

summer 2009

Pillars of the Earth

How environmentalists like Jeanie Nelson walk the walk.

also:

Vanderbilt Aid Society

Opportunity Vanderbilt Q&A

When Patients Become

Research Volunteers

Opportunity Vanderbilt



“I BELIEVE WE SHOULD LEAVE THIS WORLD BETTER THAN WE CAME INTO IT. THAT’S WHY I WANT TO BE A TEACHER, TO BE THE PERSON WHO CHANGES THE WORLD FOR HIS STUDENTS.”

*Justin Barisich
Peabody College, Class of 2011
Berger Family Scholarship*

Ability, achievement and hard work define Justin Barisich.

He grew up working summers on his dad’s shrimp boat, and after Hurricane Katrina destroyed his home and his high school, that work ethic spurred him to move in with his grandparents, change schools and move forward. Now he’s at Vanderbilt, studying to be a high-school teacher.

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COVER

In the decade since Jeanie Nelson, BA'69, JD'75, co-founded The Land Trust of Tennessee, the organization has protected more than 42,500 acres across the state. Read about Nelson and other alumni environmentalists beginning on page 36. Photo by Daniel Dubois.

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Women Who Opened Doors

The Vanderbilt Aid Society has brought the "uplifting power of education" to thousands of students.

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Rainmakers Rodes Hart and Orrin Ingram share their take on Vanderbilt's expanded aid program.

Keylee and Zoey's Big Day

Conjoined twins Keylee Ann and Zoey Marie Miller were separated during an eight-hour operation at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt on April 7. The surgery, the first of its kind at Vanderbilt, involved a team of 30 medical, surgical and nursing personnel. Story on page 14. Photo by Joe Howell.



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Kevin Wilson



KEVIN WILSON, BA'00, is author of the collection *Tunneling to the Center of the Earth: Stories* (2009, ECCO/Harper Perennial). His fiction has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, *Cincinnati Review* and elsewhere, and twice has been included in the *New Stories from the South: The Year's Best* anthology. Wilson lives in Sewanee, Tenn., with his wife, poet Leigh Anne Couch, and his son, Griff. He teaches fiction at the University of the South and helps run the Sewanee Writers' Conference.

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Lisa A. DuBois



LISA A. DUBOIS has penned stories for newspapers, magazines, radio and video. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina and a master's degree in biomedical communications from Southwestern Medical Center. In 2007 she completed a history of the founding of Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, *More Than a Place* (Providence House Publishers). The longtime Nashville-based writer moved to the Houston area last year.

Mark Dalhouse

MARK DALHOUSE is a lecturer in history and director of Vanderbilt's Office of Active Citizenship and Service. He has written and published on the role of religion in American politics and on civic engagement and college-student activism. Dalhouse is faculty head of East House in The Commons, Vanderbilt's residential community for first-year students, where he lives with his wife, Mary Ellen, and their twin toddlers, Teddy and Braden.



Michael Wolf



MICHAEL WOLF has completed his first year of medical school at Vanderbilt. The San Diego native is co-founder of the Vanderbilt Educational Garden Initiative (VEGI), a project of Vanderbilt medical students to create a community garden in Nashville's McFerrin Park neighborhood in response to a lack of access to nutritious foods. He also volunteers at the Shade Tree Family Clinic, a free clinic directed and operated by Vanderbilt medical students.

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DoreWays

A forum for exchanging ideas

From the Editor

Better Off and Better

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I HAD THE CHANCE TO HEAR popular Vanderbilt philosophy professor John Lachs deliver a talk titled “The Human Race: Both Better Off and Better” to a small suburban group of perhaps 20 people.

Lachs opened his presentation by telling the group that he hoped the evening would be “a dialogue rather than a lecture”—something that proved to be a mistake. A couple of women began vying for the title of Most Interruptions During a Single Presentation. One man seemed determined to turn the discussion toward speculation regarding the likelihood of extraterrestrial intelligent life.

Lachs gamely soldiered on, giving a much-abbreviated version of what he had planned to say, I suspected. Despite all the static, though, his message from that evening has stuck with me, and I think about it often.

Better off than our ancestors? Of course we are, he argued. Think of the deaths because of childbirth, disease, hunger, cold, and the generally wretched lot of our counterparts of a thousand years ago or more.

Better? That too, he insisted. Until relatively recent history, if someone bigger and meaner wanted something you had, they might well kill you in order to get it.

I’m writing this column from the coronary intensive care unit of a hospital in Sioux City, Iowa. We were visiting family in the region when my husband had a heart attack two days ago. Thanks to caring, competent treatment—Dr. Bruce Stavens, MD’80, is one of the cardiovascular surgeons here—my husband is doing well.

Better off? I’m certainly a believer right now.

Better? I’m filling the time between ICU visits reading a novel of historical life, a tale full of young princes imprisoned and never seen again, full of corrupt clergy, enemy heads lopped off and left on the town bridge for all to see and beware. I’m thinking John Lachs may be right.

I also thought of Lachs’ assertion recently when I came upon this passage in Paul Conkin’s history of Vanderbilt University, *Gone with the Ivy*, about campus life in the 1890s:

“Until 1899 the campus floated on its own sewage. ... The students pumped their own water, often drank from a common dipper. ... Because of dirty pipes and fears of epidemics, campus authorities urged students to drink only the cistern water. ... [One] can only speculate about students’ bathing habits, either in Liberty Hall or in the scattered boarding houses ... ”

With so much fear and uncertainty about the global economy right now, a bit of perspective can do more for flagging spirits than an upswing in the Dow Jones. So can inspiring stories like the one in this issue (page 36) about alumni who are devoting their lives to preserving our planet.

Thanks, Professor Lachs. I’m not sure anyone else heard your message that evening—but I did.

—GayNelle Doll

From the Reader

Health Care, Society and Personal Responsibility

I VERY MUCH ENJOYED READING “Invisible Nation” by Dr. John Sergent, BA’63, MD’66 [Spring 2009 issue, VJournal]. The doctor argues that “decent health care is a right of citizenship” and compares, as moral equivalents, segregation based on race with denial of health care due to poverty. The doctor’s position is that everyone should be treated as if we have the same amount of money in the bank, which has far different implications than treating everyone as if we had the same amount of melanin in the skin. The doctor may choose to deliver his services to the poor and thereby deny his services to the rich. But a line is crossed when the doctor instructs me to pay for the poor and thereby limit the health care I can provide for my family.

And what about us attorneys? Shouldn’t the poor have access to all manner of legal services? Imagine if attorneys paid doctors to treat the poor and doctors paid attorneys to represent the poor?

While we ponder the morality of the poor’s limited access to health care, let us not lose sight of the moral implications of excessive taxation. What would the world look like if the state took all our wealth and gave us back what was left after the needs of the poor were met? Is any political body wise enough to undertake such a task or foolish enough to think that it could?

JAMES C. McCLENDON II, BA’83
Lake Wales, Fla.

I AM A RETIRED R.N./B.S.N. and the mother of a Vandy graduate. The article “Invisible Nation” is excellent and right to the point both morally and socially. I have not heard it voiced more eloquently. Thank you, Dr. Sergent. I intend to send a copy of the article to every nurse, nursing institution and hospital I can think of.

ELEANOR SCHOFIELD
Cranbury, N.J.



I WAS INTERESTED and very pleased to read “Invisible Nation,” and it provoked a line of thinking that I had not quite fully considered. My studies at Peabody College brought me into contact with displaced, voiceless, yet fully capable people. I spent an entire year learning how to “hear” their stories, as opposed to just listening to them. Sergent’s article brought to the fore an important issue in this regard: framing.

As a society, and as cognitive beings, we receive all our information through what George Lakoff calls “frames,” or amalgams of images, connotations and related ideas. Sergent’s reframing of the plight of the uninsured through the lens of the civil rights struggle moved me beyond my normal thinking—away from summaries of benefits and anti-selection risk, to see those who walk among us without health insurance as human beings in need of a fundamental right.

Reframing our thinking on health and well-being in this country should be a primary task of advocates and policymakers. For too long we’ve looked at the uninsured and automat-

ically seen the *undeserving* uninsured. This automaton response has blinded us to contextual and cultural barriers to care. Dr. Sergent has removed those blinders and has asked us to reconsider and speak on behalf of the “invisible nation.”

JESSE CHANDLER, BA’05, MED’06
Spring Hill, Tenn.

I BELIEVE THAT I UNDERSTAND Dr. Sergent’s point that the real issue with the uninsured problem is a complex one, and that claiming it is too big to solve or that the uninsured are somehow responsible for their problem doesn’t quite do the problem justice. But what exactly does he suggest we do, either as individuals or a society? As a physician myself, I see a great deal of uninsured patients who have no hope of paying for the services I provide them. I don’t expect to be paid. That is my moral—to use his word—responsibility, and something I expected to do from the first moment I wanted to practice medicine.

However, I also make it a point not to care about a patient’s health more than they do. I


tell this to my patients, and more often than not, they understand. Uninsured adults are largely responsible for their predicament. Obviously, there will be countless cases similar to Dr. Sergent’s “Jenny,” but for every one like her, there are at least 10 obese, hypertensive, diabetic smokers who refuse to change their lifestyle one iota. Sure, these 46 million invisible people need our help, but they also must begin to help themselves and meet us halfway.

DR. JAY U. HOWINGTON, BA’92
Savannah, Ga.

Beat This, Greenies

REGARDING “Green Planet Blues” [Spring 2009 issue, A.P.O.V.], Ellen Pearson, BA’63, says her average electric consumption is now 28 kilowatt hours per day. My latest electric bill says that over a 27-day billing cycle, I consumed 393 kwh, for an average daily consumption of 14.56 kwh. I heat with wood and dry my clothes on a clothesline (or rack in winter).

DAVID KATAHN, BE’89, BMUS’95
Centerville, Tenn.



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[EDITOR'S NOTE: Reader Katahn mailed his letter to us on the backside of a page of sheet music for J.S. Bach's *Lute Suite BWV 997*.]

Flying Colors

THE COVER OF THE LAST ISSUE [Spring 2009, "Sky's the Limit"] was a delight to me, an old Nashvillian. It brought back many memories, including the War Memorial Building, scene of my high school (West End) graduation and other activities. Downtown has changed a lot since the '40s.

JUNE BROWN DOOLEY, BS'45
Ridgely, Tenn.

THE NASHVILLE AIRPORT had a disaster drill April 9, and I was one of eight "victims" chosen to be LifeFlighted from the airport to Vanderbilt. I have a lot more respect for these people now that I've been in their hands. I was strapped to a board the whole time, but these guys were professional and quick. I could barely tell we were in the air—it was a very smooth ride.

Kudos to the entire crew of LifeFlight. I hope I never have to use their services in a real-life situation, but if I do, I know I will be in great hands.

BRENDA SHELDON
Madison, Tenn.

A Fighting Chance

"MANNA FALLS ON LA CHURECA" [Spring 2009 issue] is an incredible article. I have been to this dump on a mission trip with several doctors and pastors and others. It is indeed like a picture of hell, but in hell there is no hope. I am so happy to read about what is being done by Vanderbilt students to show love and care to these people.

DR. ADRIAN BENNETT, MD'02
Atlanta

Hooked on Classics

TAYLOR HOLLIDAY'S ARTICLE "Janus Rising" [Spring 2009 issue] is a fascinating history of the teaching of classics at Vanderbilt. It's interesting to learn that many students who include Latin or Greek in their course

of studies go on to careers in law, medicine, religion or business.

I was privileged to study Homeric Greek with Dr. Clyde Pharr in 1943–44 and to serve as his student secretary as he edited the first complete translation into English of the Theodosian Code. Later, in Vanderbilt Divinity School, I studied Koine Greek.

Language study has helped me across the years in the preparation of sermons and in the writing of articles and books. I'm really glad that Vanderbilt has offered classical studies from its very beginning in 1873.

FRED CLOUD, BA'44, BDIV'47, DMIN'90
Nashville

ECCE! MAGISTRI DIXERUNT VERUM! (Look! The teachers have spoken the truth!)

I'm glad we classicists are finally getting some good recognition.

JOHN V. BLAZIC, CLASS OF 2011
*Classical languages major
Cincinnati*

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Streamlined Obits: Two Thumbs Down

I LOOK FORWARD to your publication but am disappointed by your new look of the “In Memoriam” section. Why did you change it?

Alumni such as I, reading the magazine, are hungry for news of their classmates. When one passes away, we are anxious to find out what he had done after graduation, who his survivors are, etc. The Spring 2009 issue tells us very little of this. Please return to your previous format.

THOMAS W. WHITE, BA’63
Houston

ON PAGE 8 OF THE SPRING 2009 issue, you claimed to be keeping alumni connected to Vanderbilt. If this is true, then go back to the format of “In Memoriam” that has been used in the past. The section in the spring issue is not satisfactory. Just listing where someone passed away is not enough. For example, just saying a member of the Board of Trust has passed, and only including that listing when knowledgeable people know that his

father was treasurer of the university and that he served well for many years, makes your magazine look rather uninformed. Alumni like to know about their old friends even though they have passed away.

M. CARR PAYNE JR., BA’49
Atlanta

The Last Word on Panty Raids

REGARDING THE PANTY-RAID article, “Boys Gone Wild” [Fall 2008 issue, Collective Memory], I was appalled at the depiction of my classmates and felt compelled to come to their rescue. I lived on the campus three years during this time, in Mary Kirkland Hall (yes, that was the correct name at the time) and McTyeire Hall, and I was in McTyeire the spring of 1952. Author Paul Conkin apparently did not speak with anyone with another point of view and certainly did not experience anything firsthand as my friends and I did. How laughable that Vandy boys would attempt to climb six floors up a wall (spider-men?) and attack his friend. The entire article sounded as if the campus were the proverbial “den of iniqui-

ty.” My mother was extremely protective and would have removed me immediately had there been any thought of perceived violence.

We were busy with our studies and activities, and I actually managed to receive a chemistry degree during this “chaotic” time. Amazingly, we thought the entire episode was quite exciting.

That it may have gotten out of hand at a later date in other places is another matter entirely. I will not allow my Vanderbilt to be grouped with those who did not behave as well. It was certainly not “the most turbulent decade”!

LOUISE PARRISH GEORGE, BA’54
Memphis, Tenn.

Letters are always welcome

in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style and clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, *Vanderbilt Magazine*, PMB 407703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7703, or send e-mail to vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu.

FAMILY MEMORIES MADE HERE.



THE POINT AT ROCK ISLAND

SATURDAY 4:30 PM. LATE SUMMER.

I dropped Lisa and the girls off at the dock so they could shower before dinner. I headed back out for a last ski run with the boys. Josh and his buddies caught fish this morning—they were up and out at first light. Later, our old friends and some new neighbors are coming over for a glass of wine and we're all walking to the amphitheater for a concert.

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Full House

When life as a lecturer and busy university administrator with twin toddlers seems tame, what you really need is 96 new members of the family.

By MARK DALHOUSE

“HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?”
 “What about the loud music?”
 “Do students knock on your door at midnight?” “Do parents call you?”

Reflecting on my first year as a faculty head of house in The Commons for first-year students, these are a reasonably representative sample of the questions I’ve fielded from inquisitive (and sometimes concerned) colleagues at Vanderbilt. Sometimes the assumption appears to be that as a live-in professor, you’ve become a sort of cross between Steve Martin in *Cheaper by the Dozen* and Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*.

My first year as a head of house is inextricably linked with the metaphor of a growing family. Our twin sons, Braden and Theodore, celebrated their first birthdays one week before my wife, Mary Ellen, and I were joined by 96 first-year students in East House in August 2008.

Whether encouraging our sons to take that first step across the apartment floor or watching East House residents take those first steps away from their parents as they said goodbye that August weekend, I’ve lived through a dizzying array of “firsts” that seem to touch upon some of life’s most basic transitions.

As my friend and dean, Frank Wcislo, said to me as we watched parents move their children into East House while my sons scurried about, “This is you in 17 years, Dalhouse.”

As a new parent and new faculty head of house, I have found it to be a remarkable trek.



Mark Dalhouse (holding son Braden); his wife, Mary Ellen (holding son Teddy); and their dog, Bailey, are joined by a few East House cohabitants.

I came to the job with some inkling of what to expect. As a newly minted Ph.D. in a tough job market 18 years ago, I had taken my first professional position as a residence hall director and part-time faculty member in a first-year residence hall at Miami University of Ohio. In that job I was responsible for managing a student resident staff and handling discipline. I lived through a gamut of experiences ranging from the tragic—a stu-

dent arrested for drug dealing during the first week of school, to comic—my residents petitioning the dean for academic credit in astronomy because a faulty fire alarm had them evacuating the building and gazing at the stars at 2 a.m. on successive nights. (Yes, they really did petition the dean, and no, their entreaty was not successful.)

So I felt reasonably prepared for experiencing The Commons. My residence hall

experience also left me with an abiding respect for the student life professionals at Vanderbilt who so ably run the halls and work tirelessly to promote student development.

This time, however, I was being asked to serve in a completely different role. I was the faculty head of house, the intellectual presence and mentor for 96 students beginning the most important academic journey of their lives.

What did that mean for my professional life at Vanderbilt? My days had, until then, a reasonable approximation of a beginning and an end. Now I would be living at work. And my work now would mean cultivating the life of the mind outside the usual comfortable confines of classroom and office.

More to the point, what did this mean for my students? In living out the answer to those questions during the past year, the single most important thing I have learned as a faculty head of house has been the power of presence.

I began the year with an ambitious programming plan that now, from the vantage point of a year out, seems almost quaint. I seemed not to have remembered that somewhere during the day, my students needed to eat, do laundry, participate in social life and study. What I saw instead, as my packed programming scheme gave way under the realities of student life, was the emergence of something much more meaningful. I didn't need to create a second curriculum. I needed to be there.

The inaugural year of The Commons coincided, happily for a historian of American politics, with the most riveting election since 1968. Opening up our residence and watching with students as Sen. Obama and Sen. McCain gave their acceptance speeches; watching the candidates debate throughout the fall; and finally sitting with my students on that climactic election night when history was made—these all spawned innumerable conversations about what all of this meant collectively for us as a nation.

It also, more often than not, led from the global to the local. “How is that class going?” “How are your parents?” “How are you and your roommate getting along?” Around the time of the election in the fall, we also began what became the single most successful program in East House: our weekly Fireside Chats (remember the American politics angle?). Every Wednesday night at 9, we put hot chocolate and cookies out in the lobby. It was a very simple concept, yet a very profound one.

Out of those weekly conversations grew relationships, one student at a time. And out of those relationships came the intellectual mentoring—the sharing of a book, discussing a news item, offering advice on a research paper—that I wanted for my students. The Fireside Chats became a community staple for East House. Wednesdays we came together, and through it I began 96 relationships that continued through the year, and that con-

tinued today. We became a family.

I could not write about this memorable year without paying tribute to the nine other people who also became faculty heads of house. All accomplished scholars, all burning to make a difference in the lives of students, these nine remarkable colleagues, friends and family became wonderful companions on this journey. We felt ourselves a unique fraternity on campus—a band of brothers and sisters. We were the first heads of house. I cannot imagine this journey without them.

Much like my sons have done during this past year, my residents also taught me. Through their eyes and experience, I felt the excitement of Election '08, I felt the anxiety as our nation's economic woes deepened, and I felt the sense of accomplishment as we finished the year together. The first-year experience encompassed all of us—both students and heads of house.

So I am holding up very well. I don't mind loud music (and actually, there is less than you might think). I welcome the knocks at the door. I have learned that some of the most significant learning this year happened not in the classroom, but in the serendipitous moments that no amount of curriculum planning could have anticipated or planned.

My “family” has grown and expanded in ways I scarcely could have imagined a year ago, and it is a journey I would not trade for the world. ▼

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"I knew students who were at Vanderbilt only because of alumni-funded scholarships," she says. "Giving back to Vanderbilt is a way to help current and future students have the same amazing experience that you had . . . an opportunity to invest in what changed and molded you."

