive ads, Geer said.



GEER

"Some candidates such as McCain may decry negative ads, but we need to hear both sides of all issues," Geer said. "Positive ads are especially poor vehicles for accomplishing that worthy goal."

McCain, who defeated Mitt Romney in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, disagreed.

After being bitten by political attacks in South Carolina in the 2000 primary, his supporters have set up what they're calling a "Truth Squad" in response to negative campaigning.

Geer said he doesn't understand why.

"Many pundits view negative ads as counterproductive, but nothing could be further from the truth," Geer said. "They generate a dialogue that helps voters understand the respective positions of the candidates."

Another benefit of attack ads is that they will make the eventual nominee tougher for the general election, which is even more vicious, Geer said.

"How candidates handle the criticism will provide insight to how they might govern, since those who occupy the Oval Office are the frequent target of harsh attacks," Geer said.

Still, McCain refuses to use negative campaigning and instead has welcomed his status as the self-proclaimed "underdog."

"The Republican establishment has never embraced me in my entire life," said McCain, who is preparing for primaries in Michigan on Jan. 15 and then in Nevada and South Carolina on Jan. 19. "But I think we just proved that we can get the support of enough Republicans to win an election."

On the Democratic side, Sen. Hilary Clinton captured an upset victory over Sen. Barack Obama in New Hampshire's primary on Tuesday. Still, Geer said he hopes that does not let Obama off the hook.

"While Hillary Clinton's surprise win in New Hampshire may lessen the push by some of her supporters to criticize Barack Obama's record," Geer said, "the public would be better served if all of the remaining candidates undergo this type of scrutiny." ■

—The Associated Press and Vanderbilt News Service contributed reporting to this article.

—Jarred Amato can be reached at jarred.s.amato@vanderbilt.edu.

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Odds & Ends

WEATHER
compiled by ELIZABETH MIDDLEBROOKS

SATURDAY



Partly Cloudy, 54/39

SUNDAY



Showers, 50/32

MONDAY



Partly Cloudy, 45/30

VUPD CRIME LOG
compiled by LAKENDRA SCOTT

There is no crime to report

Check out <http://police.vanderbilt.edu/crimelog.htm> for complete listings.

SERVICE GUIDE

The Vanderbilt Hustler (ISSN 0042-2517), the student newspaper of Vanderbilt University, is published every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the academic year except for during exam periods and vacations. The paper is not printed during summer break.

The Vanderbilt Hustler allocates one issue of the newspaper to each student and is available at various points on campus for free. Additional copies are \$.50 each.

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CORRECTIONS

The Hustler strives for accuracy and fairness and will correct errors of substance. See our correction policy on the Opinion page for information about notifying us.

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BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available in Sarratt 130 during business hours.

THE 123456789 STARTING 9

compiled by LAKENDRA SCOTT

1 Sir Edmund Hillary, first man to reach top of Everest, dies at 88

NEW ZEALAND — Sir Edmund Hillary, the unassuming beekeeper who conquered Mount Everest to win renown as one of the 20th century's greatest adventurers, has died, announced New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark. He was 88.

"The legendary mountaineer, adventurer and philanthropist is the best-known New Zealander ever to have lived," Clark told The Associated Press.

Hillary reached Everest's summit shortly before climbing companion Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953.

He did not reveal whether he or Norgay reached the summit first until 1999.

2 Kerry endorses Obama for president, bypassing Clinton, Edwards

CHARLESTON, S.C. — 2004 Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry gave Barack Obama a timely endorsement Thursday, snubbing both Hillary Rodham Clinton and his own vice presidential running mate.

Kerry came to South Carolina to embrace Obama, two weeks before the state's primary and after Clinton's emotional victory in New Hampshire, according to The Associated Press.

The Massachusetts senator said there were other candidates he had worked with and respected, but Obama was best able to bring Americans together.

3 Study: HIV needs lots of human help to do its damage

WASHINGTON — The AIDS virus hijacks human proteins to do its damage, but until now few of its targets were known. On Thursday, Harvard researchers unveiled a longer list, an important step in the hunt for new drugs, The Associated Press reported.

HIV consists of just nine genes, but it makes up for that bare-bones structure in a sinister way — by literally taking over the protein's cellular machinery so it can multiply and then destroy.

The new research, published online Thursday by the journal Science, found 273 of these potential targets.

4 Bush predicts Mideast peace treaty before he leaves White House

RAMALLAH, West Bank — President Bush said Thursday a peace accord between Israel and Palestine will require "painful political concessions" by each.

"Now is the time to make difficult choices," Bush told The Associated Press after a first-ever visit to the Palestinian territories, a day after separate meetings with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem.

Bush is in the Mideast for eight days, trying to bolster his goal of achieving a peace agreement by the end of his presidency in a year.

5 US formally protests Iranian harassment of US warships in Persian Gulf

WASHINGTON — The United States on Thursday lodged a formal diplomatic protest with Iran over an incident in which Iranian speedboats harassed U.S. warships, The Associated Press reported.

The protest repeats U.S. complaints about Sunday's "provocative" action in the Strait of Hormuz, the State Department said.

In Tehran, Iranian Foreign Ministry officials said they were unaware of the U.S. protest.

At a Pentagon news conference, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the Iranian boats had acted "in a pretty aggressive manner."

6 Best Wok added to Commodore card

VANDERBILT — Students now have another good option on the card in Chinese restaurant Best Wok.

Best Wok began taking online orders Monday and has already seen a tremendous increase in sales, said junior Tyler Armstrong, co-chair of Vanderbilt Student Government's Campus Services committee.

"Students suggested the idea, and it got done," Armstrong said.

"We're always open to adding new restaurants to the card." Taste of Nashville should expand even further in the coming month, Armstrong said.

7 Documents: Missing Marine claimed officer raped her, though family says history of lying

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. — A pregnant Marine who vanished last month before she was to testify in a military probe claimed "a senior officer ... had raped her and that the investigation had gone sour," according to new court documents.

The woman made the allegation to her stepmother, who told investigators looking for the 20-year-old lance corporal that her stepdaughter had a history of compulsive lying, the documents filed this week state.

The Associated Press reported Thursday military officials said they ordered the missing Marine's roommate, Sgt. Daniel Durham, to answer questions about the case.

8 Tennessee receives C+ for education

TENNESSEE — Tennessee ranks 16th nationally in education with an overall grade of C-plus, according to an annual report that ranks states on school quality.

The Journal Education Week found that while Tennessee has some of the nation's best education policies, it lags behind on national math and reading achievement tests, The Tennessean reported.

Tennessee increased its high school graduation rate by almost 15 percent between 2000 and 2004, the study showed.

