

arts AND SCIENCE

The magazine of Vanderbilt University's College of Arts and Science

SPRING 2009



whereAREYOU?

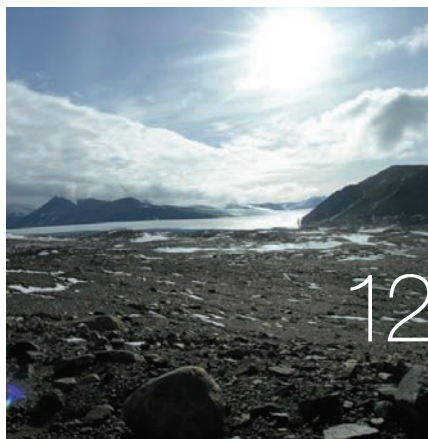


DANIEL DUBOIS

Answer found on the back cover



6



12



20



30

6 Stay, Root and Invest

Carolyn Dever, the new dean of the College of Arts and Science, embraces opportunities and relationships.

12 Beyond a Rock and a Frozen Place

Molly Miller makes Earth science come alive, even in the coldest spot on the planet.

20 The Convergence of Arts and Science

When the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences intersect, the road leads to learning, creativity and original thought.

artsANDSCIENCE® is published by the College of Arts and Science at Vanderbilt University in cooperation with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations Communications. You may contact the editor by e-mail at artsandsciencemagazine@vanderbilt.edu or by U.S. mail at PMB 407703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7703.

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Special appreciation to Henry R. Shipman for assistance with *Back in the Day* and other archival projects.

Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

Cover: Students in Susan DeMay's upper level Department of Art course use potter's wheels to create advanced forms of art. From front to back are Jessica Worthy, Devan Council, Ben Scott and May McClain Frederiksen. Photo by John Russell.

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Arts and Science was printed with vegetable/soy-based ink on Rolland Enviro 100 Print, a 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper. This environmentally responsible paper choice is EcoLogo-certified, processed chlorine-free, FSC recycled and manufactured using biogas energy.

departments

<i>A View from Kirkland Hall</i>	2
<i>Arts and Science Notebook</i>	3
<i>Open Book</i>	5
<i>Arts and Science in the World</i>	8
<i>Five Minutes With...</i>	10
<i>Up Close</i>	14
<i>Great Minds</i>	16
<i>Rigor and Relevance</i>	18
<i>And the Award Goes To</i>	26
<i>Forum</i>	28
<i>First Person</i>	30
<i>Giving</i>	32
<i>Back in the Day</i>	34
<i>In Place</i>	36
<i>Parting Shot</i>	38



DANIEL DUBOIS

THERE IS NO GREATER CHALLENGE FACING THE UNITED STATES THAN HEALTH CARE: the provision of affordable, high quality medical attention to every person, and the establishment of a health care system that ensures equity of access and the integrity of new discovery for all time.

Vanderbilt's College of Arts and Science is on the front lines of this challenge. Researchers from our science and social science—and yes, even our humanities—departments partner with researchers from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and all over the globe to advance the medical sciences. As of March of this year, 307 undergraduates are enrolled in the Arts and Science program in Medicine, Health and Society, where they take courses from faculty university wide on the science, history and politics of health. This relatively new major now trails only economics and political science as the largest in our school. In 2007-2008, Arts and Science researchers were granted more than \$20 million in funds for federally sponsored, health-related research. All of us in the Vanderbilt community and society at large benefit from this involvement.

Now I have the great honor to inform you of a new collaborative project involving the college. On March 5, leaders of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation announced the birth of a partnership between Meharry Medical College and Vanderbilt's College of Arts and Science. With the foundation's support, Meharry will establish the Robert Wood Johnson Center for Health Policy at Meharry Medical College, one of the nation's oldest historically black medical schools. At the core of the national center's mission is the education of a new generation of leaders in health policy studies, leaders whose diversity reflects the full diversity of the U.S. population.

The College of Arts and Science plays a central role in the center's vision. With the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Meharry, we will recruit six new faculty members in sociology and economics of health to Vanderbilt. In turn, the faculty will recruit nearly 20 new graduate students in sociology and economics.

Future leaders in health policy will receive their doctoral training here at Vanderbilt in collaboration with scholars and students at the Robert Wood Johnson Center for Health Policy at Meharry Medical College. These students and faculty will bring the best of both campuses—Vanderbilt's and Meharry's—to shape health policy for generations to come. Emerging from an environment of unprecedented interpersonal and intellectual diversity, these faculty and students will broaden the discourse of health policy in the U.S. and beyond. Thanks to this vision, our society will have better answers to its most stubborn, sensitive, and, we all hope, solvable questions.

Arts and Science is fortunate to participate in this initiative with our remarkable partners at Meharry Medical College, benefitting from the support and expertise of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Wish us luck as we break this rich, new ground.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Dever', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carolyn Dever
Dean

Hilles Honored With Major Literary Award



DANIEL DUBOIS

Poet Rick Hilles, assistant professor of English, received a 2008 Whiting Writers' Award from the New York-based Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation.

The prestigious awards are presented to "writers of exceptional talent and promise in early career."

Hilles, author of the award-winning poetry collection *Brother Salvage*, teaches poetry as part of the English department's master of fine arts program in creative writing. His poems have appeared in *Harper's*,

The Nation, *New Republic*, *Poetry* and *Salmagundi*.

"It means a great deal to me—more than I can adequately say—and I hope that this sense of gratitude and encouragement will stay with me for a long, long time," Hilles says.

"Rick's poetry moves and inspires readers, and he does the same in the classroom," says Jay Clayton, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English and chair of the department.

"There hasn't been a better time for creative writing at Vanderbilt since the days of the Fugitive poets."

Whiting Writers' Awards candidates are proposed by a select group of anonymous nominators nationwide whose experience and vocations expose them to individuals of

It takes a kind of courage, sometimes, just to say it.
Whole days spent otherwise have proven this to me.
Step forward, and the wind braces you on all sides.

from "Flashlight Stories" by Rick Hilles

extraordinary talent. Winners are chosen by a different anonymous selection committee of recognized writers, literary scholars and editors appointed annually by the foundation. The Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation has awarded more than \$6 million to 240 writers in fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama since its inception in 1963.

Excerpted from "Flashlight Stories" in *Brother Salvage* by Rick Hilles, ©2006.
Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Accolades

We're the best—but don't take our word for it. In the past few months, Vanderbilt has received a variety of honors. Earlier this year, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*



judged Vanderbilt as the No. 15 best value among universities that combine outstanding economic value with exceptional education. It's also a pretty good place to work. In January, Vanderbilt became the first university ever to be named to *Fortune* magazine's list of the top 100 best places to work in the United States. That followed an earlier announcement that it was also ranked in the top 10 best places to work in academia in the United States, according to *The Scientist* magazine. And did we mention that our football team won the Music City Bowl?

Condolences

The College of Arts and Science expresses its condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the Rev. Frederick Schneider, professor of history, emeritus. Schneider, a beloved member of the faculty from 1955 through his retirement in 1986, died in December at the age of 87.

We Won't Vote Him Off the Island

Fans of CBS's reality TV show *Survivor: Tocantins* may have recognized a familiar face among the castaways marooned in the rugged Brazilian Highlands. Arts and Science alumnus Brendan Synnott, BA'00, was one of the show's contestants trying to outwit, outplay and outlast the others. *Arts and Science* magazine profiled Synnott, co-founder and former CEO of the popular natural food brand Bear Naked Granola, in its spring '08 issue.



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Celebrating New Emeritus Faculty

Two long-time Arts and Science faculty, M. Donald Hancock, professor of political science, and William P. Smith, professor of psychology, received emeritus status during the May 2009 Commencement ceremonies.

Hancock, who joined Vanderbilt in 1979, specializes in the politics of Western Europe and comparative European politics. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his master's degree and doctorate from Columbia University. He served as director of the Center for European Studies at Vanderbilt (now the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies) from 1981–2000.

Hancock's most recent book, *Politics in Germany*, was published in 2008.

Smith joined the College of Arts and Science in 1965 after teaching at Columbia University and San Diego State College. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Duke University, a master's degree and doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and was later a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellow at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Smith, who also served as associate dean and later, acting dean of the graduate school, is a widely respected scholar in social conflict, decision making, negotiation and social comparison.

OpportunityVanderbilt

A scholarship gift is the gift of opportunity...

It was scholarship support that gave Katrice Peterson the opportunity to attend Vanderbilt's College of Arts and Science. With a major in classical studies, a full class schedule, campus leadership roles and community service, she's made the most of her Vanderbilt experience. Just graduated, she's now headed to law school and endless new possibilities.

"My scholarship reminded me every day at Vanderbilt that there were alumni who believed in what I could accomplish and were willing to take a chance on me reaching my goals," she says. "You don't forget that kind of generosity."

With a scholarship gift, you give other exceptional young women and men the opportunity to learn, discover and achieve at Vanderbilt.

Opportunity Vanderbilt supports the university's commitment to replace need-based undergraduate student loans with grants and scholarships, with a goal of \$100 million in gifts for scholarship endowment.

Photo by Vanderbilt Creative Services



Katrice Peterson, BA'09

SHAPE THE FUTURE A CAMPAIGN FOR VANDERBILT

Make a gift to Vanderbilt online—www.vanderbilt.edu/givenow. Questions—Jonathan Petty, jonathan.petty@vanderbilt.edu, 615/322-8119.

When you ask someone from Arts and Science if they've read any good books lately, be prepared to be amazed, entertained and informed.

Symptoms of Unknown Origin
by Clifton K. Meador, BA'52, MD'55
(for a sociology of medicine class)

Does My Child Have Autism?
by Wendy Stone

Sports Illustrated

—**Gabrielle Levine, junior, psychology**

The Daily Beast (a news blog with a cheat sheet of the important information out there)

The Saucy Sisters' Guide to Wine
by Barbara Nowak and Beverly Wichman

Ilium by Dan Simmons

Madame Bovary
by Gustave Flaubert (for French 272)

The Art of the Short Story
by Dana Gioia (for English 211)

—**Katy Adams, senior, English and French**

The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor
edited by John Morreall

How to Talk Dirty and Influence People
by Lenny Bruce

Women in Congress by Aristophanes

Right Ho, Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse

(I study comedy. I'm teaching Humor, Ancient to Modern this semester—I can't deny it's fun.)

—**Amanda Krauss, assistant professor of classics**

The Secret Lives of Citizens: Pursuing the Promise of American Life by Thomas Geoghegan

The Temple Gate Called Beautiful
by David Kirby

Apollo's Fire: A Day on Earth in Nature and Imagination by Michael Sims

A Natural History of Seeing: The Art and Science of Vision by Simon Ings

20 Questions to Ask if You Have a Great Idea or Invention by Michael H. Jester

—**Jon Erickson, biological sciences bibliographer and coordinator, patent and trademark depository, Science and Engineering Library**

The Zookeeper's Wife by Diane Ackerman

Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician by Anthony Everitt

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Performing Songwriter

Reader's Digest

Prevention

National Geographic

USA Today and *The State* newspapers online

—**Tonya Mills, administrative assistant, political science**



STEVE GREEN

Richard McGregor (pictured), assistant professor of religious studies, is reading *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* by Hans Gumbrecht.

Other recent reads:

Picture Theory by W.J.T. Mitchell (explores the conundrum that we fill our world with images, but then have no control over them)

Light of the Heavenly Bodies to Explain the Secrets of the Pyramids by Abu Jafar al-Idrisi

On Suicide Bombing by Talal Asad (challenges our impulse to explain the motives behind acts of public violence)



Stay, Root AND Invest

The College of Arts and Science's new dean embraces opportunities and relationships.

by NANCY WISE

Dean Carolyn Dever says that when she talks to alumni of the College of Arts and Science, she's always inspired by how many have found success by being open to opportunities and the unexpected.

The new dean has done that herself.

Dever planned her career as an educator, author and scholar of Victorian literature. But her passion, abilities, vision and talent for building relationships put her into leadership positions, first as associate dean, then executive dean, and now as dean of the College of Arts and Science, the largest school within Vanderbilt University.

When former dean Richard McCarty became provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs, a committee of faculty and Board of Trust members conducted a national search for a new dean. The committee decided that Dever, professor of English and then interim dean, was the best person for the job.

"The search committee interviewed eight finalists from a strong pool of applicants. Carolyn Dever stood out from this impressive group based upon her record of scholarly accomplishments and her leadership skills, breadth of experience and vision for Arts and Science," says Stevenson Professor of Chemistry Ned Porter, who chaired the search committee. "Her deep concern for student welfare and her passion for learning were clearly evident."

Dever's concern and passion are also for the school and its people. "I care about the institution, and I love to work with other people to put ideas and opportunities in place," Dever says. "Our faculty and staff are working to invest our very best in the institution on a day-to-day basis, and my job is a variation on a theme. I have a different set of responsibilities and a different point of view now, but nonetheless the same basic toolbox is in front of me."