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Kat Tennis, BA'09

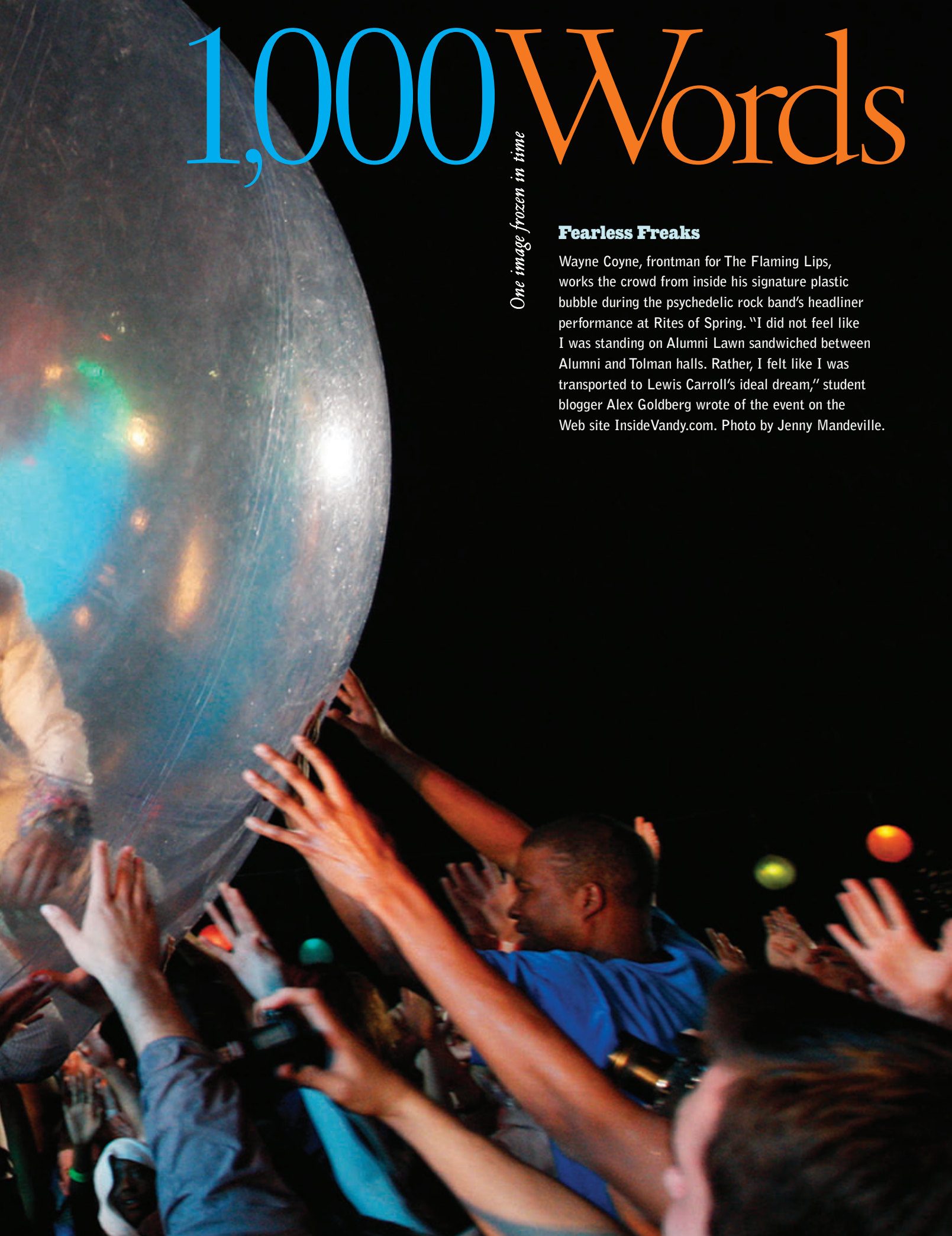


1,000 Words

One image frozen in time

Fearless Freaks

Wayne Coyne, frontman for The Flaming Lips, works the crowd from inside his signature plastic bubble during the psychedelic rock band's headliner performance at Rites of Spring. "I did not feel like I was standing on Alumni Lawn sandwiched between Alumni and Tolman halls. Rather, I felt like I was transported to Lewis Carroll's ideal dream," student blogger Alex Goldberg wrote of the event on the Web site InsideVandy.com. Photo by Jenny Mandeville.



The Campus

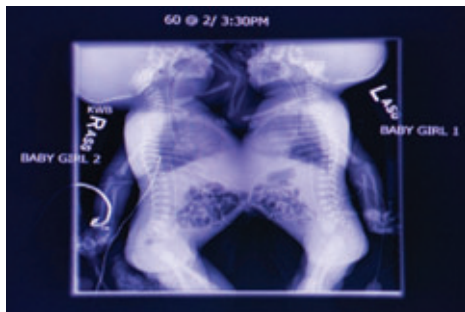
“The whole process was exhilarating. People were congratulating us for days.” —DR

Conjoined Twins Separated in First-Ever Surgery at Vanderbilt

THREE-MONTH-OLD CONJOINED twins Keylee Ann and Zoey Marie Miller were separated April 7 during a complex eight-hour operation at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. The surgery, carried out by a team of 30 medical, surgical and nursing personnel, was the first of its kind at Vander-



JOE HOWELL



Above: At any moment during the eight-hour surgery, 14 or more personnel were working around the babies. Left: An X-ray image verifies the girls’ digestive systems are not conjoined.

bilt and is believed to be the first successful separation of conjoined twins in Tennessee.

“It was pretty exciting to finally get them separated,” says Dr. Wallace (Skip) Neblett, lead surgeon. “We talked about this and planned it for months as the babies matured.”

In the United States the incidence for conjoined twins—identical twins who develop from the same fertilized egg—is one per 200,000 live births. The girls were “omphalopagus” twins, fused from the lower breastbone to the navel. They

shared a liver and part of a diaphragm, and were born with one umbilical cord.

Born Jan. 4 in Johnson City, Tenn., the girls were immediately transferred via LifeFlight to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Vanderbilt’s Children’s Hospital. Together they weighed 4 pounds, 12 ounces. Their parents, Victoria Ford and her husband, Brian Miller, knew early in the pregnancy that the twins were conjoined. In January, when Zoey and Keylee were in fetal distress, the girls were born by Caesare-

an section 10 weeks early.

The twins were cared for in Vanderbilt’s NICU until they grew strong enough for the separation surgery. On March 24, Zoey required surgery for a heart defect. That operation required that Keylee go under general anesthesia as well. Staff and faculty in the NICU devised systems to administer medications Zoey needed to recover from her heart surgery without causing harm to Keylee. The twins shared a common circulatory system.

In the weeks leading up to the separation, Dr. James O’Neill, professor of surgery, emeritus, who has participated in the surgical separations of 23 sets of conjoined twins—more than any other physician in the country—planned and led three drills. “We wanted this to go smoothly, so we practiced to

make sure we had all the essentials ready for potential complications,” O’Neill says. “We were absolutely prepared.”

Because there were two patients, two full surgical teams had to be present in the operating room. Both girls possessed all the essential blood vessels and connectors, so each had her own completely functional liver without the need for complex repair. Their recovery has been uncomplicated, although Zoey must return at a later date for another heart surgery.

View a slide show of the separation surgery at <http://snipurl.com/vutwins>.

Guthrie Assumes Law Deanship

CHRIS GUTHRIE, a seven-year veteran of Vanderbilt Law School and former associate dean for academic affairs, was named dean of the law school effective July 1. An expert on dispute resolution, negotiation, judicial decision making, and behavioral law and economics, Guthrie has agreed to a five-year appointment, subject to approval by the Vanderbilt Board of Trust.

He replaces Edward L. Rubin, who will continue as a faculty member at the law school.

“We have an outstanding faculty, a gifted student body, a superb staff, an accomplished alumni base and supportive university leadership,” says

Summer 2009

WALLACE NEBLETT, on *Vanderbilt's first conjoined twin separation*

Guthrie. "With all these pieces in place, I am confident that the law school's best days are ahead."

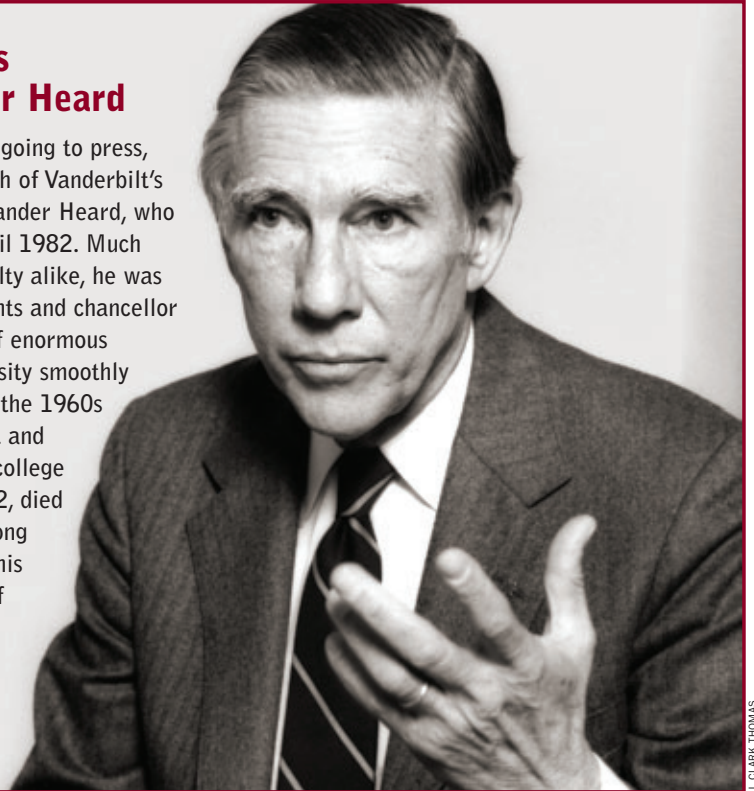
Guthrie, 42, graduated with distinction and honors in 1989 from Stanford University before earning his master's in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and then a law degree from Stanford Law School. He practiced with Fenwick & West in Palo Alto, Calif., before joining the University of Missouri Law School faculty in 1996. Guthrie also has taught as a visiting professor at Northwestern University Law School and the Washington University School of Law.



Guthrie

University Mourns Loss of Chancellor Heard

As *Vanderbilt Magazine* was going to press, we received word of the death of Vanderbilt's beloved fifth chancellor, Alexander Heard, who led Vanderbilt from 1963 until 1982. Much admired by students and faculty alike, he was adviser to three U.S. presidents and chancellor at Vanderbilt during a time of enormous growth. He guided the university smoothly through the stormy period of the 1960s and 1970s without the unrest and violence that afflicted many college campuses. Heard, who was 92, died July 24 at his home after a long illness. Look for more about his vast legacy in the fall issue of *Vanderbilt Magazine*.



J. CLARK THOMAS

"We were fortunate to have already on our faculty a candidate who could be dean at any leading law school," says Lisa Bressman, professor of law, FedEx Research Professor, and chair of the search committee.

"Chris Guthrie is extraordinary."

He is one of the authors of the influential textbook *Dispute Resolution & Lawyers* and has published more than 40 scholarly articles in leading law journals, including the *University of Chicago*

Law Review, *Cornell Law Review*, *Michigan Law Review*, *Northwestern University Law Review*, and the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. He has received multiple prizes for his scholarly research.

Guthrie also is an award-winning teacher who has taught Torts, Negotiation, Dispute Resolution and Family Law. "He will build upon the school's successes while preserving those qualities of the law school that are distinctly Vanderbilt," says Genet Berhane, a law student, editor-in-chief of the *Transnational Law Journal*, and member of the search committee.

Top-Ranked Peabody Marks Anniversary with Chair Appointments

PEABODY COLLEGE of education and human development celebrated the 30th anniversary of its merger with the university by announcing that six of its faculty are the recipients of named chairs.

"The six professors receiving these chairs are high-impact individuals who make important contributions to the practice of education or psychology," says Camilla Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, who



Inquiring Minds

The Big Chill

Imagine a time when the entire universe froze. That is essentially what happened about 11.5 billion years ago, when the universe was a quarter of the size it is today, according to a model published online May 6 in the journal *Physical Review D*. The model was developed by Research Associate Sourish Dutta and Professor of Physics Robert Scherrer at Vanderbilt, working with colleagues at the University of Oregon.

Cosmologists now think dark energy makes up more than 70 percent of energy and matter in the universe and is pushing the universe apart at an ever-faster rate. "One thing that is unsatisfying about many of the existing explanations for dark energy is that they are difficult to test," says Scherrer. "Our model can interact with normal matter and so has observable consequences."

Find out more: <http://snipurl.com/vuchill>

Licorice Compound Offers Anti-Cancer Potential



A chemical component of licorice may offer a new approach to preventing colorectal cancer without the adverse side effects of other preventive therapies, Vanderbilt Medical Center researchers report. In the study published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, Dr. Raymond Harris, Dr. Ming-Zhi Zhang and colleagues show that inhibiting the enzyme 11 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type 2 (11 β HSD2)—either by treatment with a natural compound found in licorice or

by silencing the 11 β HSD2 gene—prevents colorectal cancer progression in mice predisposed to the disease.

Licorice has been used for thousands of years for ailments ranging from coughs to constipation, but long-term consumption can lead to low blood potassium and increases in blood pressure.

Find out more: <http://snipurl.com/vulicorice>

Writing Instruction Gets a Failing Grade

A national survey of high school writing instruction finds 50 percent of teachers say they are not prepared to teach students how to write well and rarely assign complex writing tasks. The study by Steve Graham, Currey Ingram Chair in Special Education, was published recently in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

"Students need to be engaged in writing longer compositions that involve analysis and interpretation, teachers should apply evidence-based writing practices and adaptations for struggling writers, and teacher-education programs and school districts need to better prepare teachers for writing instruction at the high school level," Graham says.

Find out more: <http://snipurl.com/vuwriting>

adds that the chairs are "our way of recognizing their accomplishments and of signifying to the world that Peabody is a place where great intellects gather and interact."

The new chair holders are:

Len Bickman, *Betts Chair*.

Bickman is professor of psychology and psychiatry, associate dean for research, director of the Center for Evaluation and Program Improvement, and an investigator in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. He is an expert in program evaluation and research on mental health services for children and adolescents.

David Cole, *Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair*. Cole is chair of the Department of Psychology and Human Development, professor of psychology, and an investigator in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Cole's interests encompass developmental psychopathology and childhood depression.

Ellen Goldring, *Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair*. Goldring is professor of educational policy and leadership and incoming chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations. Her research focuses on school reform efforts and the changing roles of school leaders.

James Guthrie, *Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy*. Guthrie is professor of public policy and education, director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy, executive director of the National Center on Performance Incentives at Vanderbilt, and has served as chair of the

Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations for the past 10 years.

Rich Lehrer, *Frank W. Mayborn Chair*. An internationally



DANIEL DUBOIS

recognized

scholar in the field of mathematics and science education, Lehrer is a

professor of science education.

Joseph F. Murphy, *Frank W. Mayborn Chair*. Murphy is professor of education and associate dean of Peabody College, a scholar in the field of school administration, and a leading advocate for school leadership reforms.



WOLF HOFFMANN

News of the chairs coincides with Peabody's recent ranking as the No. 1 graduate school of education in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine. Peabody is the first Vanderbilt graduate or professional school to receive the No. 1 distinction in the history of *U.S. News* rankings.

Vanderbilt's schools of medicine, law, business and engineering also are ranked in the graduate school listings in the April 28 issue of the magazine, along with Vanderbilt programs in history, English and psychology.

Nurses Run Clinics for Metro Schools Employees

METRO NASHVILLE Public Schools (MNPS) has opened five new Employee and Family Health Centers to provide prompt, quality care for everything from acute illness to

chronic disease management.

The clinics, which opened in May, are the result of a new partnership with Insurance Trust and University Community Health Services (UCHS). Each site is run by board-certified family nurse practitioners from the Vanderbilt School of Nursing. The clinics provide convenient, quality health care for about 16,000 teachers, retired teachers, employees and their families.

“Our teachers and Metro employees provide great services to our city, and it is a privilege to manage these clinics for them,” says Patti McCarver, registered nurse and clinics manager for MNPS. The clinics are distinct yellow and gray portables, each equipped with four exam rooms to help patients with illnesses, injuries, women’s health care, annual physicals, sports physicals, immunizations, management of chronic illness, and health-risk assessments. Same-day appointments are available for acute illnesses.

In addition to at least one nurse practitioner at each site, the project includes a popula-

tion health manager who works closely with program administrators, the school system and community health groups to help prevent secondary health issues. Clinics are located at MNPS headquarters and at four other locations around the city.

The clinics are expected to help cut down on the number of health care-related absences for employees and their dependents. No public monies are involved in the clinics, which are funded by the Teachers Health Plan.

Jacobson’s Legacy: A Thriving VUMC

DR. HARRY R. JACOBSON retired June 1 as vice chancellor for health affairs at Vanderbilt University. He is succeeded by Dr. Jeffrey Balsler, MD’90, PhD’90, who last year was named dean of the School of Medicine.

Since Jacobson assumed leadership in 1997 of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, VUMC’s performance has exceeded expectations by nearly every measure: annual net revenue, the number of faculty



and staff, space for research and patient care, and national rankings. Annual research funding quadrupled to more than \$400 million.

“Harry has been one of the most visionary leaders in Vanderbilt’s history,” says Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos. “His instincts and ability to execute bold plans have forged a remarkable path of growth and success for our world-class medical center.”

“Vanderbilt is now viewed nationally as the academic center that is moving the fastest in terms of steps toward more effective science, toward more effective health care,” adds Vanderbilt’s informatics guru, Dr. Bill Stead, who chairs the Center for Better Health.

Jacobson’s view of the world was forged in the rough-and-tumble neighborhood in Chicago where he grew up. Born outside of Munich, Germany, he emigrated with his parents and three siblings when he was 4. His father, who had survived a Soviet prisoner-of-war camp, challenged his children to do well academically.

Harry Jacobson earned his M.D. degree from the University of Illinois in Chicago in 1972

and was recruited to Vanderbilt in 1985. Within a decade he had moved up to the executive suite as deputy vice chancellor for health affairs.

Along the way he held more than \$1.5 million in active grant support, published more than 100 peer-reviewed publications and a textbook on kidney disease, served on and chaired national advisory committees, and explored the corporate side of medicine through such companies as Nashville’s Renal Care Group, which he co-founded.

Under Jacobson’s leadership, Vanderbilt formed strategic partnerships with physician groups south of Nashville in Williamson County, established the multi-specialty Vanderbilt Medical Group, expanded key service lines like cancer and heart disease, raised the bar on philanthropy (a move that made possible the establishment of a free-standing Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt), improved the system’s financial performance and its focus on customer service, and launched effective branding and advertising campaigns.

Jacobson realized that a thriving clinical operation was essential to growing the medical center’s research enterprise and attracting top-notch faculty and students. “We owe a lot of our ability to grow as a research enterprise ... to the growth of the hospital and the clinics,” says Lawrence Marnett, director of the Vanderbilt Institute of Chemical Biology. “It has been the engine that has driven it.”

Another strategy advanced by Jacobson was the use of venture capital to encourage development and commercial-



Nurse Patti McCarver weighs Clayton Aaron Jenkins during an open house for Metro Nashville Public Schools’ new Employee and Family Health Centers, which are run by nurse practitioners from Vanderbilt School of Nursing.

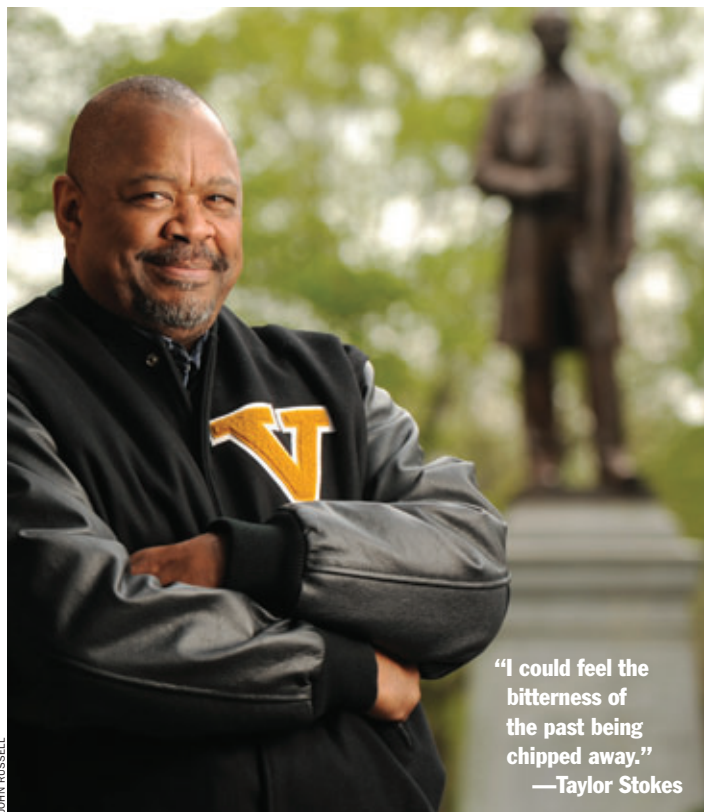
ization of intellectual property. In 1999 he helped establish the \$10 million “Chancellor’s Fund” which, in conjunction with the university’s technology transfer office, helped launch 18 companies. A later version, the Academic Venture Capital Fund, nurtured cross-institutional projects including institutes of chemical biology and imaging science.