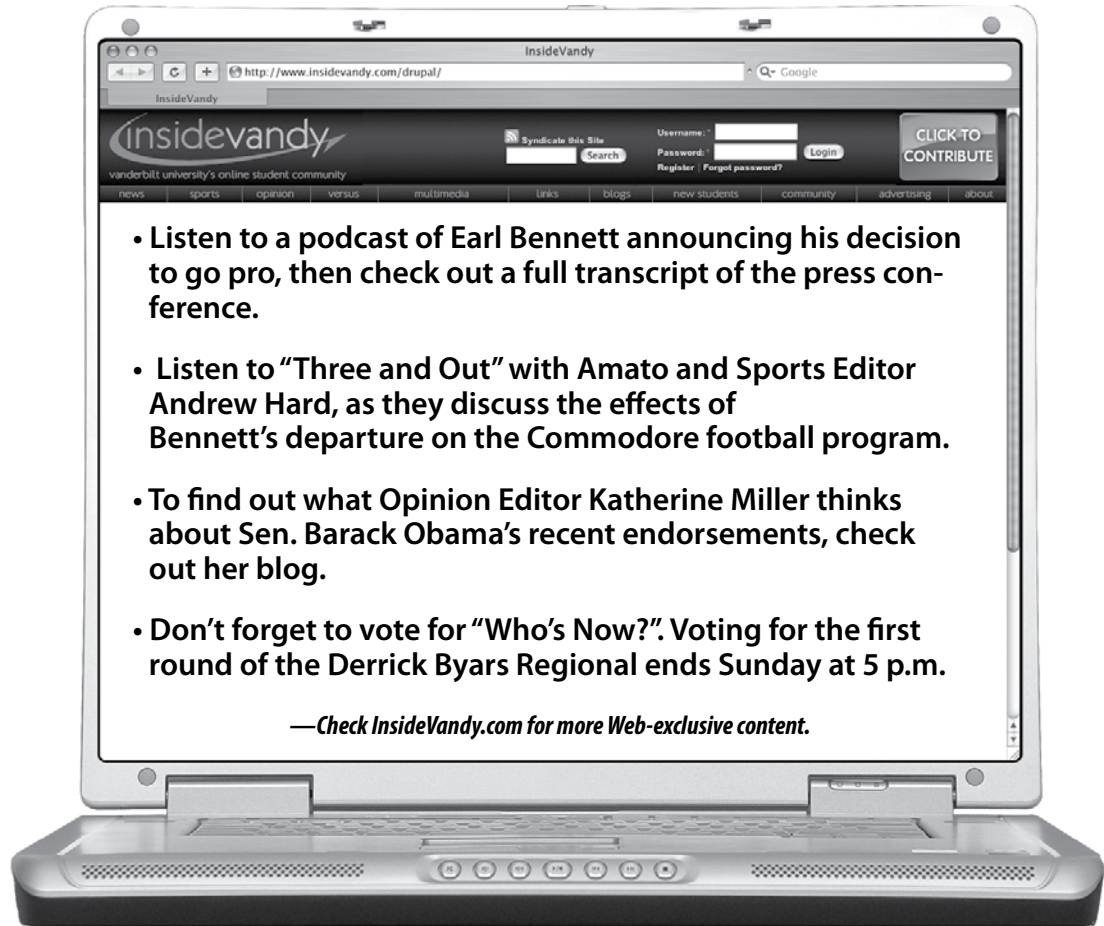
9 Richardson ends campaign for Democratic presidential nomination, endorses no one

SANTA FE, N.M. — New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson ended his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination Thursday after poor finishes in the first two contests in Iowa and New Hampshire, according to The Associated Press.

Richardson said although his support at the polls lagged, many of his leading rivals moved closer to his positions on such issues as the war in Iraq.

On a less serious note, he estimated the long campaign had included 200 debates. He quickly amended that to 24 but said, "it felt like 200."

WHAT'S NEW ON INSIDEVANDY.COM



- Listen to a podcast of Earl Bennett announcing his decision to go pro, then check out a full transcript of the press conference.
- Listen to "Three and Out" with Amato and Sports Editor Andrew Hard, as they discuss the effects of Bennett's departure on the Commodore football program.
- To find out what Opinion Editor Katherine Miller thinks about Sen. Barack Obama's recent endorsements, check out her blog.
- Don't forget to vote for "Who's Now? ". Voting for the first round of the Derrick Byars Regional ends Sunday at 5 p.m.

—Check InsideVandy.com for more Web-exclusive content.

SNAPSHOT

BEGINNING OF THE END



LAUREN FONDRIST / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Seniors Andy Johns and Walker Kahle soak in the first day of classes of their last semester. Classes began Wednesday after a two-and-a-half week break between semesters.

Undergraduate Honor Council

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MEMORIAL MADNESS: Organizers expect pep rally to become tradition

From **MEMORIAL MADNESS**, page 1
in its Southeastern Conference opener.

"It's just awesome to see that kind of support," said senior George Huddleston, who worked with fellow Fanatics Doug BeCraft and Kate Corvese and VSG athletics co-chair Marc Levit to plan the event. "The team loves it. Shan was giddy. We were doing preparations for Wednesday, and he came out of the gym and saw some of the jerseys and just had a grin from ear to ear.

"The team is successful, and it's awesome for them to see that we support them. I think they know we've been supporting them since they were 0-0."

It doesn't hurt, though, that the Commodores are now 16-0.

"The basketball team speaks for itself, and they're a huge reason why people were here so early," Levit said. "We do it for them, and we do it for the students."

According to Levit, 1,021 students attended the pep rally. Sophomore Garrett Spiegel won the 3-point contest in a tiebreaker, and freshman Dana Reynolds received a free year of tanning after winning the hula hoop contest. At halftime, freshman Lindsay Baird came up short on her half-court shot for \$30,000.

"I thought it was exciting and innovative," said sophomore Joseph Mikhail. "I hope to see more of them in years to come."

Levit expects Memorial Madness to become an

annual event and also said he was open to adding and improving things in the future. Vice Chancellor for University Affairs David Williams agreed.

"We're open from the athletic side to anything, so we really want to get the feedback from the students and find out what else we need to do," he said. "We certainly love this sort of environment."

As for switching to a more traditional Midnight Madness to kickoff the season, Levit said he was less certain that would happen.

"We're going to think about that," he said. "It depends a lot on the coach, Kevin Stallings, and the players, as well as the students."

But for the inaugural year, Corvese could not have been

more pleased with the results.

"I had butterflies in my stomach," she said. "We've all been planning this, and hoping people would come and share the enthusiasm that we have for this and then to see all the people out there was amazing."

It is clear that students take pride in making Memorial Gym one of the toughest places to play in the SEC.

"Just because we have fewer students than the rest of these huge SEC schools doesn't mean we don't have to be as spirited," Levit said, "and our guys have proven it tonight that we're a (heck) of a school." ■

—Jarred Amato can be reached at jarred.s.amato@vanderbilt.edu

SORORITIES: Lack of sleep, time commitment wear members down

From **SORORITIES**, page 1

Nicole Goetsch, also a member of Kappa Delta. "It might be more emotionally straining on the freshmen, but physically it's harder on the members."

And concentrating on classes on top of recruitment can be stressful for some.