Power Tools

The tools in that toolbox are impressive. Dever is a leading scholar in the field of 19th century Victorian literature and gender studies. The Boston native earned her undergraduate degree at Boston College and her master's and doctorate at Harvard. She began teaching at New York University, where she earned tenure and directed graduate placement and graduate studies. She joined Vanderbilt in 2000.

"I loved my previous job at NYU, but I was ready for a move," she says. She soon found that Vanderbilt was, in her words, a remarkable place, warm and collegial. "The quality of scholarly discourse and human interaction is first-rate." She values that the institution can be cutting-edge and yet prize its heritage of process, civility and good living.

"Vanderbilt is the place where I have very much decided to stay, root and invest. It has to do with the fact the university has historically valued the humanities and the social sciences and the natural

“Carolyn really appreciates her colleagues in all their unique capacities—she has a capacious enthusiasm for the many different ways people develop their professional careers and how their own personality flavors that pursuit.”

– Dana Nelson, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English

sciences,” she continues. “I have the chance now to take leadership of the College of Arts and Science in a very high point in the institution’s history.”

Diversity in Disciplines

The diversity of the college’s academics fascinates Dever. As associate dean, she was charged with improving graduate education. To do so, she observed the workings of each department and forged relationships with colleagues from disciplines she might not have otherwise known.

“Those relationships are vital,” she says. “I had to get to know a lot of people, had to learn the different business models, the different approaches. How scientists fund their graduate students is different from how humanists fund their graduate students. But within that diversity, there’s a common thread.” That common thread is a deep commitment to quality and to doing their best, she says.

Interaction with other faculty expanded with her work as executive dean. “That was a great opportunity for me to understand the inner workings of this process by which we advance faculty careers,” she says. “The associate dean position is very programmatically oriented, while the executive dean position is very focused on faculty, their appointments, their research and their work.”

Dana Nelson, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English and founding director of the school’s mentoring program in career development, says that Dever has rock-solid support for faculty. “Carolyn really appreciates her colleagues in all their unique capacities—she has a capacious enthusiasm for the many different ways people develop their professional careers and how their own personality flavors that pursuit,” Nelson says. “That receptivity and attunement to faculty across the divisions, as both professionals and as people, is a wonderful foundation for her leadership of the college. She also brings that same quality of attention and care to each individual student and project.”

New Relationships, New Goals

Along with the administrative and leadership tasks she handles as dean, Dever now has new relationships to explore.

“The part of the job that I thought that I would like, but in fact I love, is the part that’s pretty much new to me, and that’s development and alumni relations,” the dean says. “We have approximately 45,000 alumni in the world out there, and I’m beginning to get to know a number of them. I’m beginning to form relationships



Collegiality and quality scholarly discourse are traits Dever values about Vanderbilt.

with these people who know this place, who care about it, who are insightful, interesting, engaged people who care about education in the world—which is incredibly interesting to me—and I love doing that work.”

In addition to meeting with alumni on campus, Dever travels across the country to meet them. A Red Sox fan, she’s looking forward to a trip that might coincide with a certain baseball series, she says. A recent visit to Dallas introduced her to area alumni and allowed her to explain Vanderbilt’s new no-need-based undergraduate loan initiative to them. “I want educational opportunity for every student,” she says. “Hence the commitment to the university’s expanded aid program, which will mean that when students graduate from Vanderbilt, they won’t have the [need-based] personal student loan debt that might limit them to particular career choices.”

The new dean has additional goals. “I want us to continue to improve in the education that we offer our students. I want us to create circumstances that allow each student to get educated and go out in the world with a full array of options,” she says. “I want to do everything that I can to put opportunities in the way of our faculty to ensure that they can continue to progress in their research. I think that Vanderbilt faculty have opportunities to contribute to this world, to make it a better place. I feel humbled and honored that I have a chance to help in that effort.

“I’ve found that if you know this place, and when you have that committed community of alumni out there who really can work with our students and contribute in thousands of different ways, that is what makes us unique as a university,” she says.

WHERE DREAMS CAN *Flourish*

Graduate student Manoj K. Dora was born in a poor village where people die of starvation and people sell their children for a meal. In this squalor, he dreamed of helping families launch small businesses to provide for their needs. Today, enrolled in Vanderbilt's Graduate Program in Economic Development (GPED), his dream seems possible.

"GPED classes helped me to refine and articulate my plans," the native of India says. "I am more confident about my plans now with the strong network I established during my stay here at Vanderbilt."

For more than five decades, dreams like Dora's have flourished at Vanderbilt's GPED program and taken root in countries around the world. In 1954, Vanderbilt established the Summer Institute on Economic Development to teach international students how to help developing, low-income national economies and countries. Funded by the predecessor to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the program was located at Vanderbilt not only because of the university's reputation, but also because of its location in the South. The aim was to show that there were pockets of America that faced similar issues to developing countries. Some 200 participants attended the three years of the summer institute, which led to the year-round degree program in the College of Arts and Science, the Graduate Program in Economic Development.



Manoj K. Dora

In the years since, more than 1,300 students from 125 countries have received degrees. (To put that in perspective, the United Nations has 192 member countries.) "It puts Vanderbilt on the map of the world," says Suhas Ketkar, PhD'73, interim director of the program and professor of economics.

Some students have returned to their home countries to create programs like that Dora hopes to institute in India. Others have gone on to careers in public service. Finance minister, ambassador and bank governor are among the positions held by program graduates. Others have worked for international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund or regional development banks. Still others have entered academia. A handful work in the private sector.

International and Influential

Süreyya Serdengeçti, MA'86, worked at the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey. When the bank recommended he pursue further education, he enrolled in the GPED. Returning to Turkey, he worked his way up to governor of the Central Bank, retiring in 2006 when his term expired. He lectures in economics at a university in Ankara and is director of a think tank.

"The quality of the education together with the international environment made the classroom experiences a delight," he says.

In 2005 Serdengeçti returned to Vanderbilt to speak to students, marking the long reach of the program and its vibrant network of alumni. That, says the program's director, is one of the enduring effects of the GPED.

"We have a large group of alumni with whom we keep in touch," Ketkar says. Of the 1,300 GPED graduates, the program maintains contact with more than 850 around the world. "We recruit new students largely on word of mouth. We have a number of graduates who have, over time, risen to important positions in their respective countries and they carry the Vanderbilt name with them."



STEVE GREEN

Marie Kelley, Director Suhas Ketkar and Mouzon Siddiqi.



The first master's class, 1956-1957.

“We recruit new students largely on word of mouth. We have a number of graduates who have, over time, risen to important positions in their respective countries and they carry the Vanderbilt name with them.”

– Suhas Ketkar, PhD’73

Ideas that Impact

That helped draw Dora to the program. His ideas to impact his community were built upon the work of Mohammad Yunus, PhD’71, microcredit founder, 2006 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and an alumnus of the program.

Ketkar himself holds a Vanderbilt degree in economics. His wife, Kusum Wadhawan Ketkar, MA’75, PhD’80, attended the program before earning a Ph.D. Ketkar taught at Vanderbilt after graduation, then went to Wall Street where he focused on emerging markets. Business travels took him around the world where, by merely being a Vanderbilt graduate, he would often be entertained by GPED alumni. After retiring from Wall Street, he returned to Vanderbilt to teach.

Tatiana Mihailovschi-Muntean, MA’02, calls GPED “an unforgettable family. The existence of such a program is the most beneficial aspect of my experience,” she says. “It gave all of us a great opportunity to study and enjoy our stay in the U.S., and to gain invaluable educational and cultural experience. Honestly, those two years in Nashville were one of the best times of my and my family’s life.”

Mihailovschi-Muntean worked for the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova when she came to GPED. After graduation, she pursued her doctorate and is currently an assistant professor at Trent University in Canada. “The GPED program is one of the best for international students,” she says. “Everything is well-organized, and everybody is extremely helpful, friendly and welcoming.”

Hospitality From Day One

Ketkar says the friendliness that students find when arriving can be attributed to Mouzon Siddiqi, program coordinator, and Van Marie

Kelley, program secretary. The two women meet students at the airport, maintain a list of suitable off-campus apartments and even help students move furniture in a truck that Siddiqi purchased for just that reason. Siddiqi’s husband, Sultan Siddiqi, MA’70, is occasionally pressed into service to help a student navigate the Social Security office, enroll children in school or find halal meat (meat permitted by Islamic law).

For Siddiqi, the issue is personal. Her husband came to Peabody College from Afghanistan to pursue master’s work without the benefit of a program like the GPED. “He found his way to the campus on his own. However, there was a university-owned, furnished house available to share with another student,” Siddiqi says. “After we married, I returned to Afghanistan in 1970 with Sultan for two years. The Afghans were incredibly hospitable, and it meant so much to me as a foreigner.”

For Kelley, the support and help they provide is just the right thing to do. “They come here from around the world,” she says. “We just want to make them comfortable and help them get set up and settled as much as possible before their classes begin. I know I would appreciate the same if I was in their situation.”

Both women also see their roles as impacting the world without leaving Calhoun Hall. “I like to feel that setting a good example of love and understanding will go abroad and help make the world a better place,” Kelley says.

Siddiqi refers to the alumni as her children, and says she hopes to continue to have a positive effect. “It will never match the impact that our students have had on my life,” she says. “I would be a different person—my world would be much smaller—if I had not had the marvelous opportunity to work in the GPED.”

Malah Tidwell

Nashville and Vanderbilt benefitted when Malah Tidwell returned to her hometown nine years ago. An administrative assistant with the College of Arts and Science's development and alumni relations office, she takes care of alumni, students and colleagues with a loving hand. "Malah is the heart and soul of the Arts and Science development team," says Jonathan Petty, associate dean for development and alumni relations. "She always goes above and beyond in her work ... no job is too big for her. She is a go-to and get-it-done-right person."

Meggie Butzow, BA'o6, who interned for four years under Tidwell's guidance, fondly recalls their relationship. "She presented me with all kinds of projects that helped me learn about and understand the general purpose of development. She was never anything but supportive, kind and understanding through it all," Butzow says. "She understood the constraints that school and classwork sometime put on me, and always made it clear that school was the priority. She really became a second mom to me."

You're a native Nashvillian?

I was born and raised in Nashville, and went to Antioch High School. We moved out there in '56. My mother still lives in the same house.

My husband, Leon, and I left on our honeymoon and moved to Worcester, Mass., outside of Boston. We stayed a year and a half and decided the weather was not for us.

We moved back to Nashville, lived in Dickson for a while, and then moved to Montgomery, Ala., where we lived for about 14 years. We had always thought that we'd like to live further south. We knew some people in Montgomery, visited, and we thought we'd try it. And we loved it. Loved it. It was quite an adventure. I remember going through Hurricane Opal, which came up as far as Montgomery. The reason I came back to Nashville was because my husband passed away, my parents were aging, both my children were married, and I felt it was just time to come home. I've been back now nine years.

How long have you worked at Vanderbilt?

I have worked here a little over eight years. After my husband passed away, I moved back to Nashville and worked for J.C. Bradford. Then it was sold and I came to work at Vanderbilt in student accounts. I worked there for a year, and then was hired in development and alumni relations for the College of Arts and Science.

What would most people be surprised to learn about you?

I once took belly dancing. That would surprise people. When my husband was alive, we had a sailboat that we called "Coupon Annie" because I was always clipping coupons; my brother-in-law wanted to know if that was how we bought it.

Other than that, I'm a pretty open book. I enjoy plays and reading. My sister and I like to go the movies and theater, and just out.

We saw *The Country Wife* at Vanderbilt and have tickets already for *Always, Patsy Cline* at the Ryman. I've seen it twice. We saw it in Nashville when it was here and then we went to Roanoke, Va., to visit my brother and it was playing there. We are big fans of Mandy Barnett. We saw her when she did it a few years ago and that's when we just fell in love with her. She becomes Patsy.

My sister, Wanda, and I do a little bit of traveling together. Last spring Wanda and I took our parents to Natchez, Miss., for a few days, and as we were driving on the Natchez Trace close to Tupelo, we went through a tornado.

What else do you do in your spare time?

Most of my time is spent with my four grandchildren. My son, Barry, has three children and my daughter, Margaret, has one child. The oldest is 7 and the youngest is a year. They light up my life. The older three will come and stay with me over the weekend, and we enjoy going to the park and zoo. They're the most special things in my life. They keep me going and keep me busy.

“Malah is the heart and soul of the Arts and Science development team.”

– Jonathan Petty

Do you have a favorite alumni event?

The last two years, I’ve worked with the Reunion office in the hospitality tent. It’s always nice to see the people and help them in any way we can. It’s excitement. Old friends will see each other and stop right where they are and congregate, saying “Do you remember this? Have you seen so-and-so? Is so-and-so coming?” Things like that.