Now, says Jacobson, he will find other ways to contribute. “I love health care. I love science. I love the business world. And I think the blend of science, health care and business to really improve the lives of people is a lot of fun.”

For more about Jeff Balsler, see the Spring 2009 issue of *Vanderbilt Magazine* at <http://snipurl.com/vubalsler>.

Taylor Stokes Completes 40-Year Journey

IN 1969, TAYLOR STOKES entered Vanderbilt as the first African American scholarship athlete to suit up for the football team. Though he had dreamed of playing in the Big 10 or at Alabama, he accepted



JOHN RUSSELL

“I could feel the bitterness of the past being chipped away.”
—Taylor Stokes

Vanderbilt’s invitation at the urging of his father.

“My father was a visionary,” says Stokes, who grew up in Clarksville, Tenn., northwest of Nashville. “He knew that if African Americans were going to get ahead, they needed to have a presence at schools like Vanderbilt—and not just on the football field.”

But times were different

then, and Stokes says he endured frequent racial slights around campus and on the field, even after making seven extra-point kicks in one game against Ole Miss during his second season—a Vanderbilt record that stood more than two decades.

When Stokes’ father died in 1971, he withdrew from Vanderbilt to run the family painting

and contracting business, and ultimately became a successful businessman. Life went on, but always with something missing.

Bitter about his Vanderbilt experience, for 35 years he avoided even driving near the campus. Then a few years ago, his wife, Chandra, and some former friends and teammates encouraged him to return to campus and finish what he had started. One of those friends was prominent Nashvillian Walter Overton, BA’74, who had followed Stokes to Vanderbilt and became the first African American scholarship football player to graduate. Overton is now general manager of LP Field, home stadium for Nashville’s NFL Tennessee Titans.

Receptive Vanderbilt administrators put together a plan of action for Stokes, and in 2007 he started his journey back at Vanderbilt—even beating a bout with cancer along the way. Head Football Coach Bobby Johnson saw to it that Stokes received the varsity letter jacket he’d never picked up in 1971.

On May 8, 2009, after a 40-year detour, Taylor Stokes finally crossed the Commencement stage and received his diploma, a bachelor of arts degree for an interdisciplinary major focusing on race, culture and religion. Stokes had majored in sociology his first time at Vanderbilt.

A devout Christian, Stokes next plans to pursue a master’s degree in Christian counseling. He also has taught in the Clarksville school system.

“I could feel the bitterness from the past being chipped away because of the generosity and love I’d experienced,” says Stokes of his return to Vanderbilt. “How often do you get

Virtual Vanderbilt

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www.vuconnect.com

With Vanderbilt’s new online community for alumni, students and friends, you can find classmates, connect with a Vanderbilt Chapter near you, share news with friends, network, ask for or share career advice, and more.



to return to the scene of your greatest tragedy, and it becomes your greatest triumph?

“I want people to see that there can be life after death, a resurrection so to speak. You can rise out of the ashes. You can return to the scene of the crime, and there can be a different outcome—an outcome of survival that allows the victim ultimately to become the victor.”

Find out more:

<http://snipurl.com/vustokes>

Vanderbilt Shrinking Its Carbon Footprint

THE UNIVERSITY HAS COMPLETED its first greenhouse-gas inventory and adopted an environmental commitment statement affirming the university’s dedication to environmental responsibility and accountability.

“Vanderbilt is one among a small percentage of schools that has undertaken the completion of a GHG [greenhouse gas] inventory and made it publicly available,” says Judson Newbern, deputy vice chancellor for facilities and environmental affairs. “Subsequent annual calculations of emissions will be conducted in the future to measure progress, which also will be made publicly available.”

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere and are emitted through both natural processes and human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, decay in landfills and the carbon cycle. Vanderbilt emits greenhouse gases through many of its daily operations such as the combustion of coal, use of electricity, commuting and waste disposal.

During the baseline period of 2005–2007, average annual greenhouse-gas emissions produced by academic, research and patient care areas on the university’s 330-acre campus amounted to an estimated 487,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂E). Academic and research areas accounted for approximately 302,000 MTCO₂E, or 62 percent of average yearly greenhouse-gas emissions; the remaining 38 percent are attributable to patient care areas.

Emissions sources at Vanderbilt include purchased electricity (45 percent); coal use (24 percent) and natural gas use (8 percent) at the on-campus co-generation power plant; and commuter travel (19 percent).

“These major sources present the most significant opportunities for improvements in Vanderbilt’s current carbon footprint,” says Andrea George, director of the Sustainability and Environmental Management Office (SEMO).

Environmental initiatives implemented to reduce emissions for the next GHG inventory report include:

- A commitment to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building practices. Seven buildings at The Commons have received gold or silver LEED certification, and green building principles also were used during the recent renovation of the One Hundred Oaks medical facilities.
- ThinkOne, a campus-wide energy conservation campaign focused on energy-saving behaviors to reduce Vanderbilt’s energy consumption (see www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu/thinkone).

Top Picks

Keegan Fellows Embark on Year of Travel



Moreadith



Whiting

New graduates Kathryn Moreadith and Rob Whiting are spending a year traveling the world as recipients of the university’s Michael B. Keegan Traveling Fellowship.

Moreadith graduated in May from the Blair School of Music with majors in composition/theory and East Asian studies and minors in piano performance and Chinese. She will spend her year studying how music is incorporated into cultural practices of disparate regions of the world.

Whiting, who graduated in May from the College of Arts and Science with majors in economics and East Asian studies, plans to study how poverty differs across nations, and what approaches are being applied to combat it.

Galloway Leads National Engineering Body

Kenneth Galloway, dean of Vanderbilt’s School of Engineering, has been elected by his national peers to a two-year term as chair of the Engineering Deans Council Executive Board. The council includes more than 300 engineering deans across the United States and is one of the leadership organizations of the American Society for Engineering Education.

It’s Good to Be Queen

Vanderbilt junior Amelie Munro Brown was selected as the 2009 Mardi Gras Queen of Carnival in New Orleans. The Louisiana native is an art history major who also enjoys white-water canoeing, rock climbing, hiking, soccer and horseback riding.



Brown

- Water and lighting retrofits, including a recent retrofit of the lighting system at Memorial Gym that resulted in an 18 percent reduction in lighting energy consumption.
- Improvements to commuter programs, including a ride-match Web site, the launch of several van pools, and the arrival of Zipcars on campus.
- A program to drastically adjust thermostats during the

hours a building is not in use.

Vanderbilt’s Environmental Commitment Statement was endorsed by a number of key stakeholder groups on campus, including the Vanderbilt Student Government and the Faculty Senate. The university also will promote lifelong learning about sustainability practices for the benefit of the Vanderbilt community.

Find out more:

www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu

Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

Total Immersion

Where there's a swimming pool or a subwoofer, Austin Langley finds a way.

By CINDY THOMSEN

AUSTIN LANGLEY IS ONE busy young woman. The rising junior, who calls Burlington, N.C., home, is a musical arts major at the Blair School of Music with a concentration in saxophone. She is a member of the Vanderbilt women's swimming team. Oh, and she just added a pre-veterinary medicine track to her studies, which means lots of additional science.

"Finding the right balance is tricky," Langley says. "At the beginning of every week, I sit down and make a schedule to see how I can fit everything in. It can be a headache sometimes, trying to get a paper done and go to swim practice and practice my saxophone and piano, but I'm figuring it out."

Langley also deals with a physical disability that would be daunting to anyone less dedicated and hard working: She is partially deaf.

"It's the lower frequencies that I don't hear as well," she says. "If there's background noise I struggle—and if a professor turns his back to the class, I don't have a clue what's going on."

Because the saxophone emits high tones, Langley is able to hear her own music fine.

But she struggles to hear instruments in the bass ranges.

"Last year I had to hear and write out chords in my music theory class, and that was the hardest thing for me because I couldn't hear the bass unless I sat there and really focused," she says. "I got speakers in my room with a subwoofer, and I would put my feet on the subwoofer and turn up the bass as loudly as it could go so I could feel it. That's how I'd get my homework done."

Face-to-face conversation is no problem. Langley hears every fifth or sixth syllable and also reads lips. Her hearing loss is genetic and is a common trait in her father's family.

"Low-frequency hearing loss like Austin's is typically seen in individuals with hereditary factors or middle-ear pathologies," says Meredith Moss, AuD'07, a clinical audiologist at the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center for Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences. "High-frequency hearing loss is much more common as it is seen most in individuals with age-related hearing loss and noise exposure."

The Vanderbilt Opportunity Development Center's Disability Services Program coordinates disability support services for students and has been a big help to Langley. At

the beginning of each semester, the center sends letters to her professors describing her hearing problem and how best to address it. Austin also has an FM system—purchased by the athletic department—that she uses in some classes. The professor wears a device that looks like a lapel microphone, and Austin wears an earpiece. But even that technology falls short on occasion.

"I struggle a lot with discussion classes," Austin says. "I can't locate the person who's talking quickly enough to catch all that they are saying. I like to sit in the front corner, but it's difficult if someone is between me and the other person."

Langley started swimming year-round in the seventh grade. She specializes in the backstroke and 200 individual medley. Noisy pools with lots of echoes and cheering fans mean that she sometimes does not hear her coach.

"A couple of times I've had problems starting in relays," she says. "With everyone being so excited, it's hard to hear exactly what's going on. At times I've just stood on the blocks, and when I heard everyone else hit the water, I knew, 'Uh-oh—better go.'"

"It is very impressive for Austin to balance swimming and the Blair School," says swimming coach Jeremy Organ. "I think music and swimming are very similar in that they both require practicing perfection every day, and that daily practice all leads up to a concert or a competition where your success is gauged by your performance."



STEVE GREEN



Partially deaf and a member of the Vanderbilt women's swimming team, Austin Langley juggles swim practice and studies in both music and pre-veterinary medicine.

Langley's schedule won't lighten up any this summer. The agenda includes an internship on a dairy farm, a job traveling the state of North Carolina for the 4-H International Exchange Program, a possible job with a veterinarian, and perhaps a trip to Norway to visit the family who hosted her in an exchange program last summer. She'll be staying in shape for swimming and keeping up with her music, too.

When Austin was choosing a college, it was difficult to find the perfect fit. Many music schools where she auditioned weren't sure about her chance for success in taking on the extra commitment of swimming. But at Vanderbilt she has found a way to excel at both music and swimming.

"I'm interested in so many things that sometimes it's hard to prioritize and get it down to just swimming, music and science," she says. "My private music teacher is [Adjunct Associate Professor of Saxophone Frank] Kirchner, and I see him a lot. He's like most teachers here—he wants me to be the best I can be, not just in music, but in everything I do." ▼

Ryan Schultz also contributed to this article.

SEC Championship and Sweet 16 Highlight Women's Season

Under the direction of Head Women's Basketball Coach Melanie Balcomb, the Commodores put together a season that culminated with the Southeastern Conference Tournament Championship, a trip to the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA Tournament, and recognition by the state of Tennessee. Along the way, seniors Christina Wirth and Jennifer Risper reaped national honors.

The women finished the 2008–2009 season with an overall 26–9 record, 10–4 in the SEC regular season. Picked by league coaches in the preseason to win the SEC, Vandy fell one conference win shy of tying its record for SEC victories and finished second behind Auburn, receiving a first-round bye in the league tournament. In tournament play the Commodores beat Georgia by eight points and crushed LSU by 14 on the way to the championship game with Auburn. Vanderbilt clinched a 61–54 victory over the Lady Tigers with some crucial three-point baskets at game's end.

"I just can't wait to play again," Balcomb said after winning the tournament. "I know

we've got to wait awhile for the NCAAs, but I think we're ready to do some great things." The Commodores advanced through the NCAA Tournament with convincing wins over Western Carolina University and Kansas State University. Vanderbilt reached the Sweet 16 round of the tournament for the 14th time in school history and lost a close match to Maryland, 78–74.

Even as the season came to a conclusion, accolades for the team and individuals kept coming. Three Commodores were named to the All-SEC team. Senior forward Christina Wirth was a unanimous first-team All-SEC selection, was named Most Valuable Player of the SEC Tournament, and was named SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Senior guard Jennifer Risper was named SEC Defensive Player of the Year and selected to the All-SEC second team along with junior guard Merideth Marsh.

Wirth received an honorable mention on the 2009 State Farm Coaches' All-America Team as selected by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. She was named to the All-Senior All-America first team by the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award committee, which honors senior student athletes who have excelled in four areas: classroom, community, character and competition. She also received the WBCA Scholarship Award. She scored an average 16.6 points per game while boasting a 4.0 grade point average during her first semester of graduate studies in the Vanderbilt School of Nursing.

Risper was named Division I Defensive Player of the Year by the WBCA at an award luncheon in St. Louis during the NCAA Women's Final Four. The senior guard played in the post late in the season and led the SEC with 81 steals.

After March madness subsided, the team was honored by the Tennessee General Assembly. Sen. Douglas Henry, BA'49, JD'51, sponsored a joint resolution "to congratulate Coach Melanie Balcomb and the Vanderbilt University Commodores on winning the 2009 Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament Championship." The legislation was sponsored in the House by Rep. Brenda Gilmore, MEd'88, signed by Gov. Phil Bredesen, and presented on April 23.

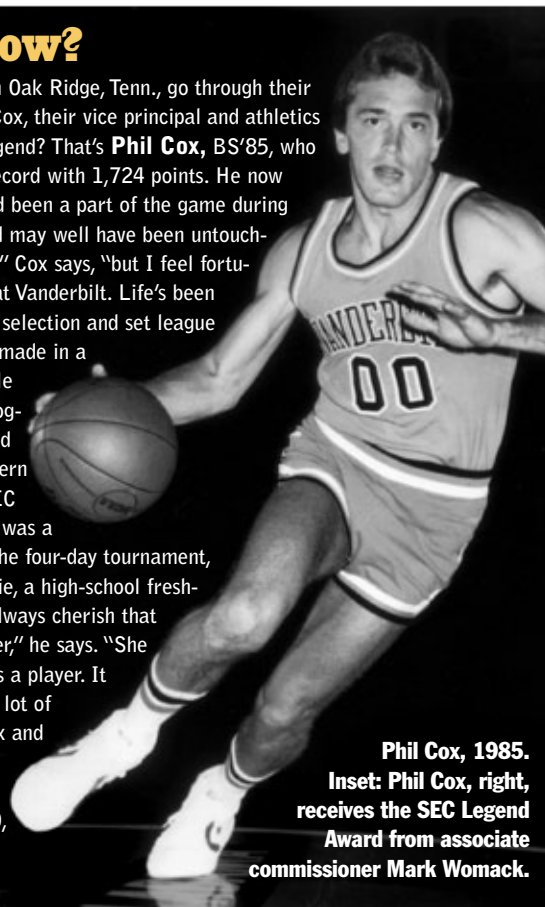
Where are they now?

As students at Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, Tenn., go through their daily schedules, do they realize that Mr. Cox, their vice principal and athletics director, is a bona fide SEC basketball legend? That's **Phil Cox**, BS'85, who at one time held the Vanderbilt scoring record with 1,724 points. He now ranks third, but if the three-point shot had been a part of the game during his career, the hot-shooting guard's record may well have been untouchable. "People have mentioned that to me," Cox says, "but I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to play at Vanderbilt. Life's been good to me." He was a two-time All-SEC selection and set league records for most consecutive free throws made in a season (43) and over two seasons (47). He still ranks second in that category. In recognition of his achievements, Cox was named a member of the 2009 class of Southeastern Conference Basketball Legends at the SEC Tournament in Tampa, Fla., in March. "It was a totally awesome experience," he says of the four-day tournament, which he attended with his daughter, Callie, a high-school freshman basketball and softball player. "I'll always cherish that time I was able to spend with my daughter," he says. "She heard stories that were told of my days as a player. It

brought back a lot of memories." Cox and his wife, Kim, also have two sons: Trevor, 10, and Eli, 6.



Phil Cox, 1985.
Inset: Phil Cox, right, receives the SEC Legend Award from associate commissioner Mark Womack.



Sports Roundup

Sophomore Curt Casali kept the competition off guard at first base as in this win against Western Kentucky.

Commodores Finish 2009 Baseball Season with Strong Showing

The Commodores found their bats and dug in defensively in postseason play to advance to the championship game of the SEC Tournament and the championship game of the Louisville Regional round of the NCAA Tournament. The team ended the regular season with a 31–24 overall record and a 12–17 record in conference play. In the SEC Tournament championship game, the Commodores dropped a 6–2 decision to LSU at Regions Field in Hoover, Ala. In NCAA Tournament play, Vanderbilt reached the championship game at the Louisville Regional, falling short in a 5–3 contest.



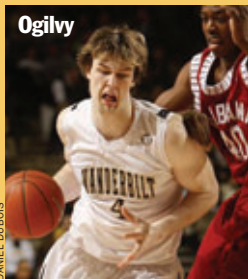
Bowling: Women Roll to National Honors

Vanderbilt spent much of the 2008–2009 bowling season ranked No. 1 in the nation and placed three bowlers on the All-America squad. Junior Josie Earnest was named the 2009 Player of the Year, and freshman Brittni Hamilton received Division I Rookie of the Year honors. Joining them on the All-America first team was senior Michelle Peloquin. The team finished in fifth place in the 2009 NCAA Bowling Championship held in Canton, Mich., in April. The Commodore keglers won a school-record five tournaments during the regular season.

Men's Basketball: Ogilvy and Taylor Earn SEC Honors

For the second consecutive year, center A.J. Ogilvy has been named second-team All-SEC as determined by the conference's 12 coaches.

After battling illness and injury early in the conference season, he finished the last nine games averaging 18.5 points per game, scoring a career-high 33 at LSU on March 4. Jeffrey Taylor, a guard/forward, was



Ogilvy

DANIEL LOUBOIS

named to the SEC All-Freshman team. He was the fifth-leading freshman scorer in the SEC and third overall scorer for Vanderbilt with 12 points per game, second in rebounds and steals, and tied for third in blocked shots.

Football: Moore and Langford Are NFL Bound

Cornerback D.J. Moore was drafted by the Chicago Bears in the NFL draft in late April. The 119th pick, he joins former Commodores Jay Cutler, Earl Bennett, Hunter Hillenmeyer and Chris Williams on the Bears' squad, making Chicago the Vanderbilt of the North. "I'm happy for D.J. and think he will become a tremendous player for the Bears," said

Vanderbilt Head Football Coach Bobby Johnson. "D.J. is a tremendous talent who put together three fantastic years for the Commodores." In his three seasons at Vanderbilt, Moore had 13 interceptions, was named first-team All-SEC, and was named an All American last season. He also caught two touchdown passes.

Safety Reshard Langford signed with the Philadelphia Eagles as an undrafted free agent. He had 48 consecutive starts as a Commodore (the most ever by a Vanderbilt defensive back) and, during his senior season,



Langford

JOHN RUSSELL

accounted for 49 solo tackles, 76 total tackles and three interceptions—one of which he returned for a touchdown against Tennessee. "Reshard will make a huge impression on the Philadelphia coaches with his talent, effort, and desire to help any way he can," Johnson said. "Reshard Langford is one of those guys you build a winning team around."

Lacrosse: Vandy Rates 10th in National Rankings

At the end of regular season play, the Commodores had a 9–5 record (2–2 in the American Lacrosse Conference) and were ranked the 10th team in the nation in several national polls. Along the way several players earned individual honors. Junior midfielder Sarah Downing was named ALC Offensive Player of the Week on April 20; freshman goalkeeper Natalie Wills was named ALC Rookie of the Week on March 23 and ALC Defensive Player of the Week on April 6; and freshman midfielder Ally Carey was named ALC Rookie of the Week on April 6.