"For the upperclassmen in a sorority, it's more stressful making sure the rounds are going to come together and getting enough sleep after spending hours at the house, while for the girls going through recruitment, it's more stressful for them since they aren't as familiar with the process," said senior Kristin Hoevel, vice president of chapter relations for Alpha Omicron Pi sorority.

"Luckily most classes don't give much work this week so you can usually catch up over the weekend without too many problems."

The timing of entertainment round can be difficult to manage with school, as well.

"It's a little tricky starting classes and having rounds, especially since some classes go late on Thursday and rounds start before (the classes) end," Hoevel said.

Freshman Erica Rothen said she tries to focus on getting enough sleep to help her get through the week.

"I've just been trying to get to bed early since I have a 9 a.m. class," she said. "I make sure I plan everything out so I'm not stressing out in the morning."

Even though recruitment requires a substantial time commitment, most women said they went into the process knowing that.



OLIVER WOLFE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Kappa Alpha Theta sorority's Theta KATs perform for potential new members during Panhellenic recruitment entertainment rounds Thursday. Sororities performed original skits and dance routines to promote their houses to women participating in rush.

"I made sure I (registered for) classes I think I can handle to make sure I wouldn't be too stressed out," Rothen said. "I know being in a sorority would be a big commitment."

Upperclassmen spent first semester and their winter breaks preparing for the week to make things easier.

"All the girls in our house work really hard throughout the first semester so by the time recruitment week rolls around we are really prepared," said senior Jessi Peterson, a member of Alpha Delta Pi sorority.

And while setting up and practicing for the entertainment round skits

involved a lot of time and effort, Kappa Alpha Theta Recruitment Chair Maggie Fesmire said she thought classes gave everyone a chance to take their mind off of recruitment.

"It takes the pressure off the whole week being about rush," she said. "I think school diffuses the stress that comes with the recruitment process, and it gives people something else to think about besides only worrying about recruitment." ■

—Sara Gast can be reached at sara.m.gast@vanderbilt.edu. Elizabeth Middlebrooks can be reached at e.middlebrooks@vanderbilt.edu

Six Republicans debate tax and spending cuts in SC, hoping to make a move in crowded race

Associated Press

Republican presidential rivals backed a blend of tax and spending cuts Thursday night to head off an election-year recession they generally agreed is avoidable.

"We should reduce taxes on middle-income Americans immediately," former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney said in a debate in the run-up to presidential primaries in Michigan and South Carolina, two states where unemployment exceeds the national average.

"The first thing is not to raise taxes," said former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. "Cut the marginal tax rate, if anything, and eventually go to a fair tax," he added, referring to his plan for a national sales tax to replace the income tax.

Arizona Sen. John McCain stressed spending cuts to get the budget deficit under control. He pledged to "wield the veto pen" and block all pork barrel spending bills that Congress sends him.

While the debate was held in South Carolina, the Michigan primary is next on the campaign calendar, a contest in which Romney, Huckabee and McCain are the principal antagonists.

South Carolina's primary is scheduled for Jan. 19 and has drawn a different group of competitors. Former Sen. Fred Thompson of Tennessee has made it clear he needs a victory or something close to it, while McCain and Huckabee also are counting on a strong showing.

Thompson underscored the urgency of a strong South Carolina showing when

he launched an attack on Huckabee, standing a few feet away on the debate stage.

"This is a battle for the heart and soul of the Republican Party and its future. On the one hand you have the Reagan Revolution ... on the other hand you have the direction that Governor Huckabee would take us ... liberal economic policies, liberal foreign policies," he said.

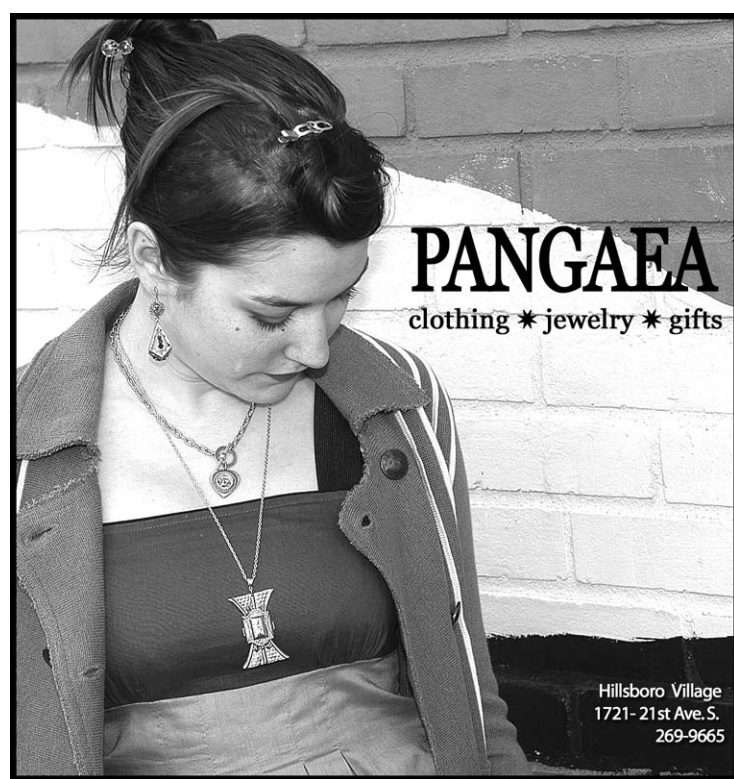
Huckabee seemed unruffled. "The Air Force has a saying that if you're not catching flak you're not over the target. I'm catching the flak. I must be over the target," he said. He added he had cut taxes as governor of Arkansas and was re-elected by his constituents, a sure sign, he added, that they were pleased with his performance.

The debate was sponsored by the South Carolina Republican Party and Fox News Channel.

The economy dominated the first portion of the debate, reflecting increased concern that a recession may be imminent.

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who is not making a strong effort in either Michigan or South Carolina, also advocated tax cuts, and his campaign purchased an advertisement during the first commercial break that said he would send the largest tax cut in history to Congress on his first day in the White House.

The first three contests of the Republican campaign have yielded three different winners: Huckabee, first in the leadoff Iowa caucuses; Romney, victor in the little-contested Wyoming caucuses; and McCain, triumphant in last Tuesday's fiercely fought New Hampshire primary. ■



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OUR VIEW

Earl, thanks for 3 great years

When asked what he would buy with his first NFL paycheck, Earl Bennett did not hesitate.

“My mom a house,” he said. The answer reaffirmed what we already knew — that, as talented a player as Bennett is, he’s an even a better person. For No. 10, it was never about the records. In fact, those seemed to matter more to us than to him. After games, Bennett used to say he would trade all of his catches in for a bowl berth. And he meant it.

Looking back at his remarkable career, so many games stand out.

We saw him break out against Richmond on Family Weekend in 2005.

He never looked back.

We saw him torch Florida in “The Swamp” and unfairly get called for an excessive celebration penalty, which was ironic considering his modesty, and then again in 2006, when he made two defenders knock heads.