Do you find you become close to alumni?

Yes, I do. I talk to them often. I assist with the Board of Visitors that we have for Arts and Science. We have been having two meetings a year and it is always a joy to work with them. We’ll have dinner the night before and then meetings the next day. The people really seem to appreciate it and are excited to find out what’s going on at Vanderbilt.

How much interaction do you have with students?

I usually have work-study students in the office. It’s something they need as well as something we need, so it’s a nice combination. I’m on the third year with the one I have now. I like to get freshmen and keep them four years. I’ve been fortunate enough to have ones that have been very serious about their studies and about their futures.

We’ve heard you like to cook. Do you have a specialty?

I like comfort food. I have a soup they ask me to bring every time we have a potluck lunch at work—lemon chicken artichoke soup. Everyone seems to like that. At Christmas, I make Oreo balls, and they like those too.



JOHN RUSSELL

Beyond a Rock and a Frozen Place



Molly Miller makes Earth science come alive, even in the coldest spot on the planet.

by MARDY FONES

A sweet aroma fills the hall outside the Earth and environmental science (EES) lab. The formation of magma and igneous rocks is being demonstrated—Molly Miller, professor and acting chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Science, is making peanut brittle in the classroom.

“Rocks melt more readily if heated in the presence of water,” Miller says. “So you could add heat to three minerals—represented by the sugar, peanuts and salt in this experiment—and they’d never melt. But add water and the sugar and salt melt at low temperature. The liquid magma—caramelized sugar—is less dense than the crystals—peanuts; if it were within the earth it would move upward.” Miller explains that this represents the basic process by which the Earth became density-stratified, with the less-dense continental crust on top of the more dense material.

Known for bringing Earth science alive, Miller was the 2007 recipient of Vanderbilt’s Chancellor’s Cup. The annual award recognizes a faculty member noted for involvement with students outside the classroom; it honored Miller’s contagious enthusiasm and passion for engaging students in Earth science and in life.

“We all have two questions to answer about our lives: ‘What do I think is most important and worthwhile to do? And in what style am I going to live as I pursue my goal?’” Miller says. “The job of a college student is to learn and use that learning to answer these questions and connect to a broader world.”

Rocks and Roots

Although Miller picked up her first fossil as a child and used a book to identify it, she didn’t feel drawn to science. “In fact, I detested it,” she reminisces. “I did a science fair project in middle school about dog intelligence. People who came to the fair one day used the

questions I designed to test their dogs’ intelligence, then brought them back to me to grade the next day. It was sort of an anti-science project that confirmed my dog was really smart.

“My teachers were not thrilled,” she deadpans.

At the College of Wooster, she took a geology class and the foundation of her career was laid. “I like the idea that the Earth is understandable in terms of a manageable number of processes, that there are commonalities and an order as to why things are the way they are,” she explains. Miller was drawn to the millennia-long scale of geological forces and their interactions. “They’re big. They’re visible. Just thinking about things being incredibly old extends your perspective.”

After completing doctorates, Miller and her husband, Calvin, joined the College of Arts and Science in 1977. Originally, the two job shared a teaching position so they could contribute equally in raising their children. “When we were in grad school, we had a vision of how we wanted to live our lives,” Miller says. “With our teaching arrangement, Calvin could spend weeks in the desert, I could do my research and one of us was always at home with the children.” Now both professors of Earth and environmental science, the Millers came on board as full-time faculty once their daughter and son were older.



DANIEL DUJICIS



ANTARCTICA PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOLLY MILLER

Polar Exploration

Although Miller is renowned for taking students to explore caves, quarries and fossil sites, her current research finds her in a very forbidding environment: the continent of Antarctica. “I’d done work in Tennessee and other places, but by 1985, I was eager to work where there was more rock and less vegetation, so I turned to Antarctica. There are massive exposures of sedimentary rocks in mountains that stand above the ice,” she says.

Initially she focused on evidence of ancient life, studying the burrows and tracks left in the rock of the Transantarctic Mountains. In 2003, Miller and her team found the fossilized stumps of an ancient forest that flourished more than 200 million years ago, even though it was near the South Pole. “It’s eye-opening to find such obvious evidence of life in a place that is so lifeless,” she says. She has made eight Antarctic trips and recently led an alumni travel group there.



Miller’s research focuses on reconstructing Antarctica’s past environments and climates to illuminate the Earth’s history.

Miller’s Antarctic research has moved to investigating the life and sediment on the ocean floor just off the coast. Despite the cold water and ice cover, the Antarctic Ocean floor teems with organisms. She and fellow researchers are conducting experiments to determine how the sediment is transported from the continent to the ocean floor in the absence of rivers and deltas, and how animals become fossilized. The results will be used to interpret ancient environmental and climate change recorded in long sediment cores being retrieved from the Antarctic continental shelf.

Miller thrives in the cold and snow and in the isolated simplicity of fieldwork. Even so, some field experiences still surprise her.

To gain access to the ocean, a hole is cut through 14 feet of ice. Underwater divers in special gear descend through the hole to reach coring sites and bring back samples. “In November, I was working alone in a tent set up over the hole and I heard this deep, heavy breathing,” Miller says. When she turned around, she discovered that a nosy, 800-pound-plus Weddell seal had appropriated the ice opening as a breathing hole, coming eyeball to eyeball with her. The seal was curious but docile and visited Miller several times before eventually swimming away under the thick ice.

In the Classroom

Miller’s research focuses on reconstructing Antarctica’s past environments and climates to illuminate the Earth’s history. While her work has implications for global warming, Miller thrives on being a teacher.

“I love teaching,” says Miller, who believes her thirst for education was inspired by her mother. “My mother got her doctorate in experimental pathology at the end of my freshman year in college. She taught me to make observations. I learned about surface tension from watching her make apple pies.”

Miller is intrepid in finding new ways to engage students, once enrolling in a stand-up comedy class to bring a new dimension to teaching. “If you’re going to teach for a long time, you have to have some fun the entire time,” says Miller, who has also employed jump ropes, Silly Putty and Play-Doh to get lessons across. “It’s a challenge to think of new ways to present the material. For every important concept, there’s an undiscovered way to make it crystal clear.”

To see Vanderbilt’s VUCast news feature on Miller, visit <http://snipurl.com/vuantarctica>

Opposite, top: Research camp in the Allan Hills, Antarctica. Above, from left: Miller’s camp quarters; geoscientists and 255-million-year sandstones with coal; Miller’s collaborator, John Isbell of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, recording observations at Wahl Glacier. Inset: Sea ice (frozen ocean).

Broadly Concentrated

Sociology department builds on existing strengths in key areas.

Sometimes new leaders make their mark on an organization by changing everything. Fortunately for the Department of Sociology, new chair Katharine Donato doesn't hold that philosophy. Instead Donato is building on the strengths of the programs in place to generate growth.

"This is not a department that needs an overhaul," says Donato, professor of sociology, who joined Vanderbilt in 2006. "It runs very smoothly. My colleagues are very productive, grounded people. That makes them a pleasure to work with personally and professionally."

The productivity of the sociology faculty is made all the more remarkable by the relatively small size of the department. Sociology, Donato explains, is a very broad field. The American Sociological Association lists 41 different sections of study. The College of Arts and Science's sociology department concentrates on eight sections, in addition to teaching an overview of sociology in general. "Some sociology departments will list 15. We're a fairly small faculty to cover eight areas," she says. "What is remarkable is we really do cover those areas."

The sociology faculty, which currently numbers 16, concentrates on teaching and research in the areas of health and medicine; cities, states, and political economy; race, ethnicity, and immigration; deviant behavior; arts and culture; gender and sexuality; work, labor, and occupations; and social movements. Their work is published in scholarly journals, two of which—*Work and Occupations* and *Homicide Studies*—are housed in the department. Starting in January 2010, the prestigious *American Sociological Review*—considered as the flagship journal in the field—will also come



DANIEL DUBOIS

Katharine Donato, sociology chair.

to Vanderbilt. Donato, Associate Professor Tony Brown, Professor Holly McCammon and Distinguished Professor of Sociology Larry Isaac were recently chosen as editors.

Relational Focus

Donato intends for the department to grow in the 2009-2010 academic year by adding new faculty positions and projects. It will grow smartly, she says, with continued focused attention on research and mentoring students. "I want to keep pushing so that we hire the best faculty and bring in the highest quality graduate students, and that both grow," she says.

Emily Tanner-Smith, who graduates with her Ph.D. in sociology in May, was drawn to the program because of its small size. Having attended a small liberal arts college for her undergraduate degree, she

wanted something larger, but not by too much. "I felt like I could get the one-on-one relationship with the faculty and that mentoring relationships could be built," Tanner-Smith says. "I had an idea of what I wanted to study, but I wasn't positive. With the breadth of the faculty members' research interests, I knew I wouldn't be locked in if I changed my mind."

With the broad reach of the field of sociology, the faculty finds plenty of opportunity to research jointly with others on campus. The Center for Medicine, Health and Society, Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy, and Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and the Environment all have ties to the sociology department through cross-discipline research or shared professors.



Assistant Professor Shaul Kelner's Tourism, Culture and Place class.

"Most of us work at the interstices of these areas, as well as within them," says Jennifer Lena, assistant professor of sociology. "This affords us particular advantages—we're all interesting people and interested in one another. We are all broadly read across the discipline and we work with ease on interdisciplinary projects like the medicine, health and society program, or Jewish studies."

Healthy Growth

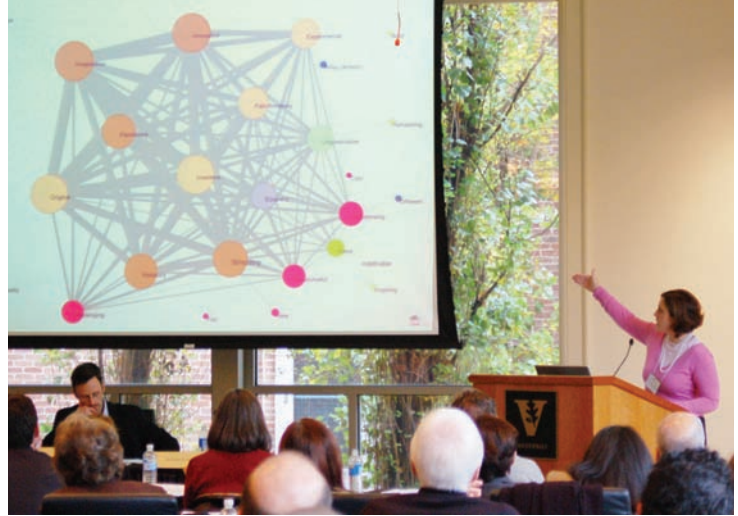
One interdisciplinary project includes interviewing Nashville residents on a wide variety of health indicators. Students use data from the Nashville Health Survey to discuss the survey methods and analyze results. When complete, Donato hopes that findings from the survey will lead to "interesting and important policy recommendations for the city."

In a new initiative, the department is teaming with Meharry Medical College on a health policy funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. As part of that initiative, graduate students will become foundation fellows, participate in Meharry's new Center for Health Policy and pursue doctorates in sociology in the College of Arts and Science.

Health-related work is both a strength and an area in which the department can continue to grow, Donato believes. As part of her research, she studies the relationship between migration and health. "We, as a social science discipline, have a long-standing history of writing on health issues," she says. "Any courses that we offer in health, broadly speaking, fill up immediately."

Emphasis on Research

Research plays a major role in the activity of the department. "Research is what we do and what we are expected to do," Isaac says. "It is at the heart of the scholarly mission. When we refer to research we generally mean the ongoing process of maintaining command of a particular field of inquiry—necessary for high-quality undergraduate and graduate teaching—and our individual and collective contributions to advance the field—necessary for graduate teaching."



Jennifer Lena, assistant professor, discusses campus creativity.

The emphasis on research strengthens the department's 25–30 graduate students, who often work with professors on research topics, earning not only valuable experience, but also publication credit. The department's prolific research has had an unexpected effect—professors sometimes have difficulty finding enough graduate students who are available to participate in new research projects. To that end, Donato anticipates small growth in the graduate program along with the addition of new faculty.

Research alone isn't enough to prepare students for future careers in academia. At the graduate level, students are required to take a teaching seminar. "We do mostly research with the graduate students, but then we add that applied piece which rounds them out as new Ph.D.s," Donato says. "It's not only about your ideas; it's about how you get those ideas across."

"I had an idea of what I wanted to study, but I wasn't positive. With the breadth of the faculty members' research interests, I knew I wouldn't be locked in if I changed my mind."

– Emily Tanner-Smith

Koji Ueno, PhD'04, and currently assistant professor at Florida State University, says the teaching seminar plus the dual emphasis on teaching and research made him a better sociologist. "The extensive and individualized feedback and mentoring from faculty tremendously helped me develop my research agendas and methodological skills to become an independent researcher," he says. "I also took advantage of the excellent course for sociology instruction as well as the opportunities to guest lecture and teach my own summer course. I felt confident about my teaching when I received my doctoral degree."