Collective Memory

Vanderbilt's roots revealed

Jewish Rush in the Bible Belt

*Zeta Beta Tau has left a deep imprint on its members—
and on the university.* By G. MARC HAMBURGER, BA'64

IT WAS EARLY DECEMBER in Tucson, Ariz.—45 years and 1,600 miles from our undergraduate days at Vanderbilt. We came together, this graying group of sexagenarians, to recharge our connections to each other and to celebrate four decades of friendship.

Not everyone was present in Tucson that weekend; regrettably, some had passed away. Their absence underscored our own finite existence. Indeed, the inevitable tug of mortality was a magnet that pulled us together again.

We graduated in '64, '65 and '66. We were physicians, attorneys, professors and assorted business types. Many had retired to savor the joys of grandparenting plus a heavy dose of travel.

We were not so different from any other Vandy fraternity group of the 1960s. Except for one thing: We were all Jewish.

The memories flowed endlessly for nearly four days. We reveled in old war stories—of parties, professors, football games and spring breaks. We shared updates on our lives—health, careers, children, grandchildren.

What we did *not* talk about was the unique position of Zeta Beta Tau, a Jewish fraternity within a largely Protestant undergraduate population. And the fact that fraternity rush prior to the late 1960s included a mandatory separate system called “Jewish Rush.”

Vanderbilt undergrads in 1964 were white, Christian and majority Greek. Our fraternity members were predominantly Southerners, comfortable with—or at least acclimated to—the mainstream religious traditions of the region.



Growing up Jewish in the Old South was a complex cultural experience. There were daily public school prayers and church-based school events. We attended Christmas parties and Easter parades and shared family occasions with non-Jewish friends.

We were aware in high school of Jewish fraternities and Gentile fraternities at Vanderbilt and most other universities of the era. This distinction was not at all offensive to us; in retrospect, though, one might question the sociology of separation.

Ironically, ZBT thrived under the old system. We were separate but perhaps even a little more than equal. Because we did not compete for pledges with a dozen mainstream fraternities, we were free to form multiple alliances across the campus—political, social, academic and personal. ZBT's campus leaders enjoyed a unique neutrality.

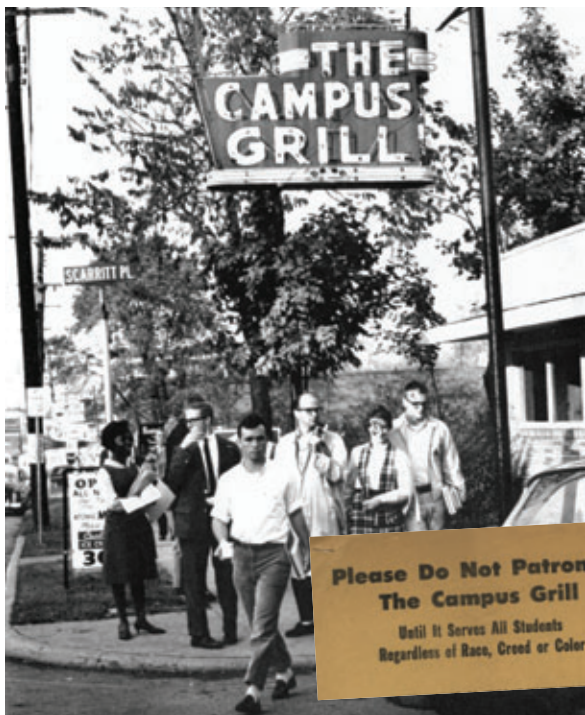
“The ZBTs excelled in every way,

and there were deep friendships between Jewish and non-Jewish students which endure to this day,” remembers Joe Martin, BA'64, president of the Interfraternity Council for 1963–64. “But when it came to rush, the Jewish students went one way, and everyone else went another. No one seemed to give it a second thought at the time.” (Martin, of Atlanta, also was president of the Vanderbilt Alumni Association in 1977–78.)

The years 1964 and 1965 were a triumphant time for ZBT. The Vanderbilt chapter was twice named best in the nation by the fraternity's national leadership. Through 1967 the chapter was the perpetual winner—eight consecutive semesters—of the Vanderbilt Interfraternity Council's Scholarship Trophy, and individual members held major leadership positions in student government and publications.

Nonetheless, we were always Jewish, individually and collectively. We were the





COURTESY OF VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

There was the episode involving The Campus Grill, on 21st Avenue South at Scarritt Place, just across the street from the library. The owner of the popular hang-out refused to serve two black graduate students. “It’s just the way I run my business,” stated the proprietor, quoted in *The Vanderbilt Hustler*, Nov. 1, 1963.

“We’re not trying to hurt your business,” one of the students said. “We just want something to eat.”

This glaring discrimination in the middle of our world drew an immediate response. A ZBT editorial writer for the *Hustler* urged a boycott of the establishment. Picket lines were set up, and student volunteers from Vanderbilt

and Fisk maintained a vigil outside the restaurant. Several weeks later The Campus Grill was open for everyone.

The annual IMPACT Symposium brought major national figures to campus. Featured

speakers in 1965 were George Wallace, the first-term (then-segregationist) governor of Alabama, and Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP. Wallace had been invited to lunch by one of the other fraternities, and ZBT voted to invite Roy Wilkins for an informal “lunch and learn.”

Roy Wilkins was a thoughtful, articulate man who exuded calm and confidence. I’ll never forget his reply to what appeared to be an academic question posed by a perky Vanderbilt cheerleader: “But Mr. Wilkins,” she asked, “wouldn’t intermarriage ultimately help your movement?”

Wilkins responded with eloquent wisdom. “Young lady,” he said, “I would never advocate marriage for a cause, no matter how just.”

Why did ZBT host Wilkins that day? Perhaps it was because we understood—instantly—the challenges of the outsider. We, ourselves, were outsiders seeking acceptance by the majority. And to a large extent, we succeeded; Vanderbilt in the 1960s was a remarkably nurturing environment, both academically and socially.

largest Jewish presence on the campus, different in some basic ways from the rest of the student body.

I remember a spring day in 1964. The chapter had a new home at 2419 Kensington Place. Rabbi Jerome Kestenbaum, DDiv’70, of West End Synagogue blessed the new building and affixed a large mezuzah to the upper right doorpost of the house. (A mezuzah is a piece of parchment in a decorative case placed on doors of Jewish homes.) Few of us were particularly religious in those days, but we were Jewish and this was our tradition.

There were other traditions, perhaps less overt but equally compelling. The Civil Rights Movement of the early ’60s revealed in us an almost genetic compulsion for human rights.

Opposite page, top: the Zeta Beta Tau house as it appeared in the 1920 *Commodore* yearbook. **Bottom:** The 1919 ZBT class included Dan May (pictured center, far left), who was one of the fraternity’s founders and later served on the Vanderbilt Board of Trust for 31 years. **This page, top:** In November 1963, ZBT members helped organize a protest of The Campus Grill because of its discriminatory practices. **Bottom:** The ZBT Class of ’65 celebrates. During 1964 and 1965, the Vanderbilt chapter was named best in the nation by the fraternity’s national leadership.



COURTESY OF MARC HAMBURGER

Oh, there were occasional slights when a co-ed's parents disapproved of their daughter's ZBT date for a sorority ball at the country club. We came to understand that such preferences were institutional and likely generational.

The ZBT Class of 1959 will become Quinqs this year at the university's Reunion Oct. 16–17. "Almost the entire class will be there," notes '58–'59 Chapter President Gary Cohen, BA'59, now an attorney in Washington, D.C. "Sixteen of 19 classmates have already signed up to attend."

Cohen and Rodger (Buddy) Cooper, BA'61, of St. Louis are part of a network of late 1950s/early 1960s ZBTs who have remained steadfastly connected, even more so in recent years with the help of the Internet. Cooper says, "I was the only Jewish football player on the freshman team. I knew I wouldn't be rushed by the mainstream fraternities, but my experience at Vanderbilt was wonderful, and I had many pals across the campus through intramural sports."

Another rising Quinq, Bob Royal of Memphis, came to Vanderbilt from Red Bay, Ala., where his was the only Jewish family in town. He recalls the onset of rush in 1955. "All freshman men went to Memorial Gym to learn about rush procedures. At the end of the talk, the 50 or so Jewish freshmen were asked to stay," says Royal, BA'59, JD'62. "I'll never for-



Since 1963 this building on Kensington Place has housed the Vanderbilt ZBT chapter.

get my reaction to seeing 50 Jewish boys all in one place — and the very different reaction of a freshman from New York City. I exclaimed, 'Wow, 50 Jews!' and he said, 'Whoa . . . only 50 Jews?' I pledged ZBT. He joined Alpha Epsilon Pi [the other Jewish fraternity on campus]."

There was also a Jewish sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi, which had opened a chapter at Vanderbilt in 1925; entertainer Dinah Shore, BA'38, was president of the chapter during her senior year. The sorority no longer has a chapter at Vanderbilt, but Zeta Beta Tau, now a nonsectarian fraternity, is still going strong on campus. Alpha Epsilon Pi continues to pledge mostly Jewish members.

Ultimately, having a separate rush system was troubling to both Jews and non-Jews. "It wasn't right," says former Interfraternity Coun-

cil President Joe Martin, who was a member of Phi Delta Theta.

New York attorney Steve Gross, BA'60, describes the concept of "Jewish Rush" as "not very flattering." He adds, "By the time my son got to Vanderbilt, Jewish rush was no more, and the old rumor of a 'Jewish quota' seemed to have gone away."

Chapter President Alan Elsas, BA'62, of Atlanta is essentially in agreement with Gross. "I felt as a freshman there was an unnecessary separation. My Atlanta friends were joining other fraternities and jokingly offered to make me an 'honorary member.' But I joined ZBT and had a terrific four years at Vanderbilt."

Former ZBT President Dr. Ralph Lampert, BA'61, of Williamsburg, Va., came to Vanderbilt from the piney woods of rural Louisiana. "For the first time in my life," Lampert says, "I was a participant in a small Jewish community — the ZBT fraternity. It was an eye-opening experience to associate with this eclectic group. You could find the urbane, the witty, the sophisticate, the athlete, the brain, even the religious zealot — all in a Jewish context. And 50 years later, I highly value those friendships."

"After graduation I slipped back into a secular mode," Lampert continues. "My cultural heritage is to be found more in William Faulkner than Saul Bellow. My religious philosophy is better explained by Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens. But despite my lapse from tradition, I believe those four years at Vanderbilt and ZBT were the most valuable and transformational of my life. I did not consider the separation demeaning, nor did my Christian friends. We were not victims." ▼

G. Marc Hamburger, BA'64, flirted with a career in journalism (Associated Press, Nashville), then plunged into the corporate world. He earned an M.B.A. at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and retired after 33 years as a marketing vice president for The Coca-Cola Co. He was president of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity in 1963–64. He and his wife, Deedee, live in Atlanta.

Members of Zeta Beta Tau from the Classes of 1964, 1965 and 1966 gathered in Tucson, Ariz., last December for a reunion. A complete list of those photographed can be found on the *Vanderbilt Magazine* Web site: www.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbiltmagazine.



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Bright Ideas

“Today’s churchgoers

Robot Playmates Offer Promise for Children with ASD

1 THE DAY THAT robots help children with autism to learn social skills is a step closer with the development of a system that allows a robot to monitor a child’s emotional state.

“A lot of research going on around the world today tries to use robots to treat children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). That research shows that the children are attracted to robots, raising the promise that appropriately designed robots could play an important role in their treatment,” says Nilanjan Sarkar, associate professor of mechanical engineering at Vanderbilt. “Efforts so far have been quite limited because researchers haven’t had a way to monitor the emotional state of the children, which would allow the robot to respond automatically to their reactions.”

One baby in 150 born today in the United States is diagnosed with ASD. Autism currently costs the U.S. more than \$90 billion per year—a cost projected to double by 2017 due to the growing population of those affected.

Sarkar has developed a method that uses physiological measurements, including heart rate, galvanic skin response, tem-

perature and muscle response, to monitor emotional state. His original motivation was to improve human–robot interactions. When his nephew was diagnosed with autism, however, Sarkar got the idea of applying the technique to aid children with ASD. He sought out one of the leading authorities on the subject, Wendy Stone, professor of pediatrics and investigator at Vanderbilt’s Kennedy Center, and they formed a partnership to develop this new approach.

Last fall, Sarkar and Stone published two papers—one in the *IEEE Transactions on Robotics* and one in the *International Journal of Human–Computer Studies*—that describe the results of their first set of experiments, conducted with six children ranging in age from 13 to 16 years who had been diagnosed with ASD.

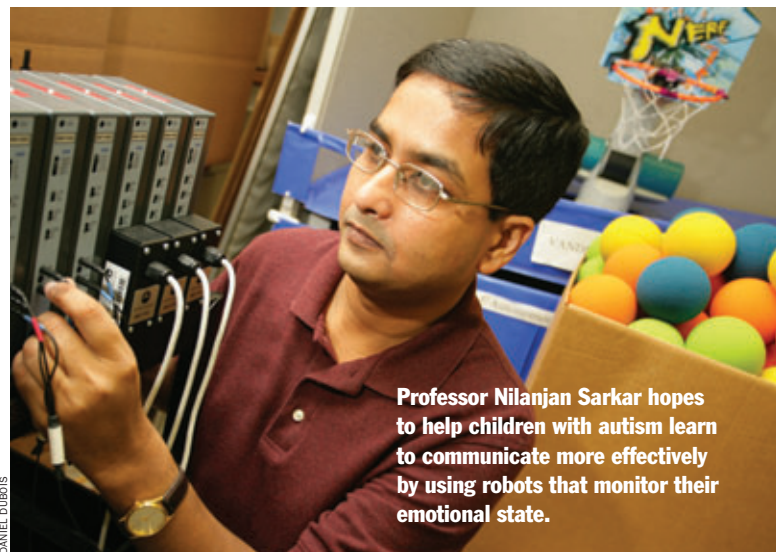
Physiological sensors were attached to the participants, and they were asked to play two games. One was the computer game Pong. The other was a variant of Nerf basketball, with the hoop and backboard attached to the end of a robotic arm that moves them back and forth or up and down. Graduate students Changchun Liu and Karla Conn participated in the studies.

The data they gathered can be used to develop individual models that can predict emotional state with an accuracy of

better than 80 percent. This information can be used in real time to increase a child’s degree of engagement.

“That’s the part that really nailed me,” says Stone, “that the robot can read the physiological cues of the person playing the game, controlling the distance

were varied, and computer-based opponents of different skill levels were introduced. This allowed researchers to induce emotions of interest, boredom, anxiety and engagement. The model was then used to predict how each child would react. When they switched to robot



Professor Nilanjan Sarkar hopes to help children with autism learn to communicate more effectively by using robots that monitor their emotional state.

and angle of the hoop, and that the person playing reported a more positive mood when the computer was responsive to his needs.”

Ability to monitor emotional state is particularly important in treating ASD, Stone says. “Children with autism are not necessarily giving the kind of emotional cues that we know how to read. They are not necessarily good reporters of their inner feelings.”

As the children played Pong, the game was changed in several ways: Ball and paddle speeds

basketball, the model’s predictions were equally accurate.

A robot’s ability to provide consistent and predictable responses should be particularly useful for treating ASD. Each child uses individual triggers such as direct eye contact or a loud voice. Once a trigger is identified, a robot could be programmed to increase the stimulus at a gradual rate the child doesn’t notice. The robot could back off when it senses that its responses are beginning to agitate the child. In this fashion, it could build up the child’s toler-

are savvy shoppers. ”

—PROFESSOR SANDRA BARNES

ance to problem stimuli. “Robots can be programmed to respond with a consistency that is difficult for humans to achieve,” Sarkar points out.

And something that robots lack also may be advantageous in this setting. “The children can be distracted by a lot of sensory stimuli coming at them,” says Stone. “Alternative methods of teaching that can remove the social component could be very helpful.”

The research was supported by a grant from the Marino Autism Research Institute.

Urban Black Congregations Keep the Faith

2 CHURCHES WITH predominantly black congregations are thriving in urban and suburban areas, and the most successful among them employ a variety of sophisticated marketing and programming strategies to draw members, a study by researcher Sandra Barnes finds. Her findings offer insights into what successful black churches have in common today, when parishioners have more choices and expect more from their churches than in the past.

“Contrary to expectations, I found that the black church is still a very important part of the lives of many African

Americans,” Barnes says. “Churches that market themselves, make sophisticated use of technology, and offer practical sermons and programs for families and children over and above typical Bible studies are most likely to draw and keep new parishioners.”

Barnes, professor of human and organizational development at Peabody College, published her report, “Enter into His Gates: An Analysis of Black Church Participation Patterns,” in the March issue of the journal *Sociological Spectrum*. The report examines changes in adult church participation rates from 1995 to 2000 based on a national survey of 1,863 predominantly black churches across seven Christian denominations. It is the first study to use a national sample of black congregations to examine this issue.

Barnes found that today’s parishioners are “religiously savvy” and expect more from their church service, such as sermons and Bible studies relevant to everyday life, activities for individuals and families, and innovative worship services that incorporate dance and music.

“The broader societal change we have seen in consumerism is also manifesting in the religious arena. We expect more, bigger and better,” says Barnes. “As in

the retail environment, today’s churchgoers are savvy shoppers. They are looking for a worship experience and programs that meet their needs, and they’re willing to shop around to find it.”

This consumerism has led churches to use sophisticated marketing tools, specifically the Internet. “Successful churches are savvy when it comes to marketing. Word of mouth continues to be an important tool, but it is no longer the primary mechanism,” Barnes says. “Web sites, television ads and prime-time exposure all play a role. Churches are using very intentional marketing strategies, and much of it relies on technology.”

Barnes also found that churches that focused on and generated excitement about their own future experienced greater participation. Churches with sound financial health experienced higher participation, as did larger churches.

Overall, Barnes found that urban and suburban black churches grew approximately 5 percent between 1995 and 2000, while participation in rural black churches dropped. Baptist churches had the highest partici-

pation growth; however, there were not statistically significant differences among denominations overall.

“What a congregation does, in terms of worship and programs, appears to be more salient than what it is, in terms of denominational ties,” Barnes wrote.

Denominations included in the survey were Church of God in Christ, Baptist, Christian Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Black Presbyterian and United Methodist. The report was based on data drawn from a national database maintained by the Faith Factor 2000 Project, a joint venture between the Lilly Foundation and the Interdenominational Theological Center. The Gallup Organization conducted the surveys.

Barnes has a joint appointment in the Vanderbilt Divinity School as a professor of sociology of religion. This research was supported by a 2005 Louisville Institute Grant and through the support of the ITC Faith Factor Project.



MICHAEL HOGUE/THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS



DANIEL DUBOIS

Breast Feeding's Protective Effect Favors Girls

3 THE ABILITY OF breast milk to protect infants against respiratory viruses is gender-biased in favor of girls, reveal studies by Dr. Fernando Polack. Polack's first study appeared last June in *Pediatrics*, and the second came out in February's *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*. The research took place at hospitals in Buenos Aires, Argentina, through Polack's INFANT foundation research facility.

"We were really looking for evidence that breast milk might protect against human metapneumovirus, for which there is no vaccine. But when we saw how significant this difference between boys and girls was, we were a bit surprised," Polack says.

Recently named the Cesar Milstein Associate Professor of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, Polack is studying alternatives to protect newborn babies against respiratory viruses, especially very vulnerable premature infants.

Polack knew of anecdotal evidence suggesting a gender difference in the protective effect of breast feeding, but the few small studies reinforcing the idea have not garnered much attention.

His study in *Pediatrics* examined the effect in very low birth-weight babies. He found that once baby girls left the neonatal intensive care unit, those who were getting breast



milk since birth were rarely rehospitalized for respiratory infections. The big surprise was that girls who were not breast-fed were at the highest risk for rehospitalization, outstripping the risk for boys. The difference between breast-fed boys and non-breast-fed boys was not statistically significant.

The most recent study, involving full-term babies, showed roughly the same thing. But beyond revealing a thought-provoking difference between boys and girls, Polack says his work brings up the more important question, How does the protection of breast milk work?

"We used to think breast milk was an immune-system boost, pre-made from the mother and ready to be used by the baby. But if that were the case, gender should not make a difference. This suggests the protection is in the baby at birth," Polack says.