We saw him make The Catch on a slant over the middle to give the Commodores their first victory over Tennessee since 1982. Bennett said that game was his favorite.

This season, we saw Bennett earn first-team All-SEC honors, despite constant double teams and erratic quarterback play. And we saw him play through pain most of us have never felt.

Players like Bennett do not come around often, and while selfish Commodore fans and players would have liked to see him return for his final season, we both understand and support his decision.

To the NFL team that drafts Bennett, you will not regret it. You are not only getting a great route-runner with exceptional hands and fearless attitude, but over 6,000 new fans.

“Hopefully people will remember me by my character and not my outstanding ability on the football field,” Bennett said Thursday.

How about we do both?

Top 10 Days Vanderbilt Should Have Off of Classes

SYDNEY WILMER
Guest Columnist

Here at Vanderbilt, class churns on no matter what fabulous excuse we have not to go to class. In honor of our incredibly brief break this year and in sad, sad recognition of next year’s short vacation, we break down the top 10 days we *should* be getting free passes on.

10. **Take Your Child To Work Day:**
The Career Center should back this one. Properly placed on a resume, this could look like internship.
9. **Mental Health Day:**
No way! Your eyeball is twitching too?
8. **Valentine’s Day:**
This is a rough day for most people. There is too much chocolate, affection and low self-esteem. Why make it worse with classes?
7. **Midterm Reading Day:**
If midterms are theoretically 50 percent of final grades, students should demand a reading day in late February.
6. **England’s National Sleep-In Day:**
The British sleep in on Halloween. Let’s move it to Nov. 1.
5. **Talk Like A Pirate Day:**
Arrg, Mateys! How can Vanderbilt students fully appreciate the significance of this holiday in class?
4. **Arbor Day:**
Vanderbilt’s campus is a national arboretum, after all. As much time as the Vanderbilt landscaping crews put into the school, we could all use a day to honor their work.
3. **Cornelius Vanderbilt’s Half Birthday:**
So, the Commodore’s birthday rolls around in late May, but Nov. 27 marks the university’s namesake’s half birthday. It might be a week after Thanksgiving, but the original Hustler deserves a party.
2. **Martin Luther King Day:**
Stevie Wonder said it best in his song “Happy Birthday” — Martin Luther King’s birthday deserves recognition. And Vanderbilt students need adequate time to reflect on both one of America’s most courageous and inspiring leaders and the civil rights movement in general.
1. **Today**
It would be really great if we could sleep in guilt-free because we don’t have classes. REALLY great.



COLUMN

Fan support critical to team

MARC LEVIT
Guest Columnist

“Teamwork on three!” the undefeated men’s basketball team shouted in unison just before erupting onto the court. Although this year’s team is loaded with primetime players and star power, Southeastern Conference Player of the Year candidate Shan Foster believes, “Our main goal is to stay humble and hungry.”

Whereas big egos, razzle-dazzle SportsCenter highlight reels and the glitzy lure of the NBA often muddle team chemistry (ask Southern California fans what they think of O.J. Mayo now), our team is different. Our team is selfless, supportive and truly devoted to one another. Despite piling up regional and national praise

and accolades, Foster cares most about staying together as a team and believes, “If we stay together, anything is possible.”

Staying together is exactly what Memorial Madness is about. Memorial Madness was not a one-time event, but rather a season long celebration of the team — the teamwork between players and students. The student section was packed, loud and crazy! Our players loved it, South Carolina hated it, and the Commodore faithful had a great time watching another impressive victory.

But what makes college basketball so unique is we students did not only watch the game, we truly affected the game’s outcome. Home-court advantage is huge during SEC play, and our spirit and enthusiasm Wednesday

night proved once again that Memorial Gymnasium houses the best college basketball experience in the SEC.

Wear your jerseys, T-shirts and Vanderbilt memorabilia with pride. Show up early, and show up loud. Heckle the other team, belt the alma mater, chant “Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!” Go crazy! South Carolina looked absolutely terrified to see an entire student section filled far before they took their warm-up shots. Our classmates and friends deserve our support. After all, basketball is a team game, and we students must do our part.

—Marc Levit is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Science. He is the Athletics Co-Chair for VSG. He can be reached at marc.levit@vanderbilt.edu.

COLUMN

Men are not to blame for single women



ANDREW SOLOMON
Columnist

I know it may come as a shock to some of you, but I like to consider myself a fairly tolerant person. I love animals. I’m polite (when sober). I fully support women’s suffrage. But one thing I cannot stand is people who complain constantly.

I swear, I can’t walk to class and back without someone griping to me about how tough and miserable their life is.

“I have so much work. My girlfriend was sleeping with her T.A. Daddy beat me.” Seriously, I sometimes put disconnected headphones on just so people won’t have an opportunity to bitch to me.

But there’s one complaint I get more than anything: Girls always want to know why they can’t find a boyfriend at Vandy.

Now before I continue, a disclaimer: I’m not sexist. I love women. A few of them are even crazy enough to hook up with me. I just think this issue needs to be addressed once and for all so people stop talking to me about it.

I know. It’s hard being single in college. After you get through the hundreds of friends you’ve made, a family who loved you enough to send you to college and the thousands of opportunities you have each day to meet someone new, it can be pretty lonely. Seriously girls, I know. If you want, you can come over to my place later, and we can talk about it.

Unfortunately, at the end of the day, it’s true. Statistically very few people are in committed relationships with another student here at Vandy. Most people are single, and a significant portion of people in relationships date someone outside the school. What’s the problem?

Well, from what I can gather from the bits of conversation I actually paid attention to, the girls blame us. Apparently men at Vanderbilt are immature, irresponsible and not interested in commitment. Those are big words, and a guy like me finds it tough to avoid behavior he can barely spell. But most of the guys here at Vandy seem normal to me and should have no trouble finding someone to date if they wanted. So if the guys aren’t the problem, we’re going to need to find another sex to blame this on ...

Gentle readers, if you want to date someone, you have to be dateable. Using a scientific process I like to refer to as “drinking until the phone calls go away,” I have come up with a list of things girls can do to become more dateable to guys on this campus. It’s not that good guys aren’t out there; we just don’t want to date you. Yet.

First off, stop playing games. I know “guys do it too,” but we pale in comparison to what you try to pull off. Don’t ignore his phone calls purposely. Don’t act aloof when he’s around your friends. Playing games is one of the quickest ways short of sleeping with the best friend to get thrown into the “manipulative bitch” category. Being honest and genuine is one of the most underrated and attractive qualities for a girl to have. Grow up and be okay with genuinely being interested in someone.

Second, drop the act. I can only speak for myself when writing, but one of the

Please see **SOLOMON**, page 5

OPINION POLICY

The Vanderbilt Hustler opinion section aims to stimulate discussion in the Vanderbilt community. In that spirit, columnists, guest columnists and authors of letters to the editor are expected to provide logical argument to back their views. Unreasonable arguments, arguments in bad faith or arguments in vain between columnists have no place in The Hustler and will not be published. The Hustler welcomes reader viewpoints and offers three methods of expression: letters to the editor, guest columns and feedback on our Web site.