A WELLIE-WEARING,
TEA-DRINKING

Englishman in Nashville

*"I don't drink coffee, I take tea, my dear,
I like my toast done on one side,
And you can hear it in my accent when I talk
I'm an Englishman in New York."*

With Nashville substituted for New York, this song by Sting has become my theme since arriving at Vanderbilt in 2007. I find myself humming the melody as I walk across campus to class, and when I contemplate the lyrics, I realize that Sting was right. Even though I speak the language, I sometimes stick out as a foreigner. From food choices to clothing to the sound of my voice, I really am an alien. A welcomed and legal alien, but an alien all the same: an Englishman in Nashville.

The first time I stepped foot in Tennessee was August 2007, a week before classes started. I arrived at Nashville International Airport armed with two suitcases and a backpack, appliances pre-ordered online from Target and Bed, Bath and Beyond, and an interest in American political science. Many people say I should have visited the school I was going to attend in advance, but there hadn't been time. My weeklong U.S. college tour the previous summer had focused on Northeastern schools—those best known in England. Yet conversations with my best friend's mother, a Vanderbilt alumna living in the U.K., piqued my interest. However reckless it seemed, I was secretly glad that I hadn't visited my future home: It appealed to my impulsive side and added to the adventure.



JOHN RUSSELL

Above right: Ruth and best friend Frances White (now also a Vanderbilt student) commemorate the end of seven years at England's Wycombe Abbey.

With the help of multiple cups of tea, bars of Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate and new friends who laughed with me, I slowly but surely muddled through my first semester in the College of Arts and Science, aka American College Life 101.

However as I got out of the plane, felt the 110 degree Fahrenheit (43 degree Celsius) heat, and heard the voice of Dolly Parton welcoming me, the realization hit. I was definitely not in England anymore. Even though I was excited, I began to feel a little nervous.

I had been warned of the differences between America and England, but the variations most Englishmen see when they go on vacation are the obvious ones. “Don’t forget they drive on the other side of the road,” they said. “Remember they spell words differently.” These are differences one can learn from watching any Hollywood movie.

Once here, I noticed the less obvious, perhaps things that are more Southern, things most Americans don’t think about being different. I found a sweet potato is a dessert as well as a vegetable, that country is a well-liked form of music, strangers say hi on the street, and it costs money to both make and receive phone calls. Even though I had been to America before, in the South I felt naïve, like a newborn baby. Gone were the things of home: the narrow country lanes, the Marmite, the silence on the Tube, and of course, the rain.

Not only did I have to modify my everyday life, but I also had to adjust to a completely different school system. My education back in England had been at an all-girls boarding school called Wycombe Abbey. It was everything Americans imagine a typical English boarding school to be. In many ways, it was like Hogwarts. Instead of magic spells and wands, we had calculus and pencils, and instead of Quidditch, we had lacrosse, but it was still rather similar. On campus was a forest we couldn’t enter, our main school building was a castle, and our uniform included striped shirts, ties, kilts and long cloaks.

As classes began, I began to notice that although some differences didn’t matter—no uniforms and men and women attending classes together—there were others that did. Phrases and writing techniques my classmates understood were foreign to me. In my first-year writing seminar, one early homework assignment was to identify the thesis of an article. I remember looking bewilderedly at the professor and my classmates as they nodded and wrote the assignment in their diaries. A thesis? Wasn’t that the article itself? Later I embarrassedly asked the professor what exactly a thesis was. I discovered it to be a statement of argument, not a 20-50 page paper, as it is in England.

I continued to learn the ways of an American university. I quickly learnt that instead of the final grade of a class resting on one exam, assignments throughout the semester also contributed. I attempted new things, joined new organizations, and considered classes that I didn’t necessarily think I would enjoy. With the help of multiple cups of tea, bars of Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate and new friends who laughed with me, I slowly but surely muddled through my first semester in the College of Arts and Science, aka American College Life 101.

When I went home for Christmas, excited to see my family and England again, another realization hit. After having lived in America for only three and a half months, I looked at my country through a completely different lens. England actually looked downsized compared to America. As I looked out the car window at the cottages and village greens passing by, the word that came to mind was “quaint.”

As soon as I thought it, I wanted to kick myself. Quaint? Who, apart from American tourists, uses that word to describe England? English people definitely do not. This time, I saw what they were talking about. It wasn’t an insult—England is just on a smaller scale.

Attending the College of Arts and Science has opened my eyes to the world and has made me versatile. More than a year later, instead of a tea-drinking, Dairy Milk-chocolate-eating English schoolgirl, I am a student who listens to country music whilst reading the BBC News Web site. I am a girl who uses American colloquialisms whilst walking across campus in her wellies. I have both U.S. dollars and pounds sterling in my wallet. While I still find American politics interesting, I have found my true passion: history. Not only the history of a different country, but relooking at the history I already know from a different perspective. So now, perhaps, instead of being an Englishman in Nashville feeling slightly out of place, I combine two cultures, am able to fit in, and have wonderful friends in both places. I am an American college student with an English heritage.

Sophomore Ruth Kinsey is a double major in German and history. She hopes to eventually work as a journalist.

BRIEFS

Holy Ancient Comic Strip, Batman!



Telling stories in comic book or graphic novels isn't new—ancient Romans had their own version in the Tabulae Iliacae—but what scholar David Petrain learns from them is. Petrain, assistant professor of classics, is studying the

group of 22 carved stone plaques which date to the early Roman empire and tell the story of the Trojan War in picture and texts. Petrain will use a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities grant to show that the Tabulae actually represent a method by which Rome rewrote and presented history.

Shot Free?

Tiny carbon tubes are helping researchers find a way to free Type 1 diabetics from insulin shots. Using nanotechnology, Vanderbilt researchers have been able to continuously monitor the amount of insulin produced by transplanted cells. Type 1, or juvenile, diabetes can be treated by transplanting insulin-producing cells into a patient's pancreas to replace nonfunctional cells. The team, led by Associate Professor of Chemistry David Cliffler, hopes to use the new microphysiometer and its nanotube-constructed electrode to measure the condition of cells before and after transplant, including the long-term effect of immunosuppressant drugs.

Rogues Exposed

by KARA FURLONG and DAVID F. SALISBURY

RESEARCH BY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY KELLY HOLLEY-BOCKELMANN INDICATES THAT THERE MAY BE HUNDREDS OF NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE-TO-SPOT BLACK HOLES CAREENING AROUND THE GALAXY. Because these rogue black holes can't be directly observed, Holley-Bockelmann's research simulates their behavior. She uses the supercomputer at Vanderbilt's Advanced Computing Center for Research and Education (ACCRE) to run simulations to test her theories.

Her research proposes that the merger of two black holes that are rotating at different speeds (or are different sizes) produces a big kick, pushing the newly merged black hole away in an arbitrary direction at velocities as high as 4,000 kilometers per second.

"This is much higher than anyone predicted," the astronomer says. If the roughly 200 globular clusters in the Milky Way have indeed spawned black holes, this means that hundreds of them are probably wandering invisibly around the Milky Way, waiting to engulf the nebulae, stars and planets unfortunate enough to cross their paths.

Fortunately, the existence of a few rogue black holes in the neighborhood does not present a major danger. "These rogue black holes are extremely unlikely to do any damage to us in the lifetime of the universe," Holley-Bockelmann stresses. "Their danger



JOHN RUSSELL

Holley-Bockelmann

zone is really tiny, only a few hundred kilometers."

Holley-Bockelmann said to think of her findings this way: "What I do on a day-to-day basis is try to figure out what the link is between a galaxy and the black hole that lives within it. Does it change the shape of the galaxy in any way? Does it affect the way the galaxy moves and evolves and ultimately dies? My job is to figure out how the black hole and the galaxy communicate with one another."

Holley-Bockelmann presented the research, which was conducted in collaboration with scientists at Penn State University and the University of Michigan, at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society.

Now You're Talking

by MELANIE MORAN

THEY SAY THAT TALK IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL. Turns out that it may be the best long-term solution for many cases of depression, as well. Ongoing research by Steve Hollon, professor of psychology, and Richard Shelton, MD, James G. Blakemore Research Professor of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt Medical Center, shows that cognitive behavioral therapy could actually be a solution for depression.

Currently, the gold standard for treating moderate to severe depression is a combination of medication and psychotherapy. Antidepressant medication generally provides symptom relief, but cognitive therapy seems to have longer lasting results. Cognitive therapy is a form of talk therapy that teaches patients to recognize what triggers their depressions and to develop more effective, positive reactions to those situations.

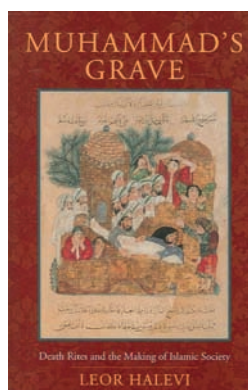
While he respects the value of medication, Hollon prefers psychotherapy for

depression. "I believe cognitive psychotherapy solves the underlying causes of depression," he says, and therefore, provides better lasting results. Since more than 32 million Americans are expected to develop depression sometime in their lives, finding effective treatments is essential. The researchers' groundbreaking work is supported by grants from the National Institute of Health and the National Institute for Mental Health.

Initial research conducted at Vanderbilt and the University of Pennsylvania compared cognitive therapy to antidepressants. Over the 16-week study, patients took slightly longer to respond to the cognitive therapy, but it had an enduring effect on them. Recent follow-up studies show that patients treated with cognitive therapy tended to have fewer instances of relapse than those treated with medication.

Islamic Traditions Rise From Death

To find the origins of many Muslim traditions, look to Islamic death and funeral rituals. That's what Associate Professor of History Leor Halevi says in his recent book, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society*. Halevi researched the relationship between religious laws and social practices and found that many Muslim practices were born in the world of death, including views on modesty, privacy and the ways that men and women interact. "In a nutshell, I take traditions about Muhammad and show their historical relevance to the making of Islam after Muhammad's death," Halevi says. *Muhammad's Grave* has received several book awards, including the 2008 Ralph Waldo Emerson Award from the Phi Beta Kappa Society and an American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion.



BRIEFS

Up Teeny, Tiny Periscope

Who developed the world's smallest periscope and why? It wasn't Q for James Bond—a team of Vanderbilt scientists developed tiny mirrored, pyramid-shaped wells the width of a human hair to get high-



From left, Janetopoulos, Wikswow, Seale and Wright.

resolution, 3-D views of cells and other microorganisms. "Not only can we see the tops of cells, we can view their sides as well—something biologists almost never see," says Chris Janetopoulos, assistant professor of biological sciences. The interdisciplinary team included researchers from the School of Engineering and the Vanderbilt Institute for Integrative Biosystems Research and Education (VIIBRE); biology major Charles Wright, BA'08; Assistant Professor of the Practice of Biomedical Engineering Kevin Seale; and VIIBRE Director John P. Wikswow, Gordon A. Cain University Professor. The mirrored wells are less expensive than current 3-D microscopy methods and the periscope has applications in genetic engineering and metabolic studies.



The Convergence of

Arts and Science

by FIONA SOLTES

Some thought Jessica Miles was making a mistake. Why would the Louisville, Ky., student who excelled in the sciences attend the College of Arts and Science at Vanderbilt rather than a science or technology institute?

But it made perfect sense to Miles and to Vanderbilt: Learning how to communicate scientific ideas meant she needed to study both science and the humanities. Even so, the graduate of a science and technology magnet school and daughter of a scientific researcher had to defend her choice.

Now a sophomore with a double major in biology and communication of science and technology, Miles finds herself in a creative haven with students, faculty and staff who share her Chaucer-to-Copernicus interests.

“There is definitely strong support for both here,” Miles says. “And seeing other students with equally diverse interests, that’s really encouraging, too.”

As the liberal arts center within a major research university, the College of Arts and Science serves as the junction of arts and science, promoting their inseparability, and celebrating that understanding of the one illuminates the understanding of the other. In such an environment, minds are open to creative bridges of ideas and thoughts thrive and truly anything can happen.



“I always enjoyed science, and loved how it relates to the world, but I also loved to write, and the science track in college did not encourage this type of expression.”

– Dahlia Porter, assistant professor of English

Dahlia Porter features botanical and natural history prints in her honors seminar.

Connections Between Art and Life

Senior Maggie Morrow came to the College of Arts and Science to study English. She signed up for calculus to round out her core curriculum. She enjoyed the mathematical way of thinking, she says, and one math class led to another, and then to another. Eventually Morrow became a double major in English and math.