Polack believes some immune process is present within babies at birth with the potential to offer "nonspecific" antiviral protection. "At least for girls, breast milk may trigger this protection that is nonspecific,

protecting against all the viruses we looked at—and we looked at a dozen or more viruses."

This points to the potential of discovering a natural human substance, or new immune mechanism, that can provide people with antiviral protection without having to be exposed to a virus first (the mechanism employed in vaccine development).

"We have been testing vac-

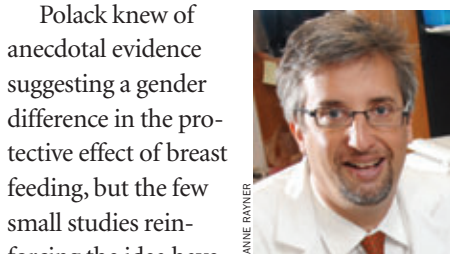
cines more than 40 years with the idea that we need a single vaccine for each organism. But today we have no single vaccine for infants under 6 months of age," says Polack. "Vaccines are very important. But this is evidence that we may have an alternate method we never imagined."

No one should read into this work that breast milk is not beneficial to baby boys, Polack emphasizes. Numerous other benefits of breast milk exist beyond protection from respiratory illness. And Polack believes boys do receive some respiratory protection too, but more research is needed to show it.

turning their combat helmets into "smart nodes" in a wireless sensor network.

ISIS developed the technology with the support of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The university has patented the system's key elements.

Like several other shooter location systems developed in recent years, the ISIS system relies on sound waves produced when a high-powered rifle is fired. These acoustic signals have distinctive characteristics that allow the systems to pick them out from among other loud noises and track them back to their source. Current systems,



Dr. Fernando Polack is studying breast milk's ability to protect newborn babies against respiratory viruses.



Akos Ledeczi shows his design for a shooter location system installed into a combat helmet.

Sniper Location System Turns Heads

4 IMAGINE A PLATOON of soldiers carrying personal digital assistants that can display the location of enemy shooters in three dimensions and accurately identify the caliber and type of their weapons.

Engineers at Vanderbilt University's Institute for Software Integrated Systems (ISIS) have developed a system that can give soldiers just such an edge by

however, rely on centralized or stand-alone sensor arrays. This limits accuracy and restricts them to identifying shooters at line-of-sight locations.

The ISIS system combines information from a number of nodes to triangulate on shooter positions and improve the accuracy of its location identification process. It also uses a patented technique to filter out echoes that can throw off other acoustic detection systems, explains Akos Ledeczi, PhD'95, the senior research scientist at ISIS who heads up the development effort.

“When DARPA gave us the assignment of creating a shooter location system using nodes with very limited capabilities, they didn’t think we could solve the technical problems,” Ledeczi admits. “At first I didn’t think we could do it either, but we figured out how to make it work.”

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Albert Sciarretta, who assesses new military technologies in urban environments for DARPA, is one of the experts impressed by the ISIS system: “Its strong points are that it isn’t limited to locating shots fired in direct line-of-sight, it can pick up multiple shooters at the same time, and it can identify the caliber and type of weapon being fired.”

When a high-powered rifle is fired, it produces two different kinds of sound waves. One is the “muzzle blast” that expands outward in a spherical wave from the muzzle. The second is a conical shock wave produced by the bullet as it travels at supersonic speed. Each node of the shooter location system contains an array of four sensitive microphones. If at least three of the microphones in a single node detect the muzzle blast, the information allows the nodes’ microprocessor to calculate the direction from which the sound came. If the same array also detects the arrival time and angle of the bullet shock wave, a simple calculation gives the shooter’s location.

“Because the microphones on the helmet are so close together, the precision is not very high,” Ledeczi says. “However, the nodes are continuously exchanging the times and angles of arrival for these acoustic signals, along with their own locations and orientations. When two or more nodes detect the shot, they

can provide the bearing with better than one degree accuracy. The range is typically within a few meters even from as far as 300 meters. The more sensors that pick up the shot, the more accurate the localization.”

The ISIS system communicates its findings with the personal digital assistants that the soldiers carry. The PDAs are loaded with maps or overhead pictures of the area upon which the shooter locations are displayed.

Find out more:

www.vanderbilt.edu/exploration/stories/shooterloc.html

‘Hidden’ Echoes Play Role in Memory

5 VANDERBILT researchers have discovered that early visual areas, long believed to play no role in higher cognitive functions such as memory, retain information previously hidden from brain studies. Researchers made the discovery using a new technique for decoding data from functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The findings, published Feb. 18 online by *Nature*, represent a significant step in understanding how we perceive, process and remember visual information.

“How do people maintain an active representation of what they have just seen moments ago? This has long been a conundrum,” says Frank Tong, co-author of the research findings and an associate professor of psychology.

“Before, we knew that early visual areas of the cerebral cortex that are the first to receive visual information were exquisitely tuned to process incoming visual

signals from the eye, but not to store this information. We also knew that the higher-order brain areas responsible for memory lack the visual sensitivity of early brain areas, but somehow people are able to remember a visual pattern with remarkable precision for many seconds—actu-



ally, for as long as they keep thinking about that pattern. Our question was, Where is this precise information being stored in the brain?”

The researchers found that fine-scale activity patterns in early visual areas reveal a trace of “something like an echo of the stimulus that the person is actively retaining,” says Tong, “even though the overall activity in these areas is really weak after the stimulus is removed.”

Before this discovery the visual cortex had not been implicated in cognitive processes such as memory or active maintenance of information, says Stephenie Harrison, lead author of the research and a graduate student in the Vanderbilt psychology department. “By using a neural decoding technique, we were able to read out what people were holding in their visual memory. We believe this sustained visual information could be useful when people must perform complex visual tasks in everyday life.”

Research subjects were shown two examples of simple striped patterns at different orientations. They were then told to hold one of the orientations in their mind while being scanned using fMRI. Orientation has long been known to be one of the first and most basic

pieces of visual information coded and processed by the brain.

“Through both evolution and learning, the visual system has developed the most efficient ways to code our natural environment, and the most efficient way

to code any basic shape or contour is orientation,” Tong explains. “We used a decoding method to see if the activity patterns contained information about the remembered orientation, and we found that they do.”

Analyzing responses over several trials, researchers could tell accurately which of the two orientation patterns a subject was holding in his or her mind more than 80 percent of the time. Their predictions held true even when overall activity in these visual areas was very weak—no different than looking at a blank screen. This suggests that the act of remembering an image leaves some sort of faint echo or trace in these brain areas. The activity traces are weak but quite detailed and rich in information.

“By doing these pattern analyses, we were able to find information that was hidden before. We do not know for sure, but it’s possible that a lot of information in the brain may be hidden in such activity patterns,” Tong says. ▼

InClass

A spotlight on faculty and their work

Lessons from the School of Life

Family-centered care is at the heart of everything Dr. Judy Aschner does.

By JESSICA ENNIS

WHEN DR. JUDY ASCHNER was busy completing her third year of fellowship in neonatology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, a personal experience did more to shape the way she practiced medicine than all her previous years of training.

It was August of 1987, and Aschner was 21 weeks pregnant with her third child. Unexpectedly, her membranes ruptured, which meant her son likely would be born soon—and most certainly would not survive.

Against medical advice, she left the hospital five days later, determined to continue the pregnancy yet knowing the likelihood of carrying the baby to viability was extremely low. She remained at home on complete bed rest for 10 weeks before delivering her son, Nadav, nine weeks early, on Halloween.

“I was terrified. He did not cry at birth—there was not a sound,” she remembers.

Nadav was critically ill, suffering from sepsis (a serious bloodstream infection), respiratory distress and low blood pressure. He remained in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) until December, when he was discharged home on oxygen.

“We were unbelievably lucky that he survived,” Aschner says. “The statistics were not in our favor.”

What she found most difficult was “being on the other side of the bed,” she remembers.

In the mid-’80s it was common practice not to include families on medical rounds.

“We were asked to leave the NICU when the team discussed our child,” Aschner recalls. “In 1987 nurseries were one great big room. Hospitals did not allow families to attend rounds due to privacy concerns for the other patients and families. It wasn’t until I was ‘that’ family that I realized this was not the right way to do it. It was a lesson learned in a very personal way.”

Aschner is the first holder of the Julia Carell

tal-perinatal medicine training program at Wake Forest University.

She feels strongly that parents should be included in all decisions being made about their child, and encourages the family to be present for rounds and participate as much as possible in the care of their infant.

Although Nadav has grown into a healthy young adult—he is about to start his senior year at Vanderbilt, majoring in political science—the memory of that experience still lingers. Judy’s husband, Michael Aschner, the Gray E.B. Stahlman Professor of Neuroscience and a professor of pediatrics and pharmacology, still finds it difficult to enter the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

“My experiences as an NICU mom changed the way I practice medicine in a very fundamental way,” Judy Aschner says. “Every neonatologist understands how stressful it is for a family whose baby is critically ill, but once the baby is stable, the team’s focus is on the next critical patient. What I learned from my experience is that the stress for the family remains until discharge and beyond. Things happen for a reason, and I guess it taught me a lot about the true meaning of family-centered care.”

Under her leadership the division has grown from 12 faculty to 30, with marked expansion of both the clinical and research programs in neonatology. “The beautiful NICU at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vander-



Photographed not long after Aschner’s arrival at Vanderbilt are family members (from left) Eiten, Nadav, Michael, Amir, Judy and Yael.

Stadler Chair in Pediatrics and director of the Mildred Stahlman Division of Neonatology at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. She came to Vanderbilt nearly five years ago after previously serving as professor of pediatrics and director of the neona-



“My experiences as a NICU mom changed the way I practice medicine in a very fundamental way,” Judy Aschner says.

bilt, with its single-patient rooms, facilitates family involvement,” she says.

For years Aschner has juggled patient care with research. She has a special interest in pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure in the lungs), a particularly dangerous form of lung disease that can affect newborn babies—and a condition that affected her son, Nadav. She has published numerous articles examining the causes of pulmonary hypertension and exploring better ways to treat this life-threatening condition in newborn babies.

“She is passionate, brilliant, articulate, and devoted to the academic principles of scholarship in her chosen field,” says Dr. Jonathan Gitlin, chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital.

Born in Troy, N.Y., the blue-collar hometown of “Uncle Sam” situated along the Hudson River, Judy Aschner was among the first in her family to attend college. She fantasized about becoming a physician but never knew another woman who had been one. She had to be talked into applying to medical school by her mentor, William Roth, professor and chair of biology at Union College in New York.

Roth asked why she did not attend a “pre-med” meeting at the end of her sophomore year of college. Because she wasn’t a pre-med major, she responded. “Why the hell not?” he demanded.

She enrolled at the University of Rochester School of Medicine in the midst of a long-distance, six-year courtship with Michael. The two had met when Judy was an 18-year-old on a visit to the Red Sea. Michael, an Israeli, moved to America to begin training as a research scientist while Judy completed medical school.

Two days after receiving her diploma, she gave birth to their first child, Yael, who is now a second-year resident in internal medicine at Vanderbilt. Besides Yael and Nadav, the Aschners have two other children: Eitan, who is now working in China after graduating from Vanderbilt’s School of Engineering in 2008, and Amir, a rising sophomore at Vanderbilt.

“All our children are or will be Vanderbilt alumni,” Aschner says. “It is hard to describe what a bonus it is to have them close by and getting their education here—or how proud I am of all my children.”

Today, Aschner is extremely busy leading

one of the top-rated neonatology programs in the country while expanding her involvement with a litany of professional and scientific organizations. She admits she has a difficult time telling people “no,” which is reflected in the traveling and lecturing she does all over the world. She even writes the questions that will be asked of neonatologists when they take the American Board of Pediatrics certification exam in neonatal–perinatal medicine.

“I wear a lot of hats,” says Aschner, who this spring was recognized as one of “10 Women to Watch” by *Nashville Medical News*. She recently was elected to a six-year term as secretary–treasurer of the American Pediatric Society (APS), with responsibilities that include service on the planning committee of the organization’s annual meeting and appointment as the APS liaison to the Federation of Pediatric Organizations. She also serves on the strategic planning committee for the perinatal section of the American Academy of Pediatrics and spent four years as chair of the Organization of Neonatology Training Program Directors.



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At Vanderbilt she serves on several departmental committees and is actively engaged in the education of neonatal–perinatal fellows. “Teaching residents and fellows at the bedside and in small lecture settings is something I really enjoy, but I’m doing less of it now than I have done in the past,” Aschner says. “Now my education and training activities are done more at a national and international level.”

Aschner also is vice chair and executive board member for the International Postgraduate Organization for Knowledge Transfer Research and Teaching Excellent Students, an international postgraduate teaching organization that particularly focuses on transferring evidence-based medical knowledge to developing nations. But she makes sure outside activities don’t detract from her primary mission of improving the lives of sick infants and the processes of care in the NICU.

“We’ve got wonderful, dedicated faculty in neonatology and outstanding NICU nurses and nurse practitioners at Vanderbilt,” she says. “The next step is to reach outside the walls of Vanderbilt.”

Two years ago she founded the Tennessee Initiative for Perinatal Quality Care (TIPQC), which seeks to improve health outcomes for mothers and infants through a statewide collaborative of neonatal and perinatal health-care providers. Tennessee’s infant mortality rate currently ranks a dismal 45th in the nation.

“No matter how great a job we do here at Vanderbilt, it won’t move the statistics a lot. We need to share what we do with others, and we need to learn from each other,” says Aschner. “We also need to partner with our obstetrical colleagues to really make a difference in the rates of preterm birth in Tennessee. The enthusiasm across the state for TIPQC is amazing, even to me. I really believe TIPQC will make a difference in Tennessee’s birth outcomes.”

The goal is for all 27 NICUs in Tennessee, as well as obstetrical practices, to join TIPQC and participate in evidence-based changes in practice to improve prenatal care, reduce infant mortality, and reduce complications of preterm birth. All NICUs are asked to join an existing national quality improvement network and to share data about NICU prac-

tices and outcomes. TIPQC will teach teams how to implement and monitor changes in their practice and establish a statewide database to analyze the impact of those changes on infant outcomes.

On a recent morning, Aschner and her husband realized their demanding travel schedules would place them on different continents for the better part of the next month, so they quickly rearranged appointments so they could retreat for a few minutes together to have a cup of coffee.

“In the past we intentionally never traveled at the same time so someone would always be home with the children. Now that everyone is out of the house, this old habit is pretty dysfunctional,” she says. “We need to try to coordinate our travel schedules or, better yet, do some traveling together. However, we both travel so much for work that it is easier said than done.”

Even on her most hectic days, though, Aschner says, “I am completely sure I was put here on this earth to be a neonatologist. There is nothing else I want to do. I think I have the best job there is.” ▼

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Saving the world, making a living,

By LISA A. DUBOIS

Big ideas for a small planet

Glacial melting. Amphibian and honey-bee populations in precipitous decline. Ocean dead zones. Rain forests burned to make way for agricultural fields. Some days it's hard to know which we should worry about first.

Fortunately for the rest of us, the alumni you'll meet here aren't wringing their hands waiting for somebody else to take action—they've made sustainability the focus of their life's work.

At some point, each had an unexpected epiphany—one at a lecture, another during a conversation, one while looking for new product markets, another while teaching young children, and one upon realizing the chronic unnecessary waste of resources inside the university. They found the courage to shift from being advocates of environmental causes to being activists—from a stance of participation to one of leadership.

and getting by at Vanderbilt for 20 bucks a week.

DANIEL DUBOIS



People across the globe feel a visceral connection to their land. It anchors families, unites communities, and lends flavor and character to an area. Tennessee has some of the most magnificent natural and historic landscapes in the country, says Jeanie Clinton Nelson—and they are worth every effort to preserve them.

In 1999, Nelson and then-Nashville Mayor (now Governor) Phil Bredesen co-founded The Land Trust for Tennessee. Nelson had spent years involved in what she calls the “dirty side of the environmental movement,” volunteer lobbying for legislation that would force companies to clean up spoiled areas, campaigning to fix environmental problems, and feeling as though she were constantly in

“Viewing beautiful, green vistas rather than pavement is important to our souls and our imagination.”

—*Jeanie Nelson, BA'69, JD'75*

pitched battle with both industries and environmentalists. During the Clinton–Gore administration, she served as general counsel for the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. By the late '90s she'd returned home to Nashville, bone-weary and ready to tackle the lovelier and permanent side of conservation.

One day Bredesen pulled her aside for a chat. He and Nelson had worked earlier to set aside tracts that could be banked as parks for the next 100 years, leading to the development of Shelby Bottoms and Beaman Parks in Davidson County. When his term as mayor ended, he said, he wanted to start a statewide land trust for Tennessee.

“But you know,” he mused to Nelson, “if you’ll do it with me, we could just go ahead and do it now.”

Ten years later The Land Trust for Tennessee has helped conserve more than 42,500 acres across the state—some of it for parks, but much of it to protect privately held acreage for perpetuity.

Landowners donate their development rights in order to keep their property unblemished. Descendants can sell the property or give it away, but it will always have restrictions that prevent it from being sold for, say, a strip mall or parking lot.

The Land Trust has preserved tracts as small as a half-acre near Vanderbilt, up to a 4,500-acre park in Shelby County. It has protected 14,000 breathtaking acres to safeguard parts of the South Cumberland Plateau, including 3,000 acres that connect the 10,000-acre main campus of Sewanee: The University of the South to an 8,000-acre state forest. Those new 3,000 acres will be used as an outdoor learning laboratory.

“Buffering our streams with protected lands is the best way to keep our water pure,” Nelson says. “Saving our forests is one of the best ways to protect against atmospheric and climate-change issues. Our forests allow birds and our souls to keep singing. Plus, they give us areas to hunt and fish and they keep tourists coming. So all of this is good for our economy, too.”

Private conservation easements form a symbiosis with public lands. While park systems must deal constantly with visitors, pollution, litter and upkeep, private lands can serve as a protective shield to preserve the beauty of the surrounding area for people visiting the park, for property owners near the park, and for wildlife that traverses both boundaries. The Land Trust also has protected prime agricultural soils so that working family farms can remain intact for future generations.

I imagine this: Thousands of fans attend a Vanderbilt football game. The lights come up, the vendors sell their wares, Vanderbilt wins, the fans go home happy—and the game has left no (as in *zero*) carbon footprint.

“We can do this,” says Brandon Daniell, a co-founder of the sustainability strategy and marketing firm Abeo Partners LLC. “If Vanderbilt were to take the lead in offsetting carbon footprints, the amount of PR they’d get would be phenomenal. They’d start a movement. Every college football game in America could have a positive environmental impact. Rock concerts are now going sus-

tainable. Vanderbilt football could, too.”

Although 94 percent of Americans intend to promote environmental causes, says Daniell, only 11 percent actually take any steps to do so. The goal of Abeo Partners, which includes co-founders Steve Cook, Bob Isherwood and David Cross, is to close the “environmental action gap” by helping institutions and businesses incorporate sustainability and health-and-wellness practices into the workplace. In other words, Abeo initiates organizational changes from within by mentoring employees who want to set up a platform of action—whether it’s establishing an internal recycling program,



JOHN RUSSELL

“The notion behind these products is to do good and to do well.”

—Brandon Daniell, BS’94

Find out more about The Land Trust for Tennessee at: www.landtrusttn.org

hosting a community clean-up day, or installing water conservation systems.

For Daniell, the ride into environmentalism began in the lands Down Under. After Vanderbilt and then culinary school in France, he moved to New Zealand for eight and a half years where he started that country's first organic coffee company. Organic foods were taking off in the United States and Europe, but there was a big "white space" in the markets of Australia and New Zealand. Simply being organic wasn't enough to attract customers; what appealed to shoppers, he realized, was the idea of fair trade. Fair-trade products offer a fair price, a better work environment, and a good return on investment for the grower. Consumers liked the idea of enabling farmers around the world to make a good living on their own terms.

From this idea grew the marketing strategy firm Lighthouse Ventures, which sells the Scarborough Fair brand of coffee, tea and chocolate. That brand is now sold in five countries and is the largest fair-trade organic food brand in the Southern Hemisphere.

Last year Daniell moved back to Nashville and branched out to cast an even wider environmental net with Abeo Partners. In April 2008, Abeo invited two Vanderbilt undergraduate marketing classes to come up with ideas that promote sustainability in the business world. The company pronounced the students' video presentations as brilliant. Said one of the judges, "The students succeeded in making sustainability irresistible."

Abeo is taking the best presentations to Australia, where students at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology will build on those ideas.