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

from a Vanderbilt e-mail address where the identity of the sender is clear or be accompanied with a phone call to the editor-in-chief. With rare exception, all letters must be received by 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense submissions for length as well as clarity.

Lengthy letters that focus on an issue affecting students might be considered for a guest column at the editor’s discretion.

All submissions become the property of The Hustler and must conform to the legal standards of Vanderbilt Student Communications, of which The Hustler is a division.

CORRECTION POLICY

Accuracy is our profession. As the “Voice of Vanderbilt,” we are committed to ensuring our work is fair and accurate. Errors of substance will be corrected. With very rare exception, these corrections will be listed on Page 2.

Bring corrections to the Hustler office in Sarratt 130 or e-mail us at editor@vanderbilthustler.com. You may also report them by telephone to the news line at (615) 322-2424 or the editor-in-chief at (615) 322-3757.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Your voice doesn’t stop here. The Vanderbilt Hustler encourages its readers to voice their opinions on legislative issues. The following students and legislators represent the Vanderbilt community.

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U.S. Sen. Bob Corker
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4944
(615) 250-8160

Rep. Jim Cooper
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(615) 736-5295

Rep. Brenda Gilmore
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Sen. Douglas Henry Jr.
Tenn. District 21
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Metro District 18
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Nashville, TN 37212
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COLUMN

Never underestimate the Clintons' power



KATHERINE MILLER
Opinion Editor

Basically, Sen. Hillary Clinton ruins everything.

As she stood there Tuesday night, smiling genuinely in her Chairman Mao jacket made of fabric ripped straight off an expensive sofa, Clinton proved once again that polls aren't always accurate. Mere days ago, Clinton was dead, now she's overcome a broken campaign to square off again with Sen. Barack Obama for the nomination.

Her entire campaign, constructed around the principles of ironclad experience and inevitability, failed her in Iowa as youth and populism shunned the establishment and her inevitability cracked.

Reportedly, Clinton staffers anticipated the loss in Iowa as soon as they heard that 280,000 people participated, rather than the 260,000 they hoped — Obama had mobilized younger, more highly-educated voters. Clinton, bitterly disappointed that she had lost the young idealists she and her husband championed more than a decade ago, left Iowa under the cover of night, while Obama rolled into New Hampshire on a chariot of optimism, expecting a decisive win in the Granite State.

The disastrous string of events leading up to and through Iowa culminated in Clinton's emotional breakdown. Ironically, her revival has been attributed to the breakdown of her icy Manchurian Candidate-like image — her playing the lady of woe card.

Did emotion save Clinton? It sure as hell didn't hurt.

While the headline of Clinton crying in a diner sounded straight out of a Loretta Lynn song, the emotion resonated with voters. Women comprised a record-breaking 57 percent of New Hampshire primary voters, carrying Clinton to winged victory. Apparently, Oprah Winfrey's divine mandate to vote for Obama simply could not compete.

Clinton's rejuvenated tap dance to victory might have had little to do with gentle weeping, though. She of the establishment and centrist policies carried a 2:1 advantage over Obama, and even edged John "Son of

a Mill Worker" Edwards with voters whose income is less than \$50,000.

The reason behind this is unclear. Perhaps Clinton's policy-heavy speeches resonated with the unheard electorate, who found more substance with Clinton's razor-sharp robotronics than Obama's mysterious "hope." If she can maintain a vice-like hold on the less affluent, he could face serious problems in the near future.

His dueling opponent, though, faces bigger decisions. Clinton reportedly spent Tuesday planning a complete reconstruction of her campaign under the assumption that she would lose and lose badly. Does she keep to the status quo? Does she attempt to maintain Humanized Hillary? She can't go crying in just any roadside stop. Does she strike at Obama while she can, as former President Bill Clinton has advocated, and attempt to undercut his viability as a national candidate? There's an incredibly high risk in that pursuit — Obama's bipartisan message of hope, albeit vague, could turn the other cheek and destroy Clinton if she goes negative.

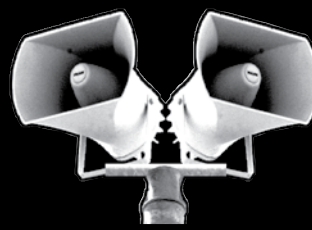
Regardless, in a series of events so divergent from their Republican counterparts, Obama and Clinton have finally broken free from their shifting mantle of inevitability that has plagued them this fall. Super Tuesday will resemble a saloon shootout, unlike the mediocre game of duck-duck-geese the Republicans are currently engaged in.

To win the shootout and go Republican duck hunting, Clinton needs to maintain her ladylike openness, court Edwards's followers and rebuild her image as the candidate that strikes terrible, terrible fear into the downtrodden hearts of Republicans.

Nonetheless, Tuesday's message is clear: Never underestimate the Clintons. They're like a hydra or a really sadistic rhododendron: You can try to cut one part off or slap it around in Iowa, but it will just come back. Harder. Better. Faster. Stronger. Wearing bright scarves and saying nasty things about Barry Obama, crying when they need to.

—Katherine Miller is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences. She can be reached at katherine.m.miller@vanderbilt.edu.

THE RANT



What is on your mind? The Rant is your place to anonymously sound off on any issue you want. Send in your rants with the subject "Rant" to: opinion@vanderbilthustler.com

Compiled by Katherine Miller

"What is up with the truck that drives around Alumni Lawn every morning and evening with bird screeches blaring through the mounted speakers on top? If they'd just told me they wanted to get rid of the squirrels, I could have brought my squirrel gun from back home. Might have supplemented the interesting stuff I've been getting at Rand lately, too. Mmm, how I miss home cookin'!"

"Parking still sucks."

"Grey's Anatomy' needs to stop making every character suffer cruel, cruel fates. Bailey's son, Alex's moral corruptness, Meredith's pitiful dreams being crushed by 'Plot Contrivance' ... er ... Rose, and the never ending saga of the George-Izzie relationship from hell: Who's writing this, the Marquis de Sade?"

"I heard winter break is even shorter next year. Who was in charge of that one?"

"It has come to my attention that our 'beloved' Rand received a score of 54 on the Health and Safety rating system. That's a 54 out of a 100, that's an F. For \$52,000 a year, we deserve a little better than a damn 54."

"George and Izzie need to learn the concept of the word 'tact' and stop running up to people and telling them really inappropriate statements."

"I hate the people who got a Shan Foster jersey and didn't even stay for the game."

SOLOMON: To get a date, ladies, you must first actually be 'dateable'

From **SOLOMON**, page 4
things I can't stand is when girls act dumber than they really are. You were smart enough to get in here, so I know you've got it in you

A large majority of the girls I get to know end up being much smarter than I originally thought when first meeting them. It's awesome to discover, but I wish more

of you would show it to me when we meet. Intelligence is sexy; don't cover it up.