“When you’re writing a paper in English class, you want it to be logical and well thought-out,” Morrow says. “I never really understood how to do that until I began taking proof-based math classes. You have to think of different cases, different examples. I’ve always felt that, in higher mathematics, it wasn’t so much of a ‘this is a right or wrong answer.’ It’s more about how you’re making the argument. And that’s what writing a paper in English is all about.”

Morrow grew up in a liberal arts-based home with a father who studied history and a mother who taught drama. While that background provided her with an early understanding about the connections between art and life, others in the College of Arts and Science once struggled with the tension of seemingly competitive interests and disciplines.

Crossing Boundaries

Dahlia Porter, assistant professor of English, started her undergraduate career in chemistry.

“I went to a high school where science and math were given a lot more emphasis, and I thought that’s what you

were supposed to do if you were a smart person,” says Porter, whose academic interests include British romanticism and transatlantic 18th-century literature and culture. “I always enjoyed science, and loved how it relates to the world, but I also loved to write, and the science track in college did not encourage this type of expression.”

Pursuing her love of literature, she obtained her master’s degree and doctorate in English. Today she shares both her interests in courses such as the honors seminar, Literature and Science: Revolution to Evolution. “The outlets for expression when starting in science were not as great as they are now. The new emphasis on crossing boundaries between disciplines has changed this,” she says.

Robert J. Scherrer, chair of physics and astronomy and professor of physics, too experienced a tug to express himself in different ways. Though he says he has always been a scientist first—and a teacher for two decades—he writes science fiction, publishing his first story eight years ago at age 42.

“When I do science, I can’t speculate as freely,” he says. “But writing science fiction gives me the ability to go off on tangents. It hasn’t really affected the way I do science. It has just given me an outlet for more crazy ideas, things I could never put in a scientific paper. It gives me a different sense of accomplishment when I write a story than when I do scientific work.”

Moonlight (and) Music

Physics major Calen Henderson has been keen on astronomy since he uttered his first intelligible word: “Moon.”

Even so, Henderson admits he has had “much more than a fleeting thought” about going into music full time rather than continuing on in physics. The graduating senior realizes one must eventually be vocation, and the other, hobby, but it doesn’t help that he is strongly gifted at both. In addition to being an award-winning piano soloist studying at the Blair School of Music, Henderson was recently lauded by the American Astronomical Society for a presentation at the group’s annual meeting.

“As it’s turned out,” says the 21-year-old from Kansas City, “it’s definitely easier to be the physicist who plays piano than the concert pianist who studies physics.”

Henderson is far from alone in the interdisciplinary approach to his studies. Karen Ann Krieger, associate professor of piano at Blair, says she has worked with piano students who double major in areas as diverse as biomedical engineering, economics and computer science. They all enjoy the therapeutic effects of the music. Even so, Henderson is a little different. He is outstanding, Krieger says, due to his passion and enthusiasm.

“Calen would come in each week and had to tell me about things outside of Blair, the latest updates on his physics research,” Krieger says. “Sometimes I had no idea what he was talking about, but he made me want to know more. These students’ passions, their interests, broaden my world.”

Henderson connects music and astronomy by speaking of sound waves and light waves, but he admits that he finds other commonalities in the two.

“The music I’ve always been drawn to has been impressionistic,” he says. “To me, there’s a fundamental connection between listening to that kind of music and focusing on the kind of relationship it can have with you, and going out on a dark night and being allowed to be one with the heavens.”



Professor of Physics Norman Tolk has been one of Henderson’s mentors in both science and music. He and Henderson “had an affinity from the beginning,” Tolk says, in part due to the professor’s own musical interests. Henderson has visited the Tolk’s home and participated in chamber music parties, in which guests both perform and dine.

“We all sort of agreed that there has been a strong historical connection between music and physics,” Tolk says. “Einstein was a violinist, and a lot of people have done both. Both reflect an underlying order, a pattern that people can resonate to.”

—Fiona Soltes

“You look at subjects from a variety of points of view, some of which are familiar and some of which are not, then you go into points where they conflict.”

– James H. Dickerson,
Assistant Professor of Physics

Scherrer’s short stories have been published in the revered science fiction magazine, *Analog*. He says that using his science background in his writing comes naturally, but that his writing technique is more challenging. “I had to unlearn how to write, since I had been writing science papers for about 10 years, and that writing style is turgid. It’s passive voice, very dry,” he says. “The first thing I have to do is whack myself over the head and really concentrate on getting into the fiction-writing mode. When I write a first draft, it’s usually terrible. Even if the content is there, the style is terrible.”

Scherrer is much more likely to write about sciences other than his own, he says, to keep from speculating on things he would otherwise know to be incorrect. It’s a different story, however, when he reads someone else’s science fiction concerning physics or cosmology. “I tend to be very critical of the science,” he admits. “I get all persnickety about it, and it hinders my enjoyment of the reading.”

Faces Agape

Though the exploration of different interests can certainly have its challenges, it also may have unexpected benefits. Some say stretching the brain to look at certain topics from different angles allows a person to find connections elsewhere in life.

Physics major Calen Henderson has spent his four years at Vanderbilt moving between the College of Arts and Science and the Blair School of Music. The talented astronomer and pianist doesn’t see conflict in his diverse passions. “As fundamentally different as things may seem, the reality is, if



Jay Dickerson, assistant professor of physics and life-long lover of art.

you put your mind to it and have enough passion and drive—especially if you’re helped along by excellent mentors—anything is possible,” Henderson says.

Assistant Professor of Physics James H. Dickerson says he’s accustomed to seeing “lots of faces agape” at the beginning of his honors seminar course, *The Physics of Art and the Art of Physics*. A first lecture, for example, might focus on the concept of color from both a physicist’s and an artist’s point of view. “That essentially sets the stage. You look at subjects from a variety of points of view, some of which are familiar and some of which are not, then you go into points where they conflict,” says the professor, who developed his own interests in physics and art history in parallel. “These questions create this space where students discover that they are welcome to probe and explore. In a very dramatic way, this gives students a sense that they should not be either frightened or discouraged by challenging topics.”

Fruitful Collaborations

Dinner discussions at the home shared by Jay and Ellen Wright Clayton often cover challenging topics. Jay Clayton is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English and chair of the English department. Dr. Ellen Wright Clayton is the Rosalind E. Franklin Professor of Genetics and Health Policy, professor of pediatrics, and director of the Vanderbilt Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society. The English professor credits conversations about scientific policy and ethics for increasing his interest in computer technology, genetics and biotechnology.

A noted scholar of Victorian literature, Jay Clayton researches the ethical and social issues raised by genetics as they appear in literature and films. He became the first literature professor to receive a grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Introducing science students to English or English students to science, Jay Clayton says, is not about “one learning to be a scientist, or the other a skilled literary critic. It’s about each person bringing their best to the experience,” he says. “Really fruitful collaborations are starting to take place.”

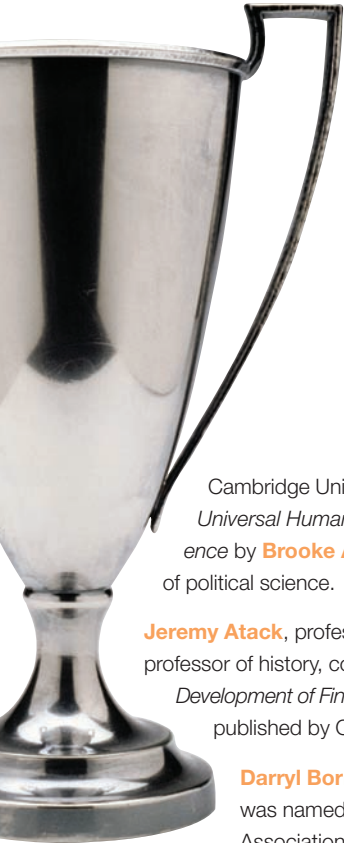
That collaborative nature and its productivity shouldn’t surprise anyone, physics professor Scherrer says. They all stem from one commonality.

“Certainly everything we do in Arts and Science has creativity at its core,” Scherrer says. “When I come up with a new idea for my research—or someone else does, even when they’re working in a different field—it’s the fact of trying to create something new and original. That’s common across the college, the thread that ties everybody together.”



Dinner conversation between Jay and Ellen Wright Clayton, a physician and authority in medical ethics, sparked Jay Clayton’s interest in how genetics and biotechnology are depicted in literature.

DANIEL DUBOIS



Cambridge University Press has published *Universal Human Rights in a World of Difference* by **Brooke Ackerly**, associate professor of political science.

Jeremy Atack, professor of economics and professor of history, co-edited *The Origins and Development of Financial Markets and Institutions*, published by Cambridge University Press.

Darryl Bornhop, professor of chemistry, was named one of 10 finalists for the Association for Laboratory Automation's annual innovation award.

The Blue Star by **Tony Earley**, Samuel Milton Fleming Associate Professor of English, was recognized by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the "100 Notable Books of 2008." *USA Today* named it one of the top 10 books of 2008.

Brandt Eichman, assistant professor of biological sciences and assistant professor of biochemistry, has received the Young Investigator Award from scientific research society Sigma XI.



Ellen Fanning, Stevenson Professor of Biological Sciences, and **Thomas J. Weiler**, professor of physics, have been awarded Humboldt Research Awards in recognition of lifetime achievements.

Seeing Mexico Photographed: The Work of Horne, Casasola, Modotti and Álvarez Bravo by **Leonard**



Tony Earley and 'The Blue Star'

Folgarait, professor of history of art, was published by Yale University Press.

American Crucible by **Gary Gerstle**, James G. Stahlman Professor of American History, has been chosen as a Best Book for a Transformative New Year by NPR's Fresh Air.

Jennifer Lena, assistant professor of sociology, and **Sarah Igo**, associate professor of history, will serve as co-chairs of the Culture Network of the Social Science History Association from October 2008-2011.

The Divine Nature of Power by **Tracy G. Miller**, associate professor of history of art, received the Southeastern College Art Conference Award for Excellence in Scholarly Research and Publication.

Assistant Professor of History **Catherine Molineux's** *Pleasures of the Smoke* has been

named co-winner of the 2008 James L. Clifford Prize from American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

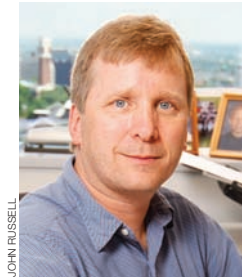
Michael Nelson, adjunct professor of political science, won the V.O. Key Book Award for *How the South Joined the Gambling Nation: The Politics of State Policy Innovation*.

Moses Ochonu, assistant professor of history, has been awarded a Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Grant.

Thomas Schwartz, professor of history, has been awarded the 2008 Annual Alumni Education Award from the Vanderbilt Alumni Association. He has also received the Book Award by Chi Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order.

John Sloop, professor of communication studies and associate dean of the College of Arts and Science, has been awarded the prestigious 2008 Charles H. Woolbert Research Award by the National Communications Association. Sloop was honored for his influential 1995 co-authored essay, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse."





JOHN RUSSELL

Gary Sulikowski, Stevenson Professor of Chemistry, has been elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Robert Talisse, associate professor of philosophy, and Scott Aikin, PhD'06, have published *Pragmatism: A Guide for the Perplexed*.

David Petrain, assistant professor of classics, and **Tracy G. Miller**, associate professor of history of art, have been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Elizabeth Zechmeister, assistant professor of political science, has been awarded a National Science Foundation grant for research on "The Effects of Terrorist Threats on Democratic Support in Liberal and Illiberal Democracies."

The College of Arts and Science presented 2008 teaching awards to faculty members in a variety of disciplines. **Nathalie Debrauwere-Miller**, assistant professor of French, received the Jeffrey Nordhaus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the Humanities; **Terry Page**, professor of biological sciences, received the Jeffrey Nordhaus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the Natural Sciences; and **Katherine Crawford**, associate professor of history, received the Jeffrey Nordhaus Award for Excellence in

Undergraduate Teaching in the Social Sciences. The Harriet S. Gilliam Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Lecturer or Senior Lecturer was awarded to **Michelle Sulikowski**, senior lecturer in chemistry. The Ernest A. Jones Faculty Adviser Award was presented to **Roger E. Moore**, senior lecturer in English. The Alumni Outstanding Freshman Adviser Award was presented to Senior Lecturer **Julia Fesmire** of the Women's and Gender Studies program. **Gregg Horowitz**, associate professor of philosophy, received the 2008 Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching. **Jon Kaas**, Centennial Professor of Psychology, was honored with the 2008 Award for Excellence in Graduate Mentoring. Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards were awarded to **Danielle Kurin**, anthropology, and **Matt Whitt**, philosophy.

"This was our way of saying 'thank you' to Vanderbilt for providing us with a quality education and nurturing our intellectual lives over the years."

– Dr. Charles H. and Mrs. Joy B. Hambrick

After establishing a scholarship for students in the College of Arts and Science, the Hambricks started exploring additional ways to help Vanderbilt. The Charitable Gift Annuity was a perfect solution because it benefits them as well, with a sizeable tax deduction and guaranteed income for life.