Today the world. Tomorrow Vanderbilt football.

Find out more about Lighthouse Ventures and Scarborough Fair Foods at: www.lighthouse-ventures.com

"It is the political process that will resolve great policy issues — and solving the climate crisis will require not only scientific, but political action."

—Keith Bergman, BA'79

Keith Bergman's conversion happened because of a spur-of-the-moment decision made while his daughter was on a college tour of Vanderbilt. It was a Monday afternoon in March 2006, and Bergman heard on the radio that former Vice President Al Gore, '73, would be speaking about global warming at Middle Tennessee State University later that day. He made a quick, executive family decision—over the strenuous objections of his daughters—that they would drive to Murfreesboro to hear the lecture. Gore spoke for a mesmerizing 90 minutes, without notes or slides, and the entire Bergman family became believers.

"It was what I've come to call 'Al Gore, Unplugged,'" says Bergman, who is the town manager of Littleton, Mass. "It changed my life. It opened up to me this whole issue of climate change and global warming. At the time, I was town manager of Provincetown at the tip of Cape Cod. When I got back to the Cape, a group of us started the Cape Cod Renewable Fuels Partnership. Our purpose was to look at alternative fuels and to make a community-wide effort to be more conscious of our carbon footprint."

A short time later Gore founded The Climate Project, a Nashville-based nonprofit organization focused on a grassroots approach to solving the climate crisis. Gore also embarked on his *Inconvenient Truth* tour, with a book and film about climate change, and he put out a call for an army of volunteers to help spread the message.

Out of thousands of early applicants, Bergman was among the first 50 trainees chosen to deliver the *Inconvenient Truth* story to the public. He has mentored and helped train 200 additional volunteers since then.



"When I introduce the *Inconvenient Truth* slide show to an audience, I tell them that when I attended Vanderbilt University 30 years ago, I studied political science, not climate science. But the global climate crisis is as much a political issue as a scientific one," he says.

Bergman admits that he is a latecomer to the issue of global warming—not some aging tree-hugger who suddenly decided to step up his game. "I tell people," he confesses, "that I'm having my 'midlife climate crisis.'"

As a public servant he has come to realize that climate issues play a major role in many of the challenges all communities face: pollution, growth, and the cost of energy. In Massachusetts his audiences tend to be receptive to the ideas he presents, and often use his discussions as jumping-off points for finding solutions to reduce their negative environmental impact. Despite

tough economic times, his constituents continue to value public funding for environmental conservation, for preserving parks and open spaces.

The United States is now on an untenable path that threatens the future of human civilization, Bergman insists. Interestingly, he puts his faith in capitalists and entrepreneurs to come up with business models that will force legislators to put the right public policies in place. That, Bergman says, is the ultimate goal of The Climate Project.

Find out more about The Climate Project: www.theclimateproject.org

Jennifer Casale had always been a proponent of good environmental practices, but she never truly appreciated the earth's delicate balance until she lived in the desert. After earning a Vanderbilt degree in English, Casale worked in the music industry for a few years before pursuing a graduate degree in creative writing at the University of Arizona in Tucson. There she took a part-time job teaching elementary students about recycling and water conservation. These young children understood the challenge.

"Water is becoming a critical issue," Casale says. "The environment is so extreme that people who live in the desert are forced to be more aware of how to interact with it and how to survive there."

Soon Casale was informally consulting about ways to be more environmentally conscientious and advising people on where to get organic and planet-friendly products. Although she could find these products, she had to drive all over town to get what she needed. She decided to open a one-stop shopping place for an array of "green" products—an old-fashioned general store for a new generation. She considered Nashville ripe for such a venture, so she returned to her college town and opened The Green Wagon on Murphy Road, only a few miles from Vanderbilt.

The problem with most "natural" products, Casale says, is that they are unregulated. A company may repackage an old product, slap a "green" label on it, and sell



"The common misconception is that you have to have a lot of money if you're going to buy products that are environmentally friendly."

—Jennifer Casale, BA'04

it for a higher price—and consumers have no idea they're being duped. Casale personally vets and scrutinizes ingredients in every product she sells—from toothpaste to organic mattresses to biodegradable balloons. The idea is to assist the community in reducing its carbon footprint in ways that are affordable and accessible.

"One main way that I make sure accessibility to the product is not cost-prohibitive is by using local suppliers," she says. "Because the majority of products I sell are made in Tennessee, the carbon footprint of the store is reduced and it helps me keep costs down. I'm not paying for shipping, and I know a lot of vendors personally, so it's a nice personal connection, too."

Another way to keep costs down is to sell supplies in bulk. The Green Wagon has a "filling station" where customers can bring in their own containers and fill up on soap, shampoo, laundry detergent or dog biscuits. Casale spreads her message by offering a

variety of gifts made from recycled materials, and by hosting private "green" birthday parties, baby showers and wedding showers. She has begun sponsoring community events where patrons can learn how to make, for example, their own household cleaning supplies from readily available items.

Casale plans to open a second store in East Nashville that will feature not only general merchandise, but also organic foods, locally grown and raised, as well as a catering service.

"People come into the store and they're happy," Casale says. "This is a positive space to be in every day."

Find out more about The Green Wagon: www.greenwagonnashville.com

“Our survival is linked to the environment and the wisdom cultivated over thousands of years of respecting natural habitat.”

—*Luke Boehne*, BS'09



DANIEL DUBOIS

Luke Boehne believes wearing deodorant is simply unnatural. “I realized it’s not healthy to put on antiperspirants that keep you from releasing your natural toxins,” he explains. “These smells indicate your personal identity, your natural signature, and they’re important for sexual attraction within the species.”

Wait a second. Is Boehne ditching his Speed Stick so he can become a chick magnet?

“Well, yeah,” he answers.

Boehne is only half-joking. To him environmentalism is a matter of ethics. The cognitive studies major who graduated from Vanderbilt in May was known around campus for drawing attention to wasteful con-

sumption and addictive consumerism. Sometimes a guy has to go radical to get his point across.

“We now think humans can experiment on anything without repercussion,” he says. “In actuality, the universe and humans all cycle in an intimate way. My empathy extends to all life forms.”

When he first arrived at Vanderbilt, he was appalled by the amount of wastefulness he saw. People were throwing away tons of perfectly good paper, office supplies, notebooks, furniture, textbooks, computers, cell phones and electronics—which could have been donated to needy freshmen, public schools or shelters, or could have been refurbished and recycled.

Then there was the food. Boehne joined the campus organization SPEAR (Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Recycling) and became its vice president in charge of dining and composting. He began protesting the amount of food being wasted on campus by eating only leftovers, and he didn’t even have to go dumpster diving (which he does not oppose) in order to eat three square meals a day.

Every department in every building at Vanderbilt hosted events, and every event served an excess of food, says Boehne. So he attended a lot of events, and afterward he would load up on the available food to try to save it from being thrown away.

“Every trash receptacle on campus is loaded with pounds of food by the end of the day. And in Tennessee, any post-consumer food waste is classified as a hazardous material on the same tier as sludge and industrial byproducts,” he says.

Through SPEAR, and with the support of Vanderbilt Dining Services and other campus offices, Boehne took the lead in creating a compost demonstration site at The Commons. Since its inception, hundreds of gallons of discarded food from the prep kitchen of The Commons’ dining facility, as well as coffee grounds from its coffeehouse, have been composted and will be used by the university for soil enrichment and tree rejuvenation across campus.

Post-graduation, Boehne hopes to take an advocacy role in the revival of local folk wisdom and in clean energy. He also wants to serve as an umbrella voice, asking healthy questions about the true energy consciousness of Vanderbilt and whether its students and academicians are following the mission of the university to better the world.

Boehne certainly has walked the talk. As a student he spent, on average, no more than \$20 a week, which included food, gas, entertainment and philanthropy.

That alone should make people stop and take notice. ▽

Find out more about Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility (SPEAR):
<http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/spear>



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STRENGTH in NUMBERS

Thousands of volunteers help make tomorrow's research breakthroughs possible.

By LYNNE HUTCHISON

Jeanne Moses didn't have a history of cancer in her family. She didn't have symptoms—just backache and a bit of weight loss. Nothing unusual for a 45-year-old mother working two jobs. So she was stunned when her doctor delivered the news: Jeanne Moses—technical writer, theatrical costumer, daughter of the director, emeritus, of the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center—had Stage IV colon cancer.

Moses immediately underwent surgery at Vanderbilt to remove a portion of her colon and ovaries—a procedure that can halt colon cancer if performed in time. But her cancer had metastasized to her lymph nodes, and three large liver tumors could not be removed without chemotherapy to reduce their size. The prognosis was not good.

“I was not at my best,” Moses recalls dryly. “I was in shock, losing blood, and on heavy pain medication. But I knew if I had to have this disease, Vanderbilt was the place to have it.”



Patient Jeanne Moses, in collaboration with clinical trials nurse Pamela McClanahan, is participating in clinical trials of an investigational drug that shows promise in halting tumor growth.

DANIEL DUBOIS

That's because Vanderbilt offered a ray of hope, she says, in the form of oncologist Dr. Jordan Berlin and the Phase II clinical trial he was conducting to test an investigational drug that showed promise in halting tumor growth.

"I didn't know a thing about cancer trials, which is odd when you consider my father's work," says Moses. "But I thought this was my best chance. Just the hope was enough for me to sign up, even if I got the placebo. But I would have done it anyway. That's what you do: give back."

Every year Vanderbilt investigators conduct more than 620 clinical research studies and drug trials with the goal of finding new treatments and cures for the diseases that plague us. Their work is that ray of hope—hope in science, discovery, and the belief that every person can help mankind.

And Vanderbilt investigators do mean *every person*.

"In the past we've risen to the challenge of smallpox, pertussis and avian studies. We're poised to do it again."

"When we evaluate vaccines, it's in healthy people between the ages of 18 and 49 first," says Dr. Kathryn Edwards, director of the Vanderbilt Vaccine Research Program, who has conducted successful vaccine trials for 43 years. "They have no underlying illness and can tolerate it the best."

Edwards also heads the Vanderbilt Vaccine Treatment and Evaluation Unit, a \$24 million program funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to test vaccines rapidly for a variety of developing infectious diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have tapped Edwards and her team to test the H1N1 (swine) flu vaccine.

If swine flu becomes a bigger problem, "it will hit in all people, not just healthy adults," Edwards explains. "We need to study it in children, then healthy people over 65, then the infirm over 65. We need Hispanics and African Americans, to make sure there aren't differences in the way people respond. We need it all."

Edwards, who has conducted major vaccine trials for smallpox, avian flu, malaria, cytomegalovirus and pertussis, actually welcomes the challenge of preventing swine flu.

"Swine flu is a good issue to engage people in research," she says. "Pandemics or diseases that appear suddenly and infect a large number of people point out that you can do social distancing and hand washing, but ultimately you need a prevention strategy. You need a vaccine."

For that you need a clinical trial—a regulated, systematic way to answer a question related to health care. Also called medical research or research studies, clinical trials are used to determine the safety and effectiveness of new drugs or treatments.

Edwards points out that volunteering for a research study offers benefits beyond the rewards of altruism. Trial participants receive a vaccine for a disease before it is made available to the public. Volunteers may be paid for their time and, depending on the study, may also receive free medical tests or treatment.

Risks also may be involved with clinical research. These risks must be spelled out in simple language on the research consent form—a federal requirement that applies to all studies involving humans. Trained nurses and physicians go over the risks with each



Dr. Kathryn Edwards, shown here with a pediatric patient and the patient's mother, has been conducting vaccine trials for 43 years.

JOHN RUSSELL

\$50 Million Grant Helps Researchers Cast a Wider Net

In 2007 Vanderbilt received the largest research grant in its history: the \$40 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). Additional funding since then has raised the grant to \$50 million.

Vanderbilt has used the CTSA funding from the National Institutes of Health to create the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR).

VICTR supports investigator training, facilities, community outreach, and Vanderbilt's Clinical Research Center, a top nationally recognized site for patient-oriented research for more than 50 years.

"VICTR brings researchers together and provides resources to take a good idea from the laboratory to the clinic and into the community," says Dr. Gordon Bernard, assistant vice chancellor for research, who directs VICTR. "We're partners with Meharry Medical College, and investigators at other institutions can access VICTR and CTSA resources through collaboration with any Vanderbilt or Meharry investigator."

VICTR recently assisted physicians at Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, Tenn., with a study on ventilator use that transformed hospital protocol.

"We will consider support for any research project that seeks to improve the health of the public. That doesn't just mean typical medical research," Bernard continues. "It can mean law, business, education—music therapy from the Blair School or educators at Peabody who use MRI to study how children learn."

VICTR also supports community partnerships—particularly with minorities—through its Community Engagement Core. Vanderbilt and historically black Meharry Medical College created the Core to foster research partnerships, to help researchers conduct effective community-engaged research, and to understand the community's health priorities. For many researchers, a typical experience in engaging the community is exclusively focused on recruitment and retention.

"Recruitment for participation in research studies can be quite challenging," says Bettina Beech, Vanderbilt associate professor of general internal medicine and public health, associate director of health

Beech, who is also director of public health research and evaluation at the Vanderbilt Diabetes Research and Training Center, asserts that researchers can recruit more minorities by being sensitive to all



"There are plenty of media stories about medical mishaps," says Bettina Beech, who is working to forge partnerships between Vanderbilt researchers and community groups. "We need to show the positives."

JOHN RUSSELL

disparities research at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, and co-director for the Community Engagement Research Core of the CTSA. "Less than 5 percent of adults nationally participate in clinical trials; participation by underrepresented minorities is even lower."

A survey commissioned by Vanderbilt suggests that some people may shy away from research because of concerns about needles and blood draws, which are common to many clinical trials.

"But we do more than clinical trials," Beech states. "Many kinds of research are not invasive—prevention trials, surveys, psychology studies. We need to educate the public about the good that research does. There are plenty of media stories about medical mishaps. We need to show the positives."

types of people and engendering trust in the community.

But how do investigators and community members find each other in the first place?

With a nod to the dating Web site eHarmony, this summer the Community Engagement Core will launch "eConnect," a social networking site intended to help researchers connect with community partners based on mutual interest and compatibility.

Appropriately, Beech and her colleagues are debuting eConnect with a "speed dating" event. Investigators and community groups will meet and learn what each has to offer.

"We're here to help people find each other," Beech says.

potential volunteer and answer all questions before the person signs the form and enrolls in the study.

“People need to fully embrace and understand all the potential benefits and risks,” Edwards says. “If people can’t understand what’s involved, we don’t enroll them.”

Research volunteer Jennifer Gilbert, BS’06, admits she was scared at the thought of volunteering for a Phase I clinical trial to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of an HIV vaccine in healthy, non-HIV-positive adults. A recent Vanderbilt survey showed that safety concerns are the most common reason people hesitate to join a clinical trial.

“I worried. I didn’t want to get AIDS.
But the HIV vaccine is different. No HIV enters participants’ bodies. There is zero percent chance of contracting HIV from participating in the study.”

“I worried. I didn’t want to get AIDS,” says the 25-year-old Peabody College doctoral candidate. “But the HIV vaccine is different. No HIV enters participants’ bodies. There is zero percent chance of contracting HIV from participating in the study.”

Ultimately, Gilbert’s concern for others overcame her safety worries. “The church I attend does work in Africa, and I became aware of how devastating HIV is,” she explains. “As a grad student I won’t get to do work in those areas, but I thought if I could help in any small way, I would.”

Gilbert met with the HIV vaccine research coordinator, who explained benefits and risks and answered all her questions. She enrolled in the study, which required her to receive three vaccine injections and monthly follow-ups during the course of a year. She was paid \$390 and experienced no side effects.

“Two or three nurses would work on me at one time to get me in and out as soon as possible,” Gilbert says. “They were amazing to work with. They cared and treated me with respect. They are the kind of people you want to help.”



Research volunteer Jennifer Gilbert, shown here with nurses Shawan Carr and Katie Crumbo, says her concern for others helped her overcome any misgivings about being a research volunteer. Safety concerns are the most common barrier to clinical trial participation, according to a Vanderbilt survey.

STEVE GREEN

This personalized service can be crucial in cancer trials, says Dr. Jeffrey Sosman, director of the melanoma program and co-leader of the signal transduction program at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center.

Cancer patients, by their very definition, are seriously ill. They need not only the best treatment, but also the best possible guidance regarding whether or not they should participate in a clinical trial.

“For the patient, a clinical trial offers a number of advantages,” says Sosman. “But they should not be in a trial where there’s better available therapy that the patient’s not getting. They should always get the option of standard of care, or it must be included in the trial.”

That said, Sosman believes the only way the best cancer treatments can ever be found is for more patients to participate in clinical trials.

“I tell my patients that my care comes independent of a clinical trial. But this is the way I can offer the best treatment,” he explains.

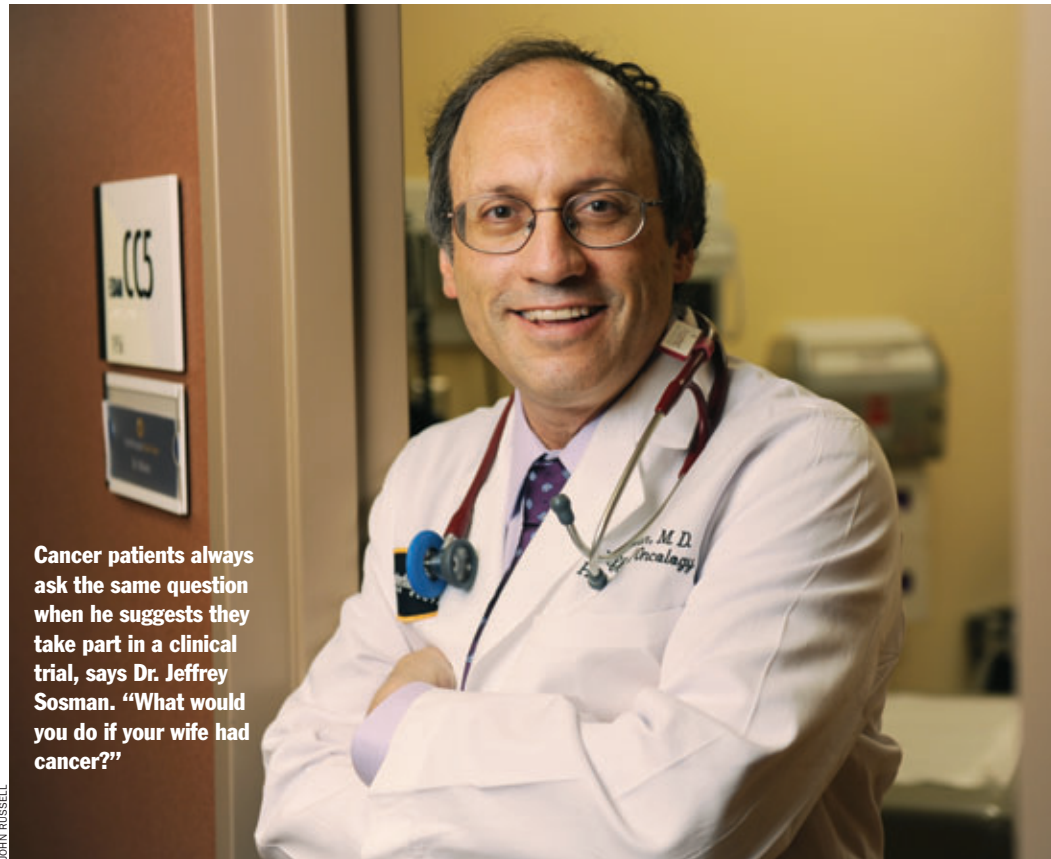
“By going into a trial, you’ll have a team of people taking care of you. You have backup checks and balances. If I forget to do a test, they remind me. If I don’t have time to check the result, they check it. The patient gets a much closer, more thorough evaluation.”

Sosman says his melanoma and kidney cancer patients always ask him the same question when he suggests a clinical trial: “What would you do if your wife had cancer?”

“I give them the same answer,” he says. “If my wife had cancer, I would find the place that was most comfortable, that had the best care. I wouldn’t go blindly into a clinical trial, but I would take input from the physician I felt most comfortable with.”

Although Sosman and Edwards perform different research on different people, their work faces the same challenge: Not enough people are willing to volunteer for research studies.