Last, be OK being single. Despite the fact your biological clock is urging you to marry the first handsome millionaire you meet before you turn 24, know confidence is as attractive in a female as it is in a male. The fact you're fine on your

own tells us you've got it together, and you won't go Britney Spears on us when we break up with you. We like our cars just the way they are, thanks.

—Andrew Solomon is a senior in the College of Arts and Science. He can be reached at andrew.j.solomon@vanderbilt.edu.



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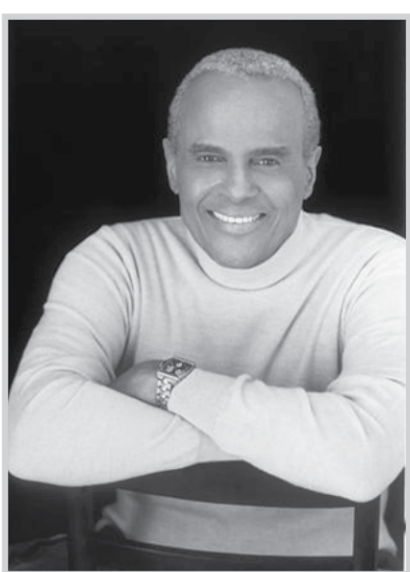


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Chancellor's Lecture Series & Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Series presents:

Harry Belafonte
Keynote Event

Monday, January 14th, 2008
5 p.m. reception, 6 p.m. lecture
Student Life Center Ballroom

Harry Belafonte is known worldwide for his accomplishments as a recording artist and concert singer, as an actor and a producer, and for his commitment to human rights. He became the entertainment industry's first cultural adviser to the Peace Corps in the early 1960s. He was also a driving force that united the cultural elements behind the needs of the Civil Rights movement. The success of that mobilization could be seen in the overwhelming presence of the arts community in places like the marches from Selma to Montgomery and the protests in Birmingham, Alabama, as well as the Freedom March in Washington, D.C., in 1963.

"My social and political interests are part of my career. I can't separate them," says Belafonte. "My songs reflect the human condition. The role of art isn't just to show life as it is, but to show life as it should be."

SPORTS

THE RUN DOWN

W2W4

SATURDAY
Men's Basketball
@ Kentucky
12:30 p.m., CBS

The undefeated Commodores (16-0, 1-0 Southeastern Conference) visit a struggling Kentucky team in their first SEC road contest this season. Vandy has defeated Kentucky four straight times, including two wins at Rupp Arena. The Wildcats (6-7) are led by freshman forward Patrick Patterson with 16.8 points and 8.1 rebounds per game. Patterson struggled mightily in Kentucky's last game, an 89-75 loss to Louisville. Tubby Smith will not be in attendance, but maybe Ashley Judd will.

SUNDAY
Women's Basketball
@ LSU
4:30 PM

Vanderbilt kicks off Southeastern Conference road play when it visits No. 11 Louisiana State on Sunday. The Commodores enjoyed success over the Tigers last season, defeating them in the regular season 68-58, and then beating them again in the SEC championship game, 51-45. The Tigers (11-3) are winners of seven of their last eight games. Vanderbilt (11-4) has won its last two games but has not beaten a ranked team since upsetting then-No. 11 Duke on Nov. 28.

TODAY
Swimming vs. Miami
1 p.m., Centennial Sportsplex

Vanderbilt returns to the pool after a 2-month layoff to host its first dual meet since 1992. Freshman Leigh-Ann Axt and coach Jeremy Organ lead the Commodores (0-6) against the Miami Hurricanes (5-1).

THEY SAID IT...

"It goes without saying that Earl Bennett was a fantastic football player for us, a fantastic ambassador for Vanderbilt football, and you go through, and you look at the way he has represented our program in every way, you couldn't ask for any more from Earl Bennett."

BOBBY JOHNSON
Football Coach

DAILY

236

The number of career catches for the SEC's all-time receptions leader, Earl Bennett.

5

The number of remaining unbeaten in college basketball after Tennessee defeated Ole Miss 85-83 Wednesday night.

Freshmen more than up to par

Youngsters enjoy success in SEC debut.

ADAM WEINSTEIN
Asst News Editor

With 9:59 to go in the first half and a one-point lead over South Carolina, the Vanderbilt players on the court were as follows: A.J. Ogilvy, Keegan Bell, Andre Walker, Darshawn McClellan and George Drake.

That's four freshmen and a redshirt sophomore, all playing at once during a hotly contested Southeastern Conference contest. With the exception of Drake, it was the first time any of these players had gotten a taste of league play.

Clearly coach Kevin Stallings had faith.

"I thought our freshmen really did a nice job," Stallings said. "I wasn't hesitant to put any one of them in there."

And for good reason. While Ogilvy was the unquestioned focal point of the Vanderbilt offense in the second half, scoring 21 of his 25 points, the Commodores (16-0) also got huge contributions from their other young guns.

Bell, Walker and McClellan combined for eight points, 12 rebounds and four assists in just 27 minutes, all of which were critical in a game where senior standout Shan Foster had his first real off night of the season.

"We've got a team where everyone is confident right now," said senior Alex Gordon, who knocked down a huge 3-pointer to put the Commodores up five with 1:30 to go in the game. "In the

minutes that they played, Andre, Darshawn, Keegan and of course A.J. are just working hard and going with what Coach is saying."

Of course, now that the freshmen all have some SEC experience under their belts, another challenge looms this weekend as Vanderbilt heads to Rupp Arena to take on the Kentucky Wildcats.

The veterans know playing their first SEC away game in Lexington will be baptism by fire for the freshmen.

"We have a lot of young guys on this team who really don't know what to expect from SEC play," Foster said. "We feel confident. We know Kentucky is going to be well prepared, and they are going to be fired up. Their fans are going to be fired up and ready to help get those guys going."

Gordon understands leadership will play a big role in how the freshmen adjust to the big stage.

"I'm just gonna tell them that it's crazy," Gordon said. "They have 25,000 fans screaming, yelling, painting themselves blue. They'll listen to us, and they'll be ready. Kentucky has a lot of tradition, so we have to be ready to go out, starting tomorrow, and prepare."

South Carolina coach Dave Odom came away impressed with the Commodores.

"I think Kevin Stallings has the makings of his best team," said Odom. "It's not necessarily because they are 16-0. His team



CHRIS PHARE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Freshman A.J. Ogilvy scored 21 of his game-high 25 points in the second half as the No. 13 Commodores defeated South Carolina 80-73 Wednesday night at Memorial Gym.

plays very good basketball. They play team basketball. They are very fun to watch on tape when you don't have to play them. He and his staff have done a marvelous job with this team."

With the continuing stability

between the seniors and the new freshmen, you can expect to see Vanderbilt work its way toward a top seed in the NCAA Tournament. ■

-Weinstein can be reached at adam.w.weinstein@vanderbilt.

friday conversation

EARL BENNETT

Earl Bennett talked to the media on Thursday afternoon about his decision to leave school early and declare himself eligible for the NFL Draft, and here are a few of the highlights.

Q: When did you start getting the concept in your mind that this year would be it for you?