Benefits on a \$10,000 Single-Life Charitable Gift Annuity*

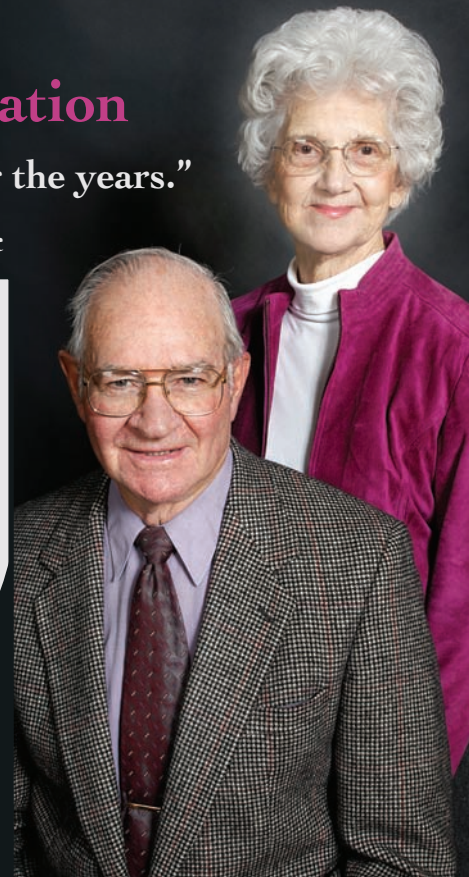
Age	Annuity Rate	Yearly Payment	Tax Deduction
65	5.3%	\$530	\$2,978
70	5.7%	\$570	\$3,647
75	6.3%	\$630	\$4,248
80	7.1%	\$710	\$4,875
85	8.1%	\$810	\$5,526
90+	9.5%	\$950	\$6,109

*Minimum age of 65 and minimum gift of \$10,000. Figures as of April 2009.

For more information, please contact Katie Jackson in Vanderbilt's Office of Planned Giving at 615/343-3858 or 888/758-1999 or katie.jackson@vanderbilt.edu. Let her tailor a Charitable Gift Annuity just for you.



VANDERBILT



My Discipline's Better Than Your Discipline

Imagine if the definition of a liberal arts education were to change. What if one of its disciplines—the humanities, natural sciences or social sciences—were to be eliminated? Which one should it be? What if we forced the disciplines themselves to debate and prove each deserved to be taught?

Three College of Arts and Science professors took on the challenge of presenting the most convincing case for why their discipline is vital and valuable. David Jon Furbish, professor of Earth and environmental science, made the case for the natural sciences; John Geer, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and interim department chair, championed the social sciences; and Tiffany R. Patterson, associate professor of African American and diaspora studies, upheld the humanities.

Briefly, what does your discipline contribute to a liberal arts education, and indeed, society?

GEER: Social science lies at the heart of any university because it brings together the best of the humanities and the sciences to advance our understanding of important historical, social, economic and political trends.

FURBISH: Science, by definition, navigates uncertainty. In turn, because knowledge generated by science so strongly influences the fabric of society—both directly and indirectly through technology and innovations—it makes sense to me that there is tremendous value in learning how science works. There's also value in discovering how science approaches the issue of uncertainty in knowledge—as a lovely ingredient of scholarship, of lifelong learning, of communication, of making informed choices.



© JIM FRANCIER

PATTERSON: The humanities approach knowledge by critically analyzing belief systems, culture, memory and imagination. An understanding of the past that created our present, the philosophical questions that informed struggles over values and cultural difference, and the literary and artistic texts that reflect our world are a necessary complement to the other disciplines.

“Learning how to think creatively is far more important than pursuing a narrow career. Careers, frankly, come and go.”

— John G. Geer

Why is that important?

GEER: The goal of any liberal arts education is to help students become democratic citizens. The social sciences lie at the center of that effort.

FURBISH: The natural sciences provide the foundation of technology and technological innovations. Science drives innovations in other fields, including engineering and medicine.

PATTERSON: The humanities provide us with the languages to communicate ideas, to insist upon understanding how human

“No one discipline has a monopoly on all we need to know about the world.”

– Tiffany R. Patterson

societies have expressed their values and how they solved, or failed to solve, social problems. The humanities also help us to avoid repeating many (if not all) mistakes of the past and to develop enlightened solutions to contemporary problems.

If you had to choose one of the other disciplines as most valuable, which would you choose and why?

GEER: Neither, we already encompass both in the social sciences. We have faculty who take the humanities seriously to advance our understanding, for example, of justice. At the same time, we have faculty who make use of the latest breakthroughs in neuroscience to understand better how personality shapes our social behavior.

FURBISH: You can't choose one discipline as more valuable. Together, they form a triad, a triangle. The triangle is mechanically the strongest geometrical construct. Load it, stress it, squeeze it, and a triangle is self-reinforcing, self-stabilizing. You of course know of the underlying principles of the legislative–executive–judicial triad. You know of the simple beauty of the reinforcing tones—the harmony—of a musical triad. Shall I add here that our triangle is a self-reinforcing structure of a world-class education?

PATTERSON: This is a false choice. Different types of intellectual activity are needed to solve modern problems and to envision a more productive future. No one discipline has a monopoly on all we need to know about the world. To ignore any of the disciplines is to be partially educated and deficient in our thinking.

What would society look like if one of these disciplines (not necessarily yours) were removed?

GEER: In the long run, we need all three areas of inquiry. Not only do they advance our understanding of a vast array of topics, ranging from history of art to how stars form, but these disciplines become more vibrant from cross-fertilization. Political science, for example, seeks to inform society about how our political system works, but it does so only after borrowing from related fields such as history, economics,

anthropology or genetics. True discovery comes when you break outside of normal lines of inquiry, and that is really only possible with interdisciplinary work.

FURBISH: I agree. Increasingly, innovations aimed at addressing problems of critical societal importance are requiring the effective communication between the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, law, medicine and engineering.

PATTERSON: Society would be impoverished. Consider how much we'd lose without the advances in science and technology or how important economics is in addressing our current crisis. Knowledge of history and anthropology is crucial in a globalized world if we are to communicate effectively across cultural and religious differences. Language, philosophy and aesthetics enhance our ability to understand a complicated and uncertain world.

So what would you say to students who protest that they will never use—for example, a class in biology, philosophy or sociology—in their intended careers?

GEER: Careers are important. But the purpose of a liberal arts education is to teach you to think. Learning how to think creatively is far more important than pursuing a narrow career. Careers, frankly, come and go—just ask all the business majors at financial firms who have lost their jobs. The ability to think, by comparison, is useful for all careers. You never know what life will yield, what new directions you might take. The liberal arts education will prepare you for such journeys. So, take the philosophy class—it will pay dividends in more ways than you can appreciate.

FURBISH: Regardless of one's educational path, an informed perspective of science is a key ingredient of scholarship, of life-long learning, of communication, of making informed choices.

PATTERSON: A liberal arts education teaches one perspective and to critically analyze our world and imagine new possibilities. A class in biology, sociology, or poetry, or interdisciplinary fields such as Latin American studies or African American and diaspora studies, will bring unexpected rewards. Take these classes and risk becoming perceptive thinkers and innovative leaders.

Driving Dreams

Robert "Bob" Boniface, BA'87



Director of Design
Chevrolet Volt and E-Flex Studio,
General Motors Corp.

SPOUSE

Amy Keenan Boniface

CHILDREN

Bobby, Annie, Julie and Megan

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT

Siena, Italy

FAVORITE BOOKS

A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole

My Vanderbilt degree provided opportunities that I could not have imagined as an undergrad—it opened doors, made me stand out from the crowd, and gave me the tools to compete in design school and corporate America.

I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN FURMAN HALL. ALMOST.

And I had almost forgotten the painful experience of earning a D in Econ 100 in that very building. As a Vanderbilt freshman 26 years ago, I hated Furman Hall. Yet there I was, walking past Furman to go speak to undergraduates about my career since graduation.

As a student, I was the poster child for mediocrity. I didn't know what I wanted to do in life, but it didn't matter much at the time. As I saw it, my poor grade point average would likely prevent me from doing it anyway.

One thing I was good at was daydreaming—I had always been a creative person. I searched out creative outlets on campus such as WRVU, where I hosted a radio show for a few semesters. I was also a hopeless car enthusiast. Much of my creative output appeared as sketches of cars on classroom desks or in the margins of my Econ notebook.

As I progressed through the College of Arts and Science, I figured out the whole college thing. My grades improved, and I graduated with a major in psychology and a minor in business administration. I felt that a good, well-rounded liberal arts degree from Vanderbilt might open doors my otherwise lackluster GPA could not. I moved to Boston where I landed an entry-level position in a mutual funds company. I loved Boston, but this was not a step toward a satisfying career.

Still, I could afford to buy a few things. One of my first purchases was a drafting table so that I could pursue sketching. That was when I finally figured out what I wanted to do... and it had nothing to do with mutual funds.

I wanted to be a car designer. It took me six months to assemble a portfolio of original automotive designs to send to Detroit's College for Creative Studies (CCS), one of the world's premier industrial design schools. To my surprise, I was accepted.

Since I had never taken an art class, CCS was a unique experience for me. It was an absolute pressure cooker. My freshman class



Proposed production version, Chevrolet Volt, 2011

had 75 students who would compete for 20 transportation design positions available for sophomore year. Eventually, only six got jobs with automobile manufacturers.

After my second year, I was hired as a design intern with ASC Inc., the industry leader in convertible top and sunroof design and noted builder of specialty vehicles and concept cars. There I was exposed to manufacturing techniques and experienced how a real design studio worked. Combined with my Vanderbilt degree, this gave me a critical advantage over my classmates as we entered our third year, when auto manufacturers begin to scout the latest wave of car designers.

In 1992 Chrysler was the hottest design studio in the industry. The automaker had introduced a series of fantastic concept cars beginning with the Dodge Viper, and the production lineup on the horizon was incredibly fresh. I was fortunate to be picked up by Chrysler as a summer intern. Because I already had a bachelor's from Vanderbilt, I was offered a full-time position at the end of the internship. I accepted it and worked with CCS to complete my design degree at night.

I was now competing with some of the finest automotive designers in the world—and the competition was stiff. All designers want their designs to be chosen for production, but many spend entire careers designing little more than door handles or wheels. In late 1993, I worked on my first production car, the 1998 Dodge Intrepid. I also worked on the Dodge Intrepid ESX concept vehicle (car talk for prototype). The ESX was a diesel-electric hybrid developed but never produced in conjunction with the government-sponsored Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles. It was engineered to deliver fuel economy of 80 miles per gallon.

In 1997 I became lead designer for the 2002 Jeep Liberty. A year later, I received the Automotive Hall of Fame's prestigious Young Leadership and Excellence Award. During this time I was promoted to manager, and later, chief of Chrysler's Advanced Product Design Studio, the birthplace of all Chrysler's future projects. Two notable initiatives to come out of our studio were the rear-wheel drive Chrysler 300C and the industry's first minivan Sto-N-Go seating

system. I loved working at Chrysler, but by 2003, I felt at odds with the company's design direction. General Motors offered me a position as director of advanced design, so in January 2004, I joined GM.

The size of General Motors and its global product range were remarkable. I was immediately thrown into the deep end and tasked with designing the GM Sequel, a concept vehicle powered by fuel cells. Fuel-cell vehicles are essentially electric cars that use hydrogen to create electricity for propulsion. The project was a success and became the first vehicle to demonstrate a driving range of 300 miles with zero emissions. Our studio was also charged with bringing the Camaro back to life. As a car enthusiast, I consider developing the new Camaro one of the highlights of my career. (Fellow Vanderbilt graduate Mark Reuss, BE'86, also worked on the Camaro project.)

Three years ago, I began design on what could very well be one of the most important vehicles in General Motors' history, the Chevrolet Volt. Unveiled at the North American International Auto Show in January 2007, the Volt concept was the hit of the event. The Volt has a sports car stance and a groundbreaking electric powertrain, which allows drivers to travel up to 40 miles on a single electric charge. If driven beyond 40 miles, the Volt also has a small onboard gas engine that continually generates electricity and extends the range by several hundred miles. The Volt is to go on sale in late 2010.

Walking around the Vanderbilt campus recently gave me time to reflect upon the years since graduation. My Vanderbilt degree provided opportunities that I could not have imagined as an undergrad—it opened doors, made me stand out from the crowd, and gave me the tools to compete in design school and corporate America. I use it when I manage a team of designers and engineers, oversee budgets and integrate scientific principles in my designs. My background in psychology helps me understand why consumers love their cars—and how to incorporate that knowledge into designing cars they'll love. I know now that my liberal arts education wasn't about a GPA.

Now I even like Furman Hall.