According to CenterWatch, only about 2 percent of the U.S. population gets involved with clinical trials each year. Among people who suffer from severe, chronic illnesses, only 6 percent participate. Ninety-four percent of the public recognizes the importance of participating in clinical research, and more than 70 percent say they would consider volun-



Cancer patients always ask the same question when he suggests they take part in a clinical trial, says Dr. Jeffrey Sosman. “What would you do if your wife had cancer?”

teering but don’t know how to find information about research studies.

These percentages keep Edwards awake at night. “That’s one of the things I worry about—where I’ll get enough people to fulfill our mission,” she says. “We feel frustrated that we go to the same well for volunteers. We recruit heavily at Vanderbilt, but we need engagement in the broader community.”

Vanderbilt is taking steps to solve this problem. In late summer the medical center will launch a Web site for investigators that will help them harness professional marketing and communications techniques to recruit research participants. And a major marketing campaign is in the works, with the goal of raising awareness and educating the public about the importance of volunteering for medical research.

Vanderbilt also is using resources from the largest federal grant in its history [see related story on page 47] to make it easier for people to find and enroll in a research study. A portion of the NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) funding supports the Vanderbilt Clinical Trials Web site (www.vanderbilthealth.com/clinicaltrials) and its recruitment registry—a searchable data-

“Cancer patients, by their very definition, are seriously ill. They need not only the best treatment, but also the best possible guidance regarding whether or not they should participate in a clinical trial.”



Dr. Gordon Bernard is principal investigator for the largest federal grant in Vanderbilt's history, a \$50 million NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award.

STEVE GREEN

“Anyone can access Vanderbilt’s [research volunteer] recruitment registry. They don’t have to be in Nashville or Middle Tennessee.”

base where volunteers may sign up to be contacted for research studies.

“Right now anyone can access Vanderbilt’s recruitment registry,” says Dr. Gordon Bernard, assistant vice chancellor for research and principal investigator for the CTSA grant. “They don’t have to be in Nashville or Middle Tennessee. When they register they can

specify how far they are willing to travel to take part in a study.”

Bernard is cautiously hopeful that more federal funding will be available in the near future so Vanderbilt can invest more in community engagement and educating the public about why and how to volunteer for research.

“We’ve really been hurting with the flat NIH funding,” he explains. “For the past three or four years, research funding has actually fallen 3 to 4 percent.”

Now, President Obama’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) legislation is providing an unprecedented \$8.2 billion to advance scientific research.

“That sure got people excited,” Bernard says, noting that the NIH has received approximately 16,000 applications for the 600 grants that will be funded. He points to the length of time for which grants will be funded as another downside to ARRA stimulus money.

“Research programs will only receive two years of funding rather than the standard five years,” he says. “You can do some things in two years, but it’s not the answer to everything. What happens when you hire people but can only keep them two years? But I think it will help loosen the belt at the NIH.”

Whether or not Vanderbilt receives a windfall of ARRA money, its research studies will move forward and expand as the institution’s research enterprise grows.

“We have a long and successful track record of clinical trials at Vanderbilt,” Edwards says. “We have an incredible safety record and lots of experience. We enter into very close relationships with our volunteers. In the past we’ve risen to the challenge of smallpox, pertussis and avian studies. We’re poised to do it again.”

But, Edwards cautions, Vanderbilt and other research institutions cannot meet that challenge without research volunteers.

“Each volunteer is important,” Edwards says. “The impact you can have on the world is enormous. We all have a responsibility to others. If we can help in terms of answering research questions, that is our responsibility.” ▼

WOMEN WHO OPENED DOORS



*For 115 years and for thousands of students,
the Vanderbilt Aid Society has made dreams reality.*

By GAYNELLE DOLL

The Vanderbilt Aid Society elected Elizabeth Boddie Elliston (above left) as its first president and Mary Barbour Wallace (above right) as its first secretary/treasurer. The “simple fare” served at their organizational meeting included chicken salad, scalloped oysters, beaten biscuits, sandwiches, individual ices and cakes, almonds, and pink and white mints.

IT BEGAN WITH A \$50 LOAN, a few women from Nashville’s most prominent families, and a young chancellor struggling with the fallout from an economic crisis that parallels our own time.

The year was 1893. James Kirkland, a 33-year-old Latin professor with a doctorate from the University of Leipzig, had just become chancellor of Vanderbilt at a critical point in the life of the young university. The United States was mired in the Panic of 1893, brought on by overbuilding and speculation. Railroads and banks were failing. Credit evaporated. Unemployment soared above 12 percent.

Against this bleak backdrop Kirkland faced enormous fiscal challenges. Yields from Vanderbilt's small endowment were dwindling. The university's tiny operating budget was stunted by too few paying students: Nearly half of Vanderbilt's student body fell into some category which entitled them to free tuition—professors' sons, sons of ministers, and public school teachers among them. The half of the student body that *did* pay tuition sometimes struggled to stay solvent. The vote by Vanderbilt's board to raise tuition from \$50 to \$85 must have seemed like an insurmountable obstacle to many of those students.

When Kirkland learned of one financially strapped student who was considering abandoning his studies, the chancellor appealed to Elizabeth Boddie Elliston, a fellow parishioner at West End Methodist Church. She agreed, anonymously, to provide the young man with a \$50 loan.

Inspired by this success, a few months later Kirkland presented a plea for a student aid fund to the women of Nashville at a tea in the

home of Mrs. Nathaniel Baxter Jr. It was a gathering that ultimately would affect the lives of generations of Vanderbilt students.

IN THE 115 YEARS SINCE the Vanderbilt Aid Society (known as the Ladies Aid Society for Students of Vanderbilt University until 1900) was founded "to raise funds to be loaned to worthy and needy young men in the Academic Department of Vanderbilt University," the organization has provided loans to more than 6,000 students. For many years it was the largest internal source of loans at the university. Over the group's history, Vanderbilt Aid Society members have contributed more than \$400,000—funds that have been lent over and over again. In fact, the cumulative loans made are in excess of \$2.5 million.

Nancy Anthony, BA'72, was a mathematics major and the recipient of one of those loans. She is now executive director of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, which operates the largest independent scholarship program in Oklahoma. "Providing

support for students during the first year is a key element of encouraging students to go to college," she says.

"Had I not gotten significant assistance during the first year, I don't think that I could have gotten to Vanderbilt in the first place. Vanderbilt invested in me through its financial support, my family invested in me through the support that they were able to provide—and I invested in myself through work-study and loans."

Lee Owen, BA'98, remembers receiving a loan just when he needed it most. He recalls, as a high school senior, "I was pretty set on journalism as a career path. I was strongly considering the University of Texas and the University of Georgia—both have excellent journalism programs and would have been far less expensive. But Vanderbilt was where I wanted to go."

Owen won a Fred Russell-Grantland Rice Scholarship in Sports Journalism, the John R. Loomis Scholarship, and the Jenard Gross Scholarship, enabling him to attend Vanderbilt and major in interdisciplinary studies. But following his sophomore year, Owen's father lost his job. "I'd describe my family as the average suburban American family," he says. "Having a sufficient amount of financial aid was pretty important."

By the time his father found another job, a younger brother was also in college at Auburn University, "making it even more important for our family to have financial assistance," he says. "Vanderbilt really went to bat for us to cover the shortfall" with a loan from the Vanderbilt Aid Society fund.

"We were often the fund of last resort," says Morel Enoch Harvey, BS'67, PhD'79 (Peabody), who has been a Vanderbilt Aid Society member for 25 years. "When a student exhausted all other sources of loans and scholarships, we provided that last little piece that could make the difference between staying at Vanderbilt and leaving."

Harvey and the group's current members will occupy a special place in Vanderbilt Aid Society history. Harvey is the last president of the organization, which voted to disband last spring now that Vanderbilt will replace need-based loans with grants and scholarships in its financial aid packages beginning this fall. (See "Opportunity Vanderbilt")



Top: Chancellor James Kirkland. Above: Elizabeth Boddie Elliston, shown in her family home, "Burlington," continued as Vanderbilt Aid Society president until 1899. The home was occupied by federal soldiers during the Civil War, and the plantation surrounding it stretched into what later became part of the Vanderbilt campus.

beginning on page 55.) But Vanderbilt Aid Society monies will continue to help students in the form of an endowed scholarship, which will benefit eight students this coming academic year from Nashville and surrounding areas—and more students in the future.

Back in Kirkland's day, members paid annual dues of \$5. More recently, dues were \$30, or \$200 for life membership. Members met yearly in one of their homes or at Vanderbilt venues such as the chancellor's residence or the Dyer Observatory.

In both its longevity and the number of its members, the Vanderbilt Aid Society is unique among women's clubs. For more than a century, the Vanderbilt Aid Society continued to flourish. Even in its final year, the group included about 1,000 women on its membership roster, a list of names that reads like a compendium of Nashville history.

"It was prestigious," says Harvey. "It was a social thing as well as a benefactor opportunity. But the primary purpose was always to fund student loans."

Gray Oliver Thornburg, BA'76, is also a former Vanderbilt Aid Society president—and a third-generation Vanderbilt graduate. "When I was in my early 20s, my mother looked me in the eye and said, 'You are going to join the Vanderbilt Aid Society,'" she recalls. "In a way it was a group before its time—women organizing 115 years ago for the purpose of seeing that others receive a college education."

Janet Farrar Worthington, BA'85, recalls being asked to give a talk about her student experience at a Vanderbilt Aid Society luncheon. "I drove out to a nice lady's gorgeous home in my '72 Mazda, which burned so much oil that I kept a case of Quaker State in the car at all times," she says. "When I turned off the engine, it tended to backfire, so I arrived with a bang."

Worthington, who majored in English, has worked as a science writer, served as a commentator for American Public Media's radio program *Marketplace*, and also co-written a college survival guide, among other pursuits. "The loan I got made a big difference," she says. "Although it doesn't seem like much now, back then it pushed me over the edge from not being able to afford Vanderbilt to being able to come to this wonderful place. My college tuition was a kind of patchwork

quilt: My parents paid for part, I had a government loan and scholarship, plus the Vanderbilt Aid money—and I still had to work while I was at school, so I didn't have a free ride by any means."

The organization's loans have played a critical role at times when federal monies and the national economy fluctuated. During World War II, for instance, when Vanderbilt instituted an accelerated year-round curriculum

Vanderbilt Aid Society Scholarship Fund.

"We can still make donations, and our legacy will continue to grow," Harvey told the women, noting that those who wish to help students with financial needs can contribute to the scholarship. Students with outstanding loans will continue to repay them to the endowment.

Lisa Littlejohn, BS'77, MS'78 (Peabody), presented a final check from the organiza-

"We were often the fund of last resort. When a student exhausted all other sources of loans and scholarships, we provided that last little piece that could make the difference between staying at Vanderbilt and leaving."

—Morel Enoch Harvey, BS'67, PhD'79 (Peabody)

program, students who otherwise would have worked during the summer to pay their way through college had few options besides Vanderbilt Aid loans.

Angela Powe Johnson, BE'00, is a biomedical engineer who works with the Defense Logistics Agency in Virginia. Johnson says her loan enabled her to take summer school courses and thus lighten her class load during her senior year. "I needed to take summer classes in order to graduate," she remembers. "Considering my engineering course work, it was extra helpful. I would not have been able to attend summer school without it. And the Vanderbilt loan had a lower interest rate, which made it more attractive."

THOUGH THE VANDERBILT AID SOCIETY has disbanded, it will continue to change the lives of future students like Johnson. On a Tuesday afternoon this spring, approximately 70 members of the Vanderbilt Aid Society met at the Vanderbilt Student Life Center for the final annual meeting of the organization. Those attending included Carolyn Southgate Sartor, BA'48, great-granddaughter of the organization's very first president. President Morel Harvey announced that the loan fund balance will be converted to the endowed

tion for \$5,500 that Vanderbilt will add to the scholarship. Harvey and Douglas Christiansen, vice provost for enrollment and dean of admissions, unveiled a plaque that will be displayed in the Undergraduate Admissions Building to honor the society and its accomplishments.

"I cannot begin to tell you how important you have been, each of you, in changing the lives of our students," Christiansen told the women. "We are thrilled that the new endowment will continue to change lives in the years ahead."

With any luck, future students will go on to live out their dreams as Lee Owen has. Following graduation from Vanderbilt, he worked as a sportswriter for a couple of start-up Nashville newspapers, covering the Tennessee Titans during the 1999–2000 season of their Super Bowl appearance. "I got to travel across the country covering the NFL. It was about as memorable a first job as anybody can have," says Owen, who has spent the past eight years in higher education—most recently teaching and serving as an editor at Mercersburg Academy near Washington, D.C.

"Though I appreciated the financial aid I received while I was a student, I'm even more grateful for it today," he says. "While having

Vanderbilt or Harvard or Stanford on your diploma is certainly not a slam-dunk guarantee of professional success, it opens doors. I've seen it firsthand. All qualified students should have access to the best education. Cost should not be a barrier.

"The fact that Vanderbilt and the Vanderbilt Aid Society thought it important enough to commit money to students with financial need made an impression on me," he continues. "It was a signal that Vanderbilt cared more about the things students can control—

grades and achievement—than things they can't—family background or ability to pay."

Forty-four years after James Kirkland became chancellor during the Panic of 1893, he retired in the midst of another economic crisis, the Great Depression. In his remarks to the Society in 1937, he said:

"It so happens that I have a memorandum of the first 150 loans made by the Society. ... Glancing through these 150 names, I was easily able to select a group of 26 names that were still very familiar to me. Of these 26, 11 are teachers, one is a preacher, six are lawyers, and eight are business men. Three are members of the present faculty at Vanderbilt, and three are members of the Board of Trust."

He ended his remarks by assuring the women:

"I feel, therefore, sure that no dollar contributed to the Society by its members will ever be lost, but that it will continue its circuit of blessings, passing from one hand to another through the long years of university history yet to come."

Now, looking back on its long history, Morel Harvey concludes, "It was a wonderful opportunity for the women of Nashville to participate with Vanderbilt. We hated to see it go. It was probably Vanderbilt's original outreach into the community, and it's a great heritage."

That heritage will live on, thanks to 115 years of generosity by a dedicated group of Nashville women, the thousands of Vanderbilt students they have helped, and generations of students who will benefit in the future. ▼

Much of the historical information in this article was provided by Lyle Lankford, senior officer for university history and protocol at Vanderbilt. Lankford's 2007 presentation to the Vanderbilt Aid Society, "Women to the Rescue: Making Dreams Reality," which includes additional historical photos, is available at www.vanderbilt.edu/magazines/vanderbilt-magazine.

Over the group's history, Vanderbilt Aid Society members have contributed more than \$400,000—funds that have been lent over and over again. The cumulative loans made are in excess of \$2.5 million.



Those at the final annual meeting of the Vanderbilt Aid Society included (clockwise, from top left) Ann Marie Deer Owens and Frances Payne; Morel Harvey and Douglas Christiansen; Anna Wadlington, Allister Estes and Jere Phillips; Debbye Oliver, Sharon Hogge and Susan Pitts Dale; and Alice Mathews and Gray Thornburg.



PHOTOS BY STEVE GREEN



Opportunity VANDERBILT

Two of Vanderbilt's volunteer leaders discuss the expanded financial aid initiative.



Rodes Hart (left) and Orrin Ingram

RODES HART AND ORRIN INGRAM believe in Vanderbilt. As alumni, trustees, philanthropists and visionaries, they reflect on the opportunities — and challenges — of eliminating need-based loans and increasing scholarship endowment.

Rodes Hart, who graduated from the College of Arts and Science in 1954 and now serves as chair of Vanderbilt's \$1.75 billion *Shape the Future* campaign, joined the Vanderbilt Board of Trust in 1979, becoming trustee emeritus in 2007.

Orrin Ingram received his B.A. from Vanderbilt in

1982. A member of the Board of Trust since 2002, he chairs its Medical Center Affairs Committee and serves as vice chair of the *Shape the Future* campaign. He also chairs the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center Board of Overseers, and the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Board.

Vanderbilt Magazine asked these two leaders to discuss Vanderbilt's commitment to replace need-based undergraduate loans with scholarships and grants — and the \$100 million philanthropic effort, Opportunity Vanderbilt, that will sustain this historic expansion of financial aid.

VM: *Why is Vanderbilt's expanded financial aid initiative, with its emphasis on scholarships rather than loans, so important?*

RH: It's the right thing to do. Scholarships replace the burden of student loans that must be repaid with interest after graduation. That loan obligation can adversely impact students' career choices or their plans for advanced or professional education. The justification is apparent, especially in this uncertain economy. We want to ensure that financial need is not a deterrent for highly qualified students who want to attend Vanderbilt.

OI: When a class is made up of individuals of all economic, geographic and cultural backgrounds and experiences, that blend enriches the learning environment for the whole class — and *every* student.

VM: *Opportunity Vanderbilt is seeking \$100 million in new gifts to support this financial aid initiative. Why not postpone this, given the current economy?*

OI: I don't see the economy as a reason not to move forward. It's never easy. By waiting we could be denying someone who is qualified a chance to attend our university. Though we are certainly mindful of the current economic climate, Vanderbilt's strategic decisions and philanthropic priorities focus on what's important to sustain the university's mission over the long term. And increasing Vanderbilt's scholarship endowment is crucial to that mission.

RH: While these are challenging financial times, I believe raising philanthropic support is always challenging. Time is of the essence, and time in any endeavor does not wait. We must develop the best minds to meet the many challenges our country and the world face. It is up to the expanded Vanderbilt community of trustees, alumni, parents and friends to meet this essential priority now.

VM: *What has been Opportunity Vanderbilt's progress toward the \$100 million goal?*

RH: To date, we've received \$61 million in gifts and pledges. This tremendous generosity is already benefiting students. We began counting gifts toward this \$100 million goal in May 2007, as the plan to expand financial aid to eliminate need-based undergraduate loans was being considered by the Board of Trust.

VM: *Why not incur student loans in order to receive an education of the caliber Vanderbilt offers?*

RH: The young people Vanderbilt educates will be the leaders who will guide our country and positively influence societies throughout the world. But debt will influence their choices.

Vanderbilt has been addressing the challenge of student debt for many years, and since 2000, students' loan burdens have been reduced by 17 percent. Scholarship giving to our *Shape the Future* campaign has had a vital role in those debt-reduction efforts. Vanderbilt's historic announcement that undergraduate loans will be replaced with scholarships and grants builds directly on the university's long-term focus on this challenge of student debt. We're not alone — many of the country's best universities are adopting similar strategies.

Approximately 60 percent of Vanderbilt's students receive some sort of financial aid. And it's important to keep in mind that even as we eliminate loans in our financial aid packages, all families still have an expected financial contribution, and some families will meet that contribution through loans — so this expanded financial aid initiative does not make Vanderbilt cost-free.

OI: Traditional student loans might have allowed a student to attend Vanderbilt, but upon graduation these new graduates were not only entering the work force but also had a huge burden of debt hanging over their heads. One of the great things about philanthropy is helping people who need a boost — and hopefully they'll be successful and will continue the tradition of giving back and making a difference for future generations of Vanderbilt students.

VM: *How do you think the educational needs of your children and grandchildren are/will be different from those of your generation?*

OI: Thank goodness I'm not in college right now. When I was in school, I was being prepared to compete with other companies inside the United States. My children are going to have to compete with businesses both within the U.S. and globally. We're also shifting rapidly from a manufacturing economy in this country to more of a service-based economy, and generally that requires a higher level of education.

RH: When I was in engineering school, we used a slide rule. It was fairly accurate, but slow. Good engineers were educated using that tool, but my grandchildren have never heard of a slide rule. The tools of today are completely different. To maximize education today and tomorrow, students need a broad educational experience to cope with the fast pace of change and expansion of knowledge. More emphasis on math, science and foreign languages is needed, as well as an understanding of our global community.

VM: *What makes Vanderbilt an important institution in today's world?*

RH: There's no doubt that Vanderbilt is equipping its students for leadership roles in an increasingly complex world — and Vanderbilt does that very well.



DANIEL DUBOIS

OI: Leaders of tomorrow will be educated at Vanderbilt today. We have very smart students who also have great judgment, maturity and a sense of service. Vanderbilt students today are extremely well-rounded—a vast majority of them participate in community service, and they take full advantage of opportunities to study abroad, to engage in leadership opportunities. That’s the kind of student Vanderbilt is training.