A: It was after the season. During the season, I had no thoughts of the NFL; I was just helping us try to go to a bowl game. That was my No. 1 goal, and even when I was out there with nagging injuries; I'm still trying to play to help this team go to a bowl game.

Q: What about passing up the chance to break the all-time NCAA receiving record?

A: It's not all about records. It's about your character, what kind of person you are, and how you carry yourself on and off the field. I feel like Vanderbilt University and my coaches helped me a lot to mature into the man that I am today. Hopefully, people will remember me by my character and not my outstanding ability on the football field.

Q: Earl, was it tough to tell Coach Johnson your decision?

A: Definitely. I love Coach Johnson to death; he's been there by my side, anything I needed help with he was always helping, whether it was on the field, off the field or in the classroom. It was a tough decision to tell him because I just love being around him; he's a great guy. I really thank him a lot for allowing me to come here and play.

Q: You look at all the things you've done over the years; what will you remember most about your Vanderbilt career?

A: When we beat Tennessee. That will probably be the one I remember the most. It was a great game.

Q: A lot of times people cut their hair when it's time to be a professional; is that the inspiration for the haircut?

A: (Laughs) No, I actually was gonna cut it either way. I got tired of it; I was

ready for a new look. This is the second time I've had the dreads and cut them off, so it really wasn't a big deal.

Q: Earl, in the next few weeks and months, what do you have to do to make football a business now?

A: Now that this process is over, I have to go into a whole new process: who I will hire as an agent, getting ready to train and work out, that's the biggest thing. In the NFL, everyone wants to see if you can run, if you can jump, if you can lift weights

and those types of things. Just preparing myself mentally and physically for that process is the next step for me.

Q: From the homework you've done, where do you feel like you fall in the draft?

A: Hopefully, I'm one of the top receivers taken in this year's draft. My coaches have prepared me a lot to be one of the top players in the nation. Thanks to my hard work and dedication and their great coaching, it really helped me to be one of the top players.

Q: The Titans need some receivers. Would you want to come back and play for them?

A: (Laughs) It would be great to come back here and play in Nashville, in the state of Tennessee. It'd be great to play with Vince Young; they've become a great team, they made it to the playoffs this year, so I'm up for it.

Q: I've been told your mom was a big fan of you getting your degree. How much did you have to sell her on the idea of coming out early?

A: I actually had to sell her a lot on this one," Bennett said. "That's all she kept saying. I am going to get my degree. I'm going to sit down with coach Johnson and with our counselor (Elizabeth Wright) to make sure I receive my degree within a year and a half and not put it off. I won't wait two years and try to come back.

Q: Did you think that coming back for another year could help your draft stock, or did you think you've proven all you can prove?

A: Anytime you can come back, you can always improve your status, especially if you do well. You also have to think about the negatives; if you do come back and you don't have a productive season and you don't meet expectations, you have to wonder if you'd fall. If you get hurt, then people wonder, "Can he play through injuries?" Those are types of things you have to think about also.

Q: What's the first thing you want to buy?

A: My mom a house.

—Read all of Bennett's comments and listen to Editor in Chief Jarred Amato and sports editor Andrew Hard discuss Bennett's remarkable career on:



COLUMN

Bennett's legacy reaches beyond football

WILL GIBBONS
Senior Reporter

When coach Bobby Johnson continued to recruit Earl Bennett even after he had committed to Kentucky, he probably didn't realize the dividends that choice would pay.

Three years later, Bennett stands as the SEC's all-time leading receiver and, more importantly, a mature and intelligent individual.

"It goes without saying that Earl Bennett was a fantastic football player for us, a fantastic ambassador for Vanderbilt football," Johnson said, "and you go through, and you look at the way he has represented our program in every way, you couldn't ask for any more from Earl Bennett."

On Thursday, Bennett announced his intentions to enter the NFL draft. His contributions on the field have been well-documented. Less known is how much Bennett has grown as a human being, a student and a leader. He leaves Vanderbilt prepared for adulthood.

"For a while I thought Earl only knew two words: 'yes, sir,'" Johnson said. "Obviously that's not true. He's very smart. He's a great student for us. It was fun getting to know Earl, and that's what you have to do."

In the classroom, Bennett is an accomplished student. He finished with a 3.25 in the fall semester and is close to receiving his degree in Secondary Education. His parents set the rule that he must finish his degree regardless of whether he decided to stay at Vanderbilt or leave early. It was Bennett's mother who required the most convincing. Perhaps it was the extensive thought process that showed Bennett's sensibility.

"I actually had to sell her a lot on this one," Bennett said. "That's all she kept saying. I am going to get my degree. I'm going to sit down with coach Johnson and with our counselor (Elizabeth Wright) to make sure I receive my degree within a year and a half and not put it off."

Too often, athletes leave school, opting for a pay day over an education. It is apparent that was not the case for Bennett.

"His siblings all finished high school, went to college and finished college," said Sarah Bennett, his mother. "He's got a brother working on his master's. Earl knows it's very important."

Perhaps it was the support system that included his family, Johnson and the rest of the coaching staff, his teammates, friends and faith that made his decision more comfortable.

For Johnson, the important thing was to keep his interests as coach out of the equation and to focus on his role as a mentor and advisor.

"When you see a family trying to make a decision, you realize that you can't be selfish," Johnson said. "You've got to go with what's best for the young man and the family. It was tough. For a minute there we all just had to sit down and say, 'Hey, whatever happens is going to be great. Whether he comes back and plays another year or not, it's going to be great.'"

And while she may have had her doubts about the NFL, Bennett's mother was all smiles on Thursday afternoon.

"It's a proud day to see my son, my baby, do what he has wanted to do," she said. ■

-Gibbons can be reached at william.l.gibbons@vanderbilt.edu.

The Vanderbilt Hustler presents

WHO'S NOW?

WHAT IS THIS?

We're running a 32-athlete, single-elimination tournament to find Vanderbilt's biggest star. You can check out the voting criteria, bracket and voting schedule below.

HOW DO I VOTE?

Go to www.INSIDEVANDY.COM to cast your vote. Voting for the first round of the Derrick Byars Regional ends Sunday at 5 p.m. Results will be posted in the following issue.

VOTING CRITERIA

Individual accolades

How big is your trophy room? Have you broken any school records, earned All-SEC honors or taken home any big-time awards?

Team success

You may be talented, but remember the name on the front of the jersey is more important than the one on the back. Have you led your team to the Big Dance or won an SEC title?

National exposure

You may be a hero in Nashville, but do people around the country even know you exist? Have you earned All-American status or appeared on Mel Kiper's Draft Board?