Pay It Forward

WHEN CONNER AND GINNY SEARCY LEARNED OF VANDERBILT'S NEW NO-NEED-BASED LOAN FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES FOR UNDERGRADUATES, THEY KNEW THE TIME HAD COME TO ACT.

"When we got the news of the no-loan program, we said 'That's it. That is the cause'—the most important thing that Vanderbilt has done since we've been involved with the school," says Conner Searcy, BA'96. That's when the couple decided to endow a need-based scholarship in the College of Arts and Science as a way of sharing their success and in hope that their gift will influence the recipients and fellow alumni to do the same and "pay it forward."

As high school students in adjacent states in the great American Southwest, Conner and Ginny could hardly foresee that their futures and fortunes would intertwine in the Southeast, surrounded by the rolling hills of Middle Tennessee and under the oak trees of Vanderbilt University. They came by different roads, found common ground, and set out on a journey of success that they now share with those that come behind.

Right from the Start

Virginia "Ginny" Buxton, BA'96, hailed from a small town in Oklahoma, where almost no one left to go away to college. "My cousin was at Vanderbilt a few years ahead of me," she recounts. "When I was looking for colleges, I looked only at a couple of schools with a focus on math, science and a great liberal arts program—far from home, but not too far from home. I went to visit Vanderbilt and was sold the minute I stepped on campus. I applied for early decision."

Conner Searcy grew up in Houston, raised by a single working mother. He has a sister who is disabled, and things were tough financially. He was able to attend private schools through financial aid and scholarships, experiences that changed his life for the better. When it came time for college, he knew he wanted a school below the Mason-Dixon Line. "I actually had my heart set on going to Duke," Conner admits. "I wanted to go to a great academic institution with a good social atmosphere. I visited Duke and then visited Vanderbilt right after that, and said, 'You know, I think Vanderbilt



Conner Searcy speaks to students in the managerial studies program.

works for me.' That's when I applied for early decision. Vanderbilt's the only school I applied to, and I was fortunate to receive an academic scholarship."

They met the year Ginny was a sophomore and Conner, a freshman. Ginny majored in biology before going on to earn a master's degree in public health administration at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. Conner focused his studies on economics. After four years in the workforce in Dallas and marriage, they moved to Boston where Conner earned a master of business degree at Harvard. "I knew I wanted to get my MBA and return to the private equity business," he says. "I was working in that field when I applied."

Ginny says they loved the adventure of being in Boston. "Nashville was sort of my first adventure out of Oklahoma, and being in Boston was great for us. We were already married when we went, and it was great to be away on our own for a while," she says. "Our first year, I told Conner we should stay and make Boston our home. We had a very mild first winter. Then we had a very strenuous second winter—the snow never stopped. We were glad to get back to Texas after that."

Family and Travel

Life in Texas is full and active. Ginny found success first in hospital administration and now as the mother of their three children: Will, 4; Brooks, 3; and Ellie, 2. Conner is a triathlete and completed his first Ironman last September. That helps keep him in condition for



The Searcys—Ginny and Conner, with children Brooks, Will and Ellie.

“When we got the news of the no-loan program, we said ‘That’s it. That is the cause’—the most important thing that Vanderbilt has done since we’ve been involved with the school.”

— Conner Searcy, BA’96

his day job. “We’re a private equity firm that buys companies in some form of distress with the idea of turning them around and ultimately selling them. Looking at new opportunities and visiting our portfolio companies requires a lot of travel,” he says. “I try to make everything a day trip. I’ve made day trips to New York and Boston. I try not to spend the night anywhere away from home when I can avoid it. Although a day trip to Boston is awfully tough.”

One day trip Conner makes on a regular basis is back to the College of Arts and Science, where he shares his business experience as a guest lecturer for the managerial studies program. “Ginny and I fundamentally believe that if you’re as fortunate as we have been, and have been afforded the things we’ve been afforded in our lives, we need to pay it forward,” he says.

The Searcy commitment to pay it forward is evident in their community activities as well. Among Ginny’s favorites are the Dallas Child Advocacy Center, Episcopal School of Dallas, Children’s Medical Center and Dallas Museum of Art. “Most of the things we do center on children and education,” Conner says.

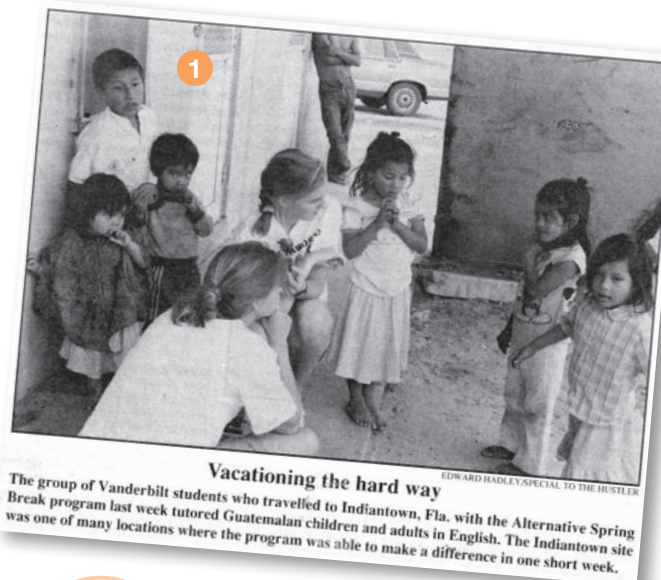
Catalyst for the Future

When they learned of Vanderbilt’s commitment to no need-based loans for undergraduates, the couple was moved to become personally involved. “It’s an incredibly noble cause that students not have to worry about paying off a mountain of debt for the rest of their lives,” Conner says. “I firmly think that this is the catalyst that the school leaders have been looking for the last 50 years, and it’ll make Vanderbilt stronger and one of the top-10 academic institutions in the country. This is going to draw in better students and better professors.”

Both their mothers are teachers, Ginny says, and instilled in their children the need to seek out the best opportunities possible and to make them available to those who

might not be as fortunate. “In terms of philanthropy, Conner and I thought, ‘we’re now fortunate enough to be in a place where we can start to give back.’ We want to set an example for our friends who may not have started thinking about how—or the vehicles for—giving back.”

Recently, the Searcys hosted a lunch to introduce some of their Vanderbilt friends to Dean Carolyn Dever. “We have a big contingency here in Dallas, and we keep in touch on a regular basis,” Conner says. “Our goal was to invite some of our friends to a luncheon where we could pitch them on giving to the scholarship fund.” He says that their friends love the fact that Vanderbilt is helping students with debt, and that they themselves can help. “Now it’s our job, Ginny and I, whether other folks turn that into giving back,” he says. “We’re working on that.”



Vacationing the hard way
The group of Vanderbilt students who travelled to Indiantown, Fla. with the Alternative Spring Break program last week tutored Guatemalan children and adults in English. The Indiantown site was one of many locations where the program was able to make a difference in one short week.

Students told Susan Ford Wiltshire, professor of classics, that they wanted to know the world beyond campus. Wiltshire suggested that they launch a spring break program of community service to discover different cultures, places and social issues. She had no takers that first year. The next year, Ethel Johnson (now Harris) responded. "I am going to try to change some things," Harris, BA'87, said. The English and molecular biology major did. About 75 students enthusiastically inaugurated Alternative Spring Break in 1986. Organizers had hoped for a mere 25. More than 20 years later, thousands of students have participated in Alternative Spring Break, thousands of people have been served, and the program has spread to campuses nationwide. Even in its infancy, the student-run organization attracted interest on campus and inspired awe at how fast it grew. In 2009, more than 420 volunteers worked on 35 sites in the U.S. and Guatemala instead of hitting the beach or slopes. Projects included repairing houses, caring for HIV-infected children, protecting endangered species and confronting other social issues. Alternative Spring Break is so popular that the organization has a wait list of students wanting to participate.

(1) The Vanderbilt Hustler, Vol. 102, No. 16; (2) The Vanderbilt Register, March 24, 1989; (3) Vanderbilt Magazine, Vol. 84, No. 2; (4) Orbis, Vol. 3, No. 9; (5) The Vanderbilt Hustler, Vol. 118, No. 17; (6) OverVU, Feb. 1988; (7) The Commodore 1987

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Alternative advising is rewarding

by Kristie O'Neil
Seven faculty and staff members were advisors for the 120 undergraduates who participated in the 1989 Alternative Spring Break program, March 5 through 12. The students and their advisors visited seven sites—Nashville; Rose's Creek; Lexington, Miss.; Washington, D.C.; Indiantown, Fla.; Monterey, Mexico, and Sioux Falls, S.D.—and worked on various community projects. The program, led by senior Margaret Horn and junior Christina Cain, is in its third year. Several of the faculty participants talked with the Register about their experiences.

Nashville
Three years ago Alma Clayton-Pederson worked with the original group of students who were developing Alternative Spring Break. As assistant to the dean of student affairs, she became involved with the program because it was part of her job, she said. "But more than that, it was a great thing to see Vanderbilt students move away from themselves and help others out."
This year, Clayton-Pederson worked odd jobs, cleanup and repair work for Cambodian refugees, Nashville's elderly, Samaritan Ministries and the community center on 18th Avenue.

She said she was most impressed with the students' willingness to work hard. Even when a day's work was over, the students were eager to do more.

"I hope that we can spread the word and let people know about the poverty in Nashville and the students' willingness to do something about it."

Rose's Creek
Carl Johnson, assistant professor of biology, went to Rose's Creek for a change. He said he was ready to do something different. What changed most was his idea about students.

"I got to know 12 undergraduates very well... I got to know them as people rather than as students sleeping in my class."
Johnson said he also began to understand the Appalachian people better.

Trash disposal is a serious problem in Rose's Creek. Everywhere you looked there was trash, he said. At first he was amazed that the conditions were so bad. "Then I realized that these people have more to worry about than picking up their trash. They're trying to just keep roofs over their heads."

Chancellor and Mrs. Joe B. Wyatt visited Rose's Creek for two days and nights. That was long enough for him to be impressed by students' attitudes toward their tasks.

"They did whatever they were asked to do with great good cheer and great energy... Absolutely nothing phased anybody. No one could be around this Vanderbilt student group without catching some of the enthusiasm. It was just contagious."

Wyatt said he hopes to be involved in Alternative Spring Break again and encouraged all faculty and staff members to apply as advisors. "I think it is very worthwhile for people, particularly Vanderbilt students, faculty and administrators who live their lives in one world, to get out together and experience other aspects of society. I emphasize 'together'... (Alternative Spring Break) gets people together working toward a common purpose in an atmosphere that is very different than Vanderbilt University, but that offers an opportunity for reflection and discussion about a host of things."

Monterrey
Marshall Eakin, assistant professor of history, said his group had two goals to achieve in Monterrey.

First, they wanted to help the Mexicans begin helping themselves. They worked with Caritas, an international organization that operates at the local level, setting up support and community assistance programs for impoverished Mexicans, many of whom had been displaced by Hurricane Gilbert.

The other goal was to raise their own consciousness about poverty. Eakin said there is a stark contrast between wealth and poverty in Monterrey. Although many Americans are able to avoid seeing our poor neighborhoods, the citizens in Monterrey are confronted with it every day.

Indiantown
Since 1981, 3,000 Guatemalan refugees have come to Indiantown. They are the Kanjobal, one of the 23 language groups of the Maya Indians.

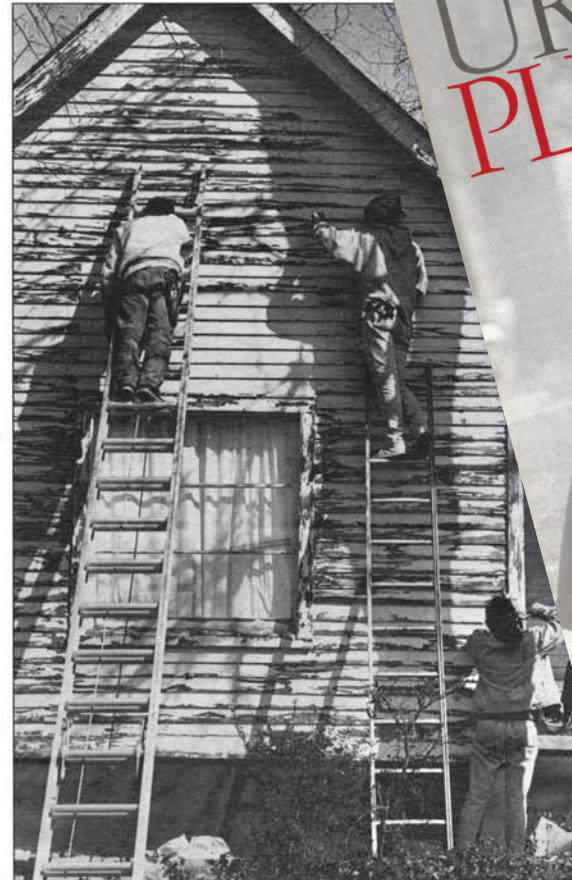
"They have one of the oldest and most sophisticated cultures in the world, but you can't see it by the way they dress or live," said Duncan Earle, assistant professor of anthropology.