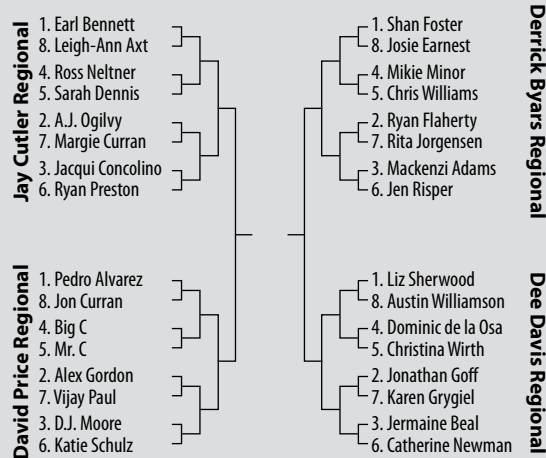
Fan appeal

You may be big-time, but when you walk around campus, can fans even recognize you? Do they wear your jersey, cheer for you at games and friend (maybe even poke) you on Facebook?

"It" factor

It's hard to quantify, but do you have the intangibles every star needs?

BRACKET



SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND
 1/11: Derrick Byars Regional
 1/14: Jay Cutler Regional
 1/16: David Price Regional
 1/18: Dee Davis Regional

SECOND ROUND
 1/21: Byars Regional
 1/23: Cutler Regional
 1/25: Price Regional
 1/28: Davis Regional

QUARTERFINALS
 1/30: Byars and Cutler Regionals
 2/1: Price and Davis Regionals

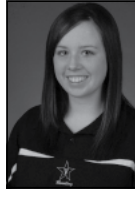


SEMIFINALS
 2/4: Byars Winner vs. Davis Winner
 2/6: Cutler Winner vs. Price Winner

FINALS
 2/8: Byars/Davis Winner vs. Cutler/Price Winner

REVEAL CHAMPION
 2/11

DERRICK BYARS REGIONAL



1		SHAN FOSTER, SENIOR <i>Basketball, guard</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading candidate for SEC Player of the Year School's all-time leader in 3-point shooting Also an accomplished pianist and stylish dresser "The Truth" helped lead team to Sweet 16 in '07
8		JOSIE EARNEST, JUNIOR <i>Bowling</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second team All-American MVP of 2007 NCAA Championship Team-leading 198 average in 70 games last season Helped lead team to first national title in school history
4		MIKIE MINOR, SOPHOMORE <i>Baseball, Pitcher</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9-1 with 3.09 ERA as No. 2 starter behind David Price in '07 Starred for Team USA last summer Earned Freshman All-American honors Team won SEC regular season and tournament championships
5		CHRIS WILLIAMS, SENIOR <i>Football, Offensive tackle</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First team All-SEC Potential first-round pick in April's NFL Draft Captain who allowed just two sacks, protecting quarterback's blindside Best offensive lineman in modern Vanderbilt history
2		RYAN FLAHERTY, JUNIOR <i>Baseball, Shortstop</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preseason second-team All-American "Flash" enters this season with 35-game hitting streak Played for Team USA and in Cape Cod League past two summers Crowd-favorite for his at-bat music from "The Departed"
7		RITA JORGENSEN, FRESHMAN <i>Cross Country</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed first at Commodore Classic Earned SEC Female Freshman of the Week honors Team MVP at postseason banquet Highly recruited out of high school
3		MACKENZI ADAMS, JUNIOR <i>Football, Quarterback</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led team to 17-6 victory over then-No. 6 South Carolina Took over as starting QB midway through season Threw for 1,043 yards and nine touchdowns
6		JEN RISPER, JUNIOR <i>Basketball, Guard</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led Commodores to SEC Tournament title Team's Defensive Player of the Year in '07 Crowd-favorite for her intensity and hustle Averaging 9.5 points, 5.5 rebounds, 3.3 assists and 2.9 steals per game

THE HUSTLER'S TAKE:

While Earnest did help her team win the school's first ever national title, she's a heavy underdog against "The Truth," the stylin' swingman with the silky smooth jumper.

THE HUSTLER'S TAKE:

Minor's the No. 1 starter on a nationally-ranked squad, but Williams is about to make some serious cash. While linemen don't usually get any love, we'll still the future NFLer the nod here.

THE HUSTLER'S TAKE:

Jorgensen has a bright future with the black and gold, but it will be tough to upset "Flash," the starting shortstop who could threaten Joe D's 56-game hitting streak.

THE HUSTLER'S TAKE:

Everyone knows Adams, "QB1," although he's yet to accomplish as much as Risper, the heart and soul of the Commodores. Fans will have to decide whether popularity or performance is more important in this one.

BENNETT: Turns focus to April draft

From **BENNETT**, page 1

Bennett rewrote the record book during his time on West End. He is the school leader in touchdowns in a game (5), yards in a game (223) and most games with 10 catches or more (9).

"We're certainly sad about it from a selfish point of view, but we're also very thrilled for Earl," Johnson said, who joined Bennett for the press conference along with Bennett's family. "This is not a spur-of-the-moment decision. Earl did a fantastic job of weighing the pluses

and the minuses and finding out what was best for him and his family."

Perhaps Bennett will be remembered for stepping up in bigger SEC games, shown most by his winning touchdown catch at Tennessee.

"Earl is a huge part of us having a chance to win some of the big games we won and also the chance that we had to move our program forward," Johnson said. "I think he can help do that in the NFL. He's going to immediately add a lot of class to any team."

Bennett is projected as a second-round pick

on nfldraftscout.com and is rated the sixth-best receiver in the draft.

"If they want a great guy on and off the field, I can provide that," Bennett said. "Hopefully, I can provide some excitement on the field."

Bennett plans on finishing his degree in Secondary Education, and may still enroll in classes this semester after planning his workout and combine schedule. The NFL Draft takes place April 26-27. ■

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SEC Opener: Business as usual for Vandy

From **SEC OPENER**, page 1

"I thought the play before that Shan (Foster) missed a shot, and I said to myself I need to step up," said Gordon, referring to Foster's rare off night, where the senior finished with a season-low 13 points. "I mean, Shan Foster, the best shooter in the SEC, maybe the best

shooter in the country, missed that shot, and I wanted to step up and help out our team. I said if I get that ball, I am going to shoot it."

The team also got a significant boost from freshman A.J. Ogilvy, who scored 21 of his game-high 25 points in the second half.

Gordon and sophomore

Jermaine Beal, who finished with 13 and 11 points respectively, joined Foster and Ogilvy in double figure scoring. Beal also handed out 6 assists.

South Carolina Coach Dave Odom left the game impressed with the Commodores' effort.

"I think Kevin Stallings has the makings of his best team.

It's not necessarily because they are 16-0," Odom said. "His team plays very good basketball. They play team basketball. They are very fun to watch on tape when you don't have to play them."

If the opener serves as any indication, the Commodores don't have any plans of slowing down in conference play. ■

Dores win SEC opener



CHRIS PHARE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

The women's basketball team relied on a balanced attack and stifling defense to open Southeastern Conference play with a 72-50 victory over Mississippi State Thursday night at Memorial Gymnasium.

Sophomore guard Merideth Marsh led the Commodores (12-4, 1-0 SEC) with 15 points, while junior Jennifer Risper added 13, junior Christina Wirth 12 and senior Liz Sherwood 11.

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