The refugees came to find a haven from the violence in their country, he said. Instead, they found an urban ghetto.

Earle and the students worked with Corn-Maya, a grassroots community organization run by the Kanjobal, setting up its office, tutoring the Indians in English, helping a local church coordinate its support services and writing immigration petitions and VISA requests.

"The presence of people from Vanderbilt helped legitimize the Indians. It helped make their situation known to people because we were covered by the press almost every day. It's hard for people to exploit them (the Kanjobal) when the media is paying attention," Earle said.

There is also an effort to establish a cultural center in Indiantown. Earle said the center would help preserve the Maya culture and give the Kanjobal a sense of self-respect. They must raise \$39,000 in the next two months in order to establish the center. At this time \$10,000 worth of donations have been promised. Make donations through Earle at 343-6125 or through Horn at 421-6182.



At the local Alternative Spring Break site, Vanderbilt students and staff cleaned and repaired homes and offered free tutoring service. Above, three students scrape paint from Irene Harrell's north Nashville home. At left, Leighton Lord, a third-year law student, helps a student from the YMCA's Y-CAP program, with his work.

Photos by Lesley Collins



URBAN LUNGE

Homelessness becomes reality for 12 students who take to the streets during their spring break

By JULIE NEUMANN, BA03
Photography by DANIEL DUROIS



Alternative Spring Break Vanderbilt's 'Peace Corps'

Vanderbilt's student-initiated Alternative Spring Break (ASB) has come to be known as the "Vanderbilt Peace Corps." ASB reflects a sense of worldwide community and provides students with an opportunity to participate in this global community.

Rooted in the concept that neighborhood encompasses the world, the ASB participants venture into local, regional, national, and international communities in need of assistance.

ASB, which takes place this year March 6-13, is based on the premise that students need to be exposed to social realities beyond the bounds of the classroom and campus; that social problems exist in all parts of the world, including the United States; and that first-hand exposure to a problem is one of the best ways to learn about it.

Planning for this year's program began in March of 1987, about a month after students returned from their ASB project sites. For the second year, student leaders and staff members from a variety of University offices have been working on the plans. Some of the sites are the same, and some of the students will be returning to the same sites they visited last year, but the enthusiastic student leaders have produced proposals for an even better experience this year.

This year's sites include Juarez, Mexico; the Clear Fork Valley in Tennessee; Natchez, Mississippi; Dupree, South Dakota; and Nashville. The community needs include construction projects, community mobilization around specific social justice issues, and learning basic computer skills, among other projects. In some of these areas, many of the students have little or no prior experience, but they are willing to be trained "on the job."

Upon their return from last year's sites, students reported that they never thought that they could work as hard as they did and still love it. This was especially true for those who participated in the Juarez, Mexico, site where they helped put a roof on a service church. While the project at this site will be different this year, it is certain that the student and staff leaders will work as tirelessly as those of ASB '87. Many of last year's participants have maintained contact with the community members with whom they worked and have developed deep friendships with them.

Most of the ASB '87 participants thought that they were going to the sites

solely to "help others." All of them discovered that they received as much help (in better understanding some of the world's social problems) as they gave (in mental and physical labor).

"The greatest feeling I had after being in Juarez for a couple of days was the sense that I had become part of the community. They welcomed us and made us feel comfortable," says Kathy Grey, who is a student leader again this year.

ASB '87 was so successful last year that it is now formally assigned to the Office of the University Chaplain and Affiliated Ministries, receives some of its funds from the University budget, and is assisted in planning and coordination by Bruce Coriell, assistant University chaplain. The students hope that eventually ASB will be able to attract enough students to conduct month long projects during the Maymester. All indications are that their dream will become reality.

The goal of ASB is to channel the energy produced by sharing oneself with the world community in directions that benefit both the student and the community. Participants feel that this happened last year, and are confident that it will happen again.

Alma Clayton-Pedersen

Students dedicate spring break to service

By Alex Kruzel
ASST. CULTURE EDITOR

ASB executive board, said that for planning some sites, one phone call is all that is needed, as national community groups frequently welcome the Vanderbilt ASB program back.

While spring break for most Vanderbilt students means taking off to sandy beaches or snowy mountains with large amounts of alcohol in tow, for 320 Vanderbilt students it marks the beginning of their 2004 Alternative Spring Break trips and the realization of months of extensive preparation and planning.

This year's 27 ASB sites span three countries and 15 states, plus Washington, D.C. The U.S. locations vary from very rural, small towns like Mound Bayou, Miss., to large, heavily populated cities such as New York and Los Angeles.

Though the majority will serve within the United States, other students will travel to three locations abroad: one site in Mexico and two in Canada. The site-selection process begins each April, a full 11 months in advance. ASB annually returns to many of its sites; some in fact, have been revisited for more than 10 years.

Jake Brewer, co-chair of the

They proposed community service as a way of life and as a part of everyone's roles as active citizens. The fundamentals upon which the group established itself remain those to which the group adheres today.

Vanderbilt's ASB sites address issues such as homelessness, HIV/AIDS and poverty and work with groups ranging from the GLBT community to the elderly.

Since its establishment, the group has expanded exponentially to become the largest student organization on campus. Vanderbilt's ASB program currently boasts 327 members partic-

Turn to ASB, Page 7



Alternative Spring Break participant Lauren Montague from Vanderbilt works with children in Philadelphia in 2002. The students worked in the inner city, creating vegetable gardens and fruit stands to assist the Urban Nutrition Initiative in the area.

ASB kicks off a week of service



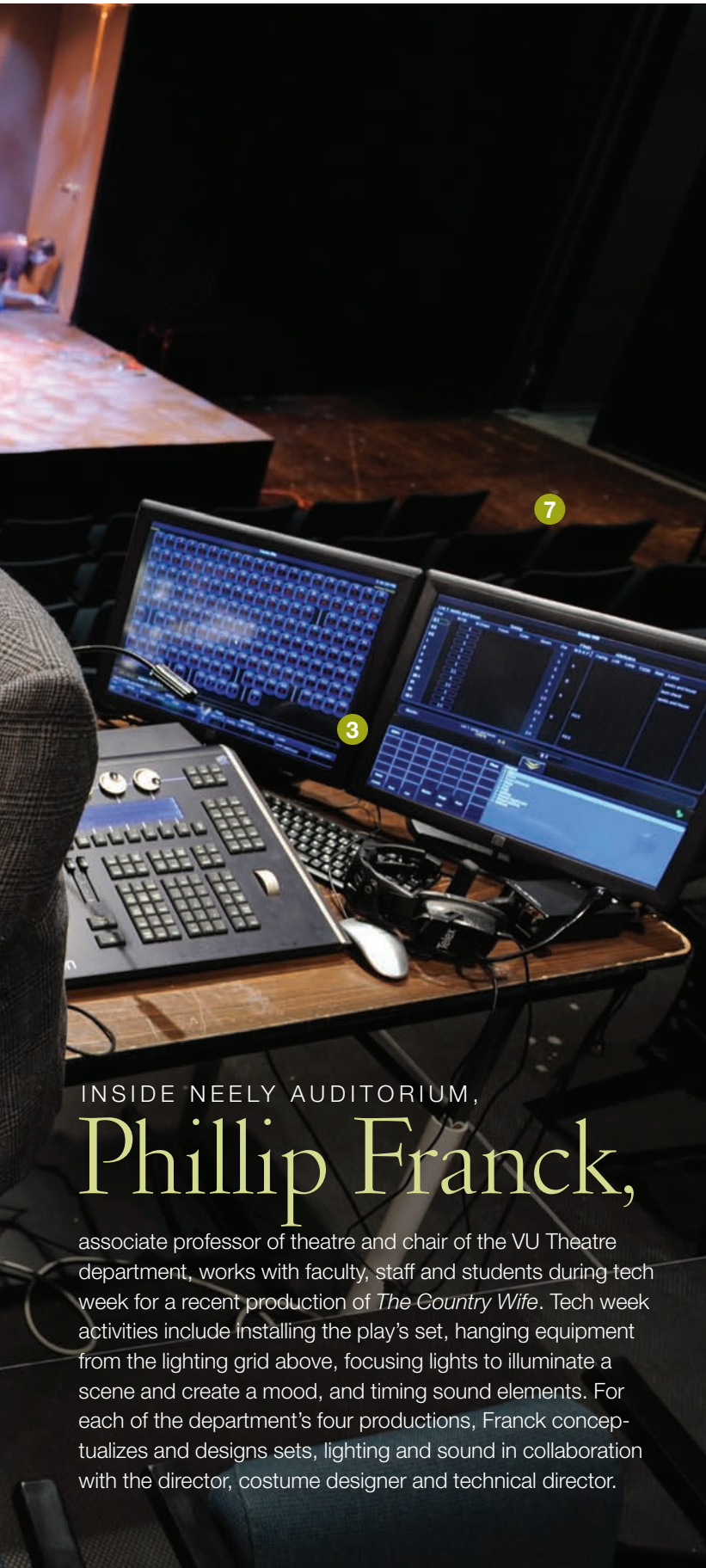
PHOTOS BY ELISE ALFORD / The Vanderbilt Hustler

ABOVE: Marlyn Figueroa & Ashley Phillips, ASB site leaders for this year's service at Thursday's ASB kickoff. Top participants will embark on their journeys to 31 sites across the globe.

RIGHT: Site Leaders from various ASB groups comically enact the long van ride to the service site. Although each ASB group spends months getting to know one another before, many participants agree that the close-quartered traveling is often a milestone for group bonding.







INSIDE NEELY AUDITORIUM,

Phillip Franck,

associate professor of theatre and chair of the VU Theatre department, works with faculty, staff and students during tech week for a recent production of *The Country Wife*. Tech week activities include installing the play's set, hanging equipment from the lighting grid above, focusing lights to illuminate a scene and create a mood, and timing sound elements. For each of the department's four productions, Franck conceptualizes and designs sets, lighting and sound in collaboration with the director, costume designer and technical director.

JOHN RUSSELL

- 1 Neely Auditorium was built in 1925 and originally served as Vanderbilt's chapel and meeting place. It was redesigned in 1976 as a black box theater, but its gothic arches and columns remain part of the department's classrooms, offices and workspaces. "Neely is really an interesting place to work," Franck says. "It's funky as frog fur. I give credit to the college for making it so professional. It would be tough to find a small theater as well-equipped as Neely."
- 2 For tech week, Franck sets up a worktable mid-auditorium and directs the installation of lights, sound and sets. During performances, lighting is managed from a booth above the audience.
- 3 When he started as a theatrical lighting designer, Franck says, light changes were managed using analog equipment. Now Franck designs lighting plots on a laptop and coordinates with the professional computerized lighting and audio system. For *The Country Wife*, the computerized board executed changes for 154 lights.
- 4 Franck teaches Theatre 212 Scenery and Properties and Theatre 213 Lighting and Sound, courses that explore the design aspects of theatrical production. Students do most of the production work on shows. Senior psychology and theatre major Elise Masur (center) and first-year student April Phillely (right) touch up paint.
- 5 To indicate the precise spot he wants a light focused, Franck uses a spear he discovered in the overflowing prop room. It allows him to view adjustments from a distance and indicate locations for modifications to the light beams. After he started using the spear, students insisted he obtain the companion Viking helmet.
- 6 Much of the behind-the-scenes theatrical magic occurs in the dark, during both tech week and production. Franck's glow-in-the-dark hardhat allows him to be seen and protected in case a student drops something from the lighting grid more than 22 feet above. The professional grid has a working load capacity of 22,000 lbs. of equipment.
- 7 Franck designed *The Country Wife* stage to face the audience in what is known as proscenium style. Neely Auditorium accommodates any stage size, shape, placement or presentation.
- 8 *The Country Wife* set uses Franck's creative lighting and shadows to create mood and provide flexibility for scene setting. The experienced lighting designer also designs for professional theaters, including Tennessee Repertory Theatre.
- 9 Senior Tyler Weaks (left) assists technical director Nate Otto (in red bandana) adjust the set. Weaks works as a staff carpenter in the department's scene shop and plays Sir Horner in the play.

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A publication of



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Where Are You? Answer: Inside the Vaughn Home, which today houses the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities.

STELLAR SIGNIFICANCE:

Rocky Alvey (right), observatory manager of Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory, discusses the operation of Dyer's 24-inch telescope with first-year students from The Commons. Built in 1953 on a hilltop south of the Vanderbilt campus, Dyer was recently named to the National Register of Historic Places as a site of historical significance. Today, it is dedicated to education and public outreach.

PHOTO BY JOHN RUSSELL