Vanderbilt recognizes that big, important, game-changing breakthroughs and discoveries typically come at the interdisciplinary crossroads. You can find neurologists partnering with musicians on research projects at Vanderbilt. Undergraduates work side by side with Ph.D. candidates in our medical center. Students can study medicine, health and society as a major, or work at the interface of the physical/biological sciences and engineering, or combine their passions for history and economics. With this interdisciplinary approach, we’re finding ways to make the world a better place by having such bright students learn and collaborate with a great faculty, across all the arts and sciences.

VM: *Some might wonder if Vanderbilt really needs their support or whether a small gift can make any kind of difference at a big university with a sizable endowment. What do you tell alumni and others when you encounter that?*

OI: You’d be surprised at what a difference a little can make in somebody’s life. A lot of “littles” can add up to be a lot. Our endowment per student isn’t as large as many other schools’—so every penny counts. Vanderbilt receives more than 85,000 gifts each year from alumni, parents and friends who give in amounts from \$10 to \$10,000. Every gift counts, and every gift makes a difference.

RH: I tell them that every contribution is important and every contribution makes a difference. Of course we need large contributions to reach the Opportunity Vanderbilt goal of \$100 million and our overall *Shape the Future* goal of \$1.75 billion—but we need gifts at every level. The endowment for scholarships needs to be increased to help our current and future students meet the cost of education. It will take success at all levels of giving to reach the goal—and I think you would agree with me that our students, the young men and women who will be tomorrow’s leaders, deserve the best we can offer. ▼

The Minds

“They aren’t just making music; they are making a difference.”

Music:

Into a Soul-Folk Groove

WHEN SINGER-SONGWRITER Denitia Odigie walked on stage at the POP Montreal International Music Festival, strummed her Ibanez acoustic guitar and began to sing, she became an international favorite, earning the title “Find of the Fest.”

The gifted Odigie, BA’04, has impressed a growing number of fans and critics, inspiring one critic to exclaim, “If you bemoan the lack of passion in singers today, you must see and hear this woman sing.”

The daughter of a Nigerian father and a Louisiana Creole mother, the self-taught musician from Houston describes her music as “soul-folk.”

“I love the soul-folk groove,” she says. “It’s my first musical memory. Soul feels like passion, authenticity.”

Odigie’s delivery ranges from soft and breathy to rhythmic and belting. Her diverse musical influences include Smokey Robinson and Al Green, country stars like Reba McEntire and Garth Brooks, and the “Queen of Soul,” Aretha Franklin.

She recently signed her first publishing deal with up-and-coming Weston Boys Entertainment and expects to put out a four-song EP, *Brick by Brick*, later this year. Her four indie



EPs—including the latest, *Contrast*—are available on iTunes.

From the day her mother bought the 13-year-old “a cheap electric guitar from Walmart,” she says, Odigie has been playing and writing songs. When Vanderbilt offered her an academic scholarship, she jumped at the chance to come to Nashville. While earning her degree in art history, Odigie continued

crafting her songs and playing local open-mic nights, including some at the university’s Overcup Oak pub.

“I got a lot of ‘Hey kid, you’re pretty good. Keep writing,’” she recalls.

Her only vocal training came from singing in the high school chorus, leading music for her church youth group, and participating in Vanderbilt’s a cappella choir. A self-described “underground poet,” she credits a songwriting class taught by Deanna Walker, coordinator of the songwriting seminar at the Blair School of Music, with giving her the encouragement she needed to pursue her dream.

“She was awesome,” Odigie says. “I thought, *I can do this.*”

Odigie recently teamed up with Vanderbilt classmate Erin Higgins, BA’04, as her booking agent. Higgins has signed the singer to various venues in Nashville, across the state, and even in the Big Apple.

“Erin has spring-boarded me into a different level,” Odigie says. “I’m playing Austin soon and have been offered a residency at a music venue in New York for the summer.”

You can catch Odigie at iTunes or on her MySpace page: www.myspace.com/denitiaodigie.

—Joanne Lamphere Beckham



The “Second Stringers,” the Blair School of Music’s newest student string band, debuted on the *Grand Ole Opry* on March 28 with the Mike Snyder Band. Matt Combs, adjunct instructor of fiddle and head of the fiddle program at Blair, directs the group. Pictured here from left to right are Rachel Baiman, Eva Walsh and Alicia Enstrom. Other members on stage that night included Mike Rinne, John Saba and Ben Sanders.

Eye

—MADELINE MYERS, *Music in the Clinic* coordinator

Soothing Sounds, Good Medicine

MUSIC HAS BEEN SHOWN to offer distraction from pain for the seriously ill, as well as reduce stress and increase social interaction for patients and their families. Music in the Clinic (M.I.C.) is a volunteer program at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center that connects patients with this healing power of music. At the same time, it connects Vanderbilt students with their community.

The program draws volunteers from all walks of musical life, including Music Row professionals, Nashville Symphony Orchestra members and, in increasing numbers,

“Music in the Clinic provides such a meaningful way for student musicians to be engaged in service to their world,” says Myers, a junior majoring in music composition/theory with a minor in piano performance. “They aren’t just making music; they are making a difference.”

That difference is seen — and heard — daily at the clinic. “Patients are here for many hours of chemotherapy and other treatments,” says Kim Hunter, the clinic’s director of patient and family support services. “Music in the Clinic creates a wonderful environment of caring and healing for both the patients and their families.”

Most of the music is presented one-on-one in a patient’s room; this level of volunteerism requires physical screening and specific training in musical therapy practices. Thanks to the new Volunteer Services Tier System, however, other volunteer performance options are available too, including performing in the clinic’s public areas on an occasional basis. Blair vocal, harp, flute, piano, brass and string students have performed at the clinic. The

Vanderbilt Community Chorus and Vanderbilt Steel Bands also have participated.

“Music in the Clinic doesn’t just give me an opportunity to serve others through music,” says Myers. “Rather, it becomes a vehicle for so many others to volunteer. By the time I graduate, I hope the program is an integral part of the medical center. I’d like to visit Vanderbilt in 20 years and find students still walking over to the VICC or Children’s Hospital to play for patients.”

—Angela Fox

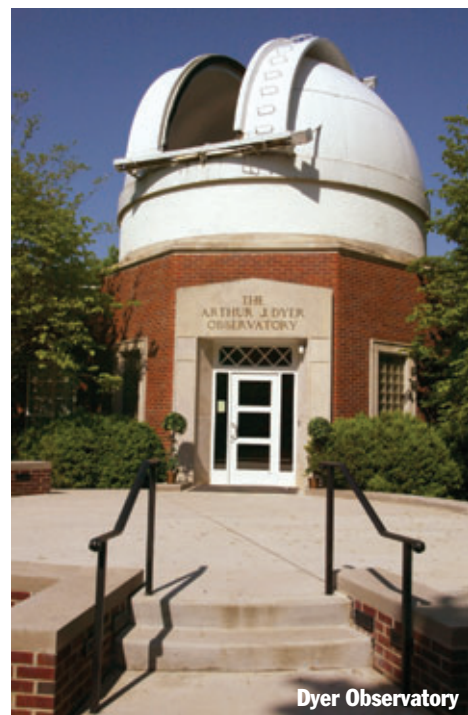


“Spirit of Thunderbird” by Lyrica Marquez was part of *Art through the Eyes of Autism*, on display through July 31 at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development. The exhibit showcased visual artists with autism living in Middle Tennessee.



Student Madeline Myers is volunteer coordinator for Music in the Clinic, which provides musicians to play for cancer patients and at the Children’s Hospital.

Vanderbilt students. According to Blair School of Music student Madeline Myers, volunteer coordinator for the program, 40 individual Blair musicians and ensembles have played at the clinic this year alone. In fact, Myers estimates that 30 percent of all Blair students have participated this year in M.I.C. and Vanderbilt Music Day. The latter features Blair and non-Blair students, as well as student ensembles like the Swingin’ Doves and the Dodecs, performing at the Vanderbilt Children’s Clinic.



Dyer Observatory

Place and Architecture:

Dyer Observatory Added to the National Register of Historic Places

THE VANDERBILT DYER OBSERVATORY has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

“Listing is recognition of a property’s importance,” says Claudette Stager with the Tennessee Historical Commission, which administers the program in Tennessee. “Properties that are listed in the National Register are important for history, architecture and culture.”

The Arthur J. Dyer Observatory was built on a hilltop in the southern part of Davidson County in 1953. The property includes the observatory, a 1953 house and garage, and the 2006 Star Chamber by British artist Chris Drury. Chattanooga architects and amateur astronomers Clarence T. and R.

Bruce Jones designed the observatory for Vanderbilt. Arthur J. Dyer, head of the Nashville Bridge Co., had the dome built and was responsible, along with Vanderbilt astronomy professor Carl K. Seyfert, for getting the observatory completed.

“The observatory came about as a result of the influence and effort of some truly great astronomers and city leaders,” says Rocky Alvey, assistant director and superintendent of the observatory. “As a result of the commitment of these individuals, tens of thousands of people since 1953 have had eye- and mind-opening astronomical experiences, and that tradition continues to this day at one of Nashville’s most wonderful his-

toric and architectural treasures.”

Traits of historical significance that helped put the Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory on the National Register include the following:

- Display cases filled with the original equipment of E.E. Barnard, discoverer of the fifth moon of Jupiter, 16 comets, dark nebulae and more, are housed at the observatory.
- Carl Seyfert, whose legacy includes having classes of galaxies (the Seyfert Galaxies) named after him, conducted his own research at the observatory until his death in 1960.
- The observatory contains a unique and versatile telescope called a Baker Reflec-

tor-Collector that was one of the first of its kind to be built.

Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places is part of a program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America’s historic and archaeological resources.

Find out more: www.dyer.vanderbilt.edu

—Missy Pankake

Books and Writers:

Tichi Wins Hubbell Medal for Lifetime Achievement

CECELIA TICHI, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English, has been named the 2009 winner of the Hubbell Medal, a lifetime achievement award presented by the American Literature Section to recognize significant advancements in the study of American literature.

“The ALS executive committee is very excited about the choice of Dr. Tichi, who so clearly and richly deserves this esteem,” says Joycelyn Moody, executive coordinator of

the ALS, a division of the Modern Language Association.

Tichi is an in-demand professor at Vanderbilt, where she teaches classes in 19th and 20th century American literature, focusing on aspects of culture



DANIEL DUBOIS
Tichi

from consumerism and social critique to country music. Her books include *Exposés and Excess: Muckraking in America 1900–2000*; *Embodiment of a Nation: Human Form in American Places*; *Reading Country Music: Steel Guitars, Opry Stars and Honky-Tonk Bars*; *High Lonesome: The American Culture of Country Music*; and *Electronic Hearth: Creating an American Television Culture*. Her new book, *Civic Passions: Seven Who Launched Progressive America (and What They Teach Us)*, is currently being prepared for fall publication by The University of North Carolina Press.

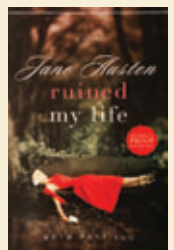
Previous winners include Vanderbilt alum-

Recent Books



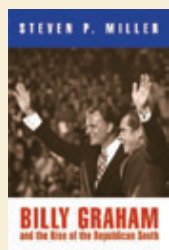
Seeing Mexico Photographed (2008, Yale University Press) by Leonard Folgarait, professor of history of art. During the years

1910–35, Mexico underwent changes brought on by the Mexican Revolution and the forging of a new nation and government. Folgarait’s book looks at the photographs of four historically engaged artists—American Walter H. Horne, Italian Tina Modotti, and Mexicans Agustín Victor Casasola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo—to explain what they reveal about this dramatic revolutionary and post-revolutionary period.



Jane Austen Ruined My Life (2009, Guideposts) by Beth Pattillo, MDiv’90. A prolific writer of letters, Jane Austen purportedly wrote 3,000, but only 160 are known today. Austen’s sister Cassandra supposedly destroyed the remaining letters at the time of her death—but why? What secrets did Jane Austen have to hide? Pattillo’s main character, Emma, takes readers on a quest across England to uncover the missing letters. As she reads Austen’s innermost thoughts, she begins to understand how Austen’s struggles mirror her own.

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Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South (2009, University of Pennsylvania Press) by Steven P. Miller, MA’02, PhD’06. Miller’s book considers the critical but underappreciated role of the noted

evangelist in the creation of the modern American South. As the region experienced the end of both legalized Jim Crow and Democratic Party dominance, Graham served as a powerful symbol in this transition—an evangelist first and foremost, but also a profoundly political figure. Miller shows that Graham influenced many of the developments that drove celebrants and detractors alike to place the South at the vanguard of political, religious and cultural trends.



The Great Dog Wash (2009, Simon and Schuster) by Michelle (Shellie) Braeuner, MEd’90. Dogs of all kinds are invited to the zaniest dog wash in town—but did someone bring a cat? Braeuner’s playful rhymes and Robert Neubecker’s lively illustrations make this dog wash memorable. The book, which won a contest sponsored by Cheerios, was packaged with 1.5 million boxes of the cereal while also being published by Simon and Schuster.

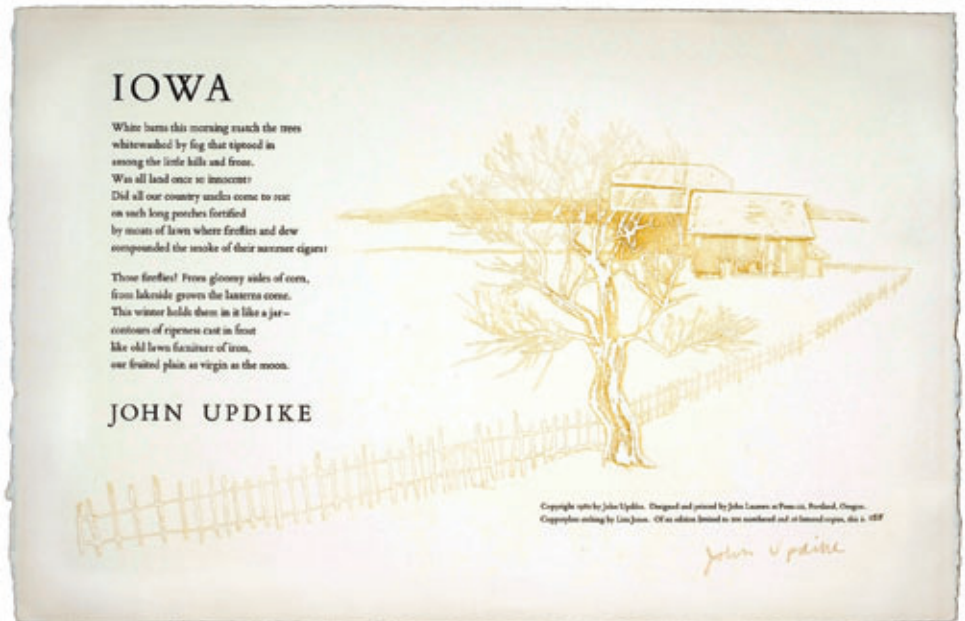
nus Robert Penn Warren, BA'25, and Houston Baker Jr., University Distinguished Professor of English at Vanderbilt.

“Winning the Hubbell Medal for lifetime achievement in American literature is thrilling,” Tichi says. “The prior winners are a roll call of my own teachers. Back in high school I was gripped by Robert Penn Warren’s novel *The Cave*, and later on by *All the King’s Men* and the evocative *Audubon*.

“I couldn’t have imagined one day teaching at the university that was Warren’s home base or guessed that a more recent Hubbell winner who taught me so much about African American literature and culture—Houston Baker—would become a Vanderbilt colleague.”

Other prior winners of the Hubbell Medal include Henry Louis Gates Jr., Alfred Kazin and Lewis Mumford.

—Jim Patterson



The Robert Stempfel Jr. Collection of John Updike materials is on display in Special Collections at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library through August. The exhibit includes first editions of classic Updike books and ephemeral items like small-press editions of his stories created in limited numbers and signed by the author, as well as poetry broadsides such as this one, titled “Iowa.”

Accolades

The **Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery** was honored recently during a celebration of the 90th birthday of the renowned, late Ecuadorian artist Oswaldo Guayasamín at the Capilla del Hombre (Chapel of Man) in Quito, Ecuador. Given in recognition of Vanderbilt’s contributions to the legacy of Guayasamín that culminated in the national traveling exhibition *Of Rage and Redemption: The Art of Oswaldo Guayasamín*, **Joseph Mella**, director of the gallery, received a gift of an original serigraph by the artist for the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Collection.



Guayasamín’s sketch for the mural “Family” for the Chapel of Man (serigraph)

The **Blair School of Music** placed six winners at the regional National Association of Teachers of Singing competition held at the University of Louisville. Winners included: **Tom Mulder**, first place, freshman men; **Zachary Monroe**, second place, freshman men; **Nathaniel Chism**, third place, freshman men; **Natalie Taylor**, first place, freshman women; **Kathryn Heaton**, second place, sophomore women; and **Preston Orr**, first place, junior men.

Kim Spurlock, BA’92, was the first-prize winner of the Charles and Lucille King Family Foundation Awards for Excellence in Filmmaking at New York University’s 67th annual First Run Film Festival, which premieres the work of some of the country’s top student films from the Kanbar Institute of Film and Television at the Tisch School of the Arts. She won a prize of \$10,000 for her entry *Down in Number 5*. In addition, she won the Wasserman Award for best directing.

This year’s festival screened more than 130 films, videos, and multimedia and animation projects. Spurlock, who recently completed her master of fine arts degree in film production, joins past recipients Spike Lee, Ang Lee and Nancy Savoca, among many others. A panel of industry professionals selected the winning films from a group of 14 finalists.

Judy Klass, lecturer in English, received a 2009 Edgar Award nomination for her play *Cell*. The play, about the investigation of the death of a crippled man being held by his brother in a locked room, was one of three nominees for best play in the awards named for writer Edgar Allen Poe. *Cell* was produced last summer at the International Mystery Writers Festival in Owensboro, Ky., and will be published by the Samuel French publishing company.

S.P.O.V.*

* Student Point of View

Shot in the Arm

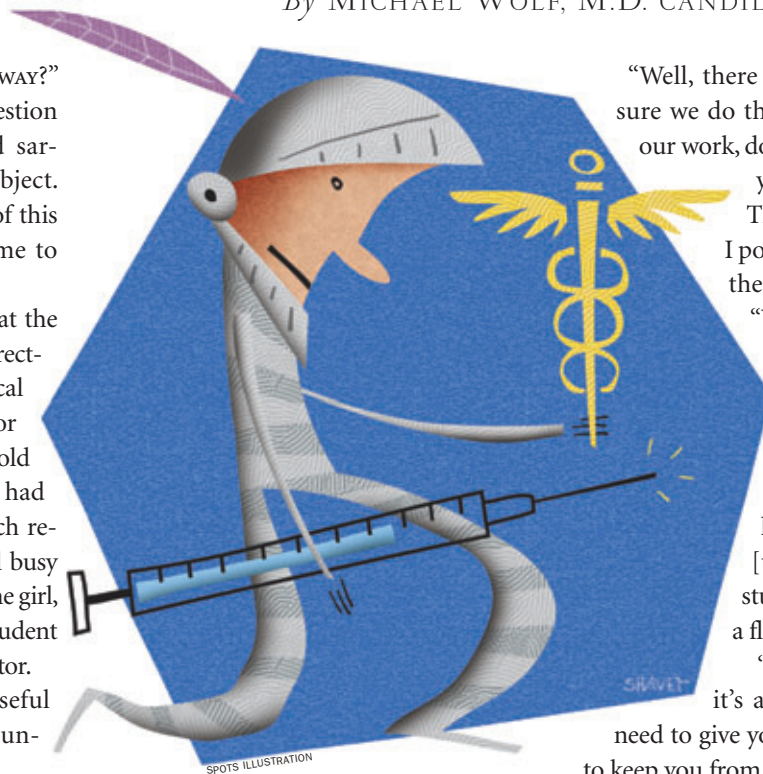
What a pint-sized patient taught me about bedside manner.
By MICHAEL WOLF, M.D. CANDIDATE, CLASS OF 2012

“S O, WHAT IS MED SCHOOL ANYWAY?” I could have brushed the question off. I could have answered sarcastically or changed the subject. But the assertive innocence of this 8-year-old girl compelled me to come up with a serious answer.

She and her mother were patients at the Shade Tree Family Clinic, a free clinic directed and operated by Vanderbilt medical students. She had come in with a minor cold, so we treated her symptoms and told her to get plenty of rest. Her mother had come for more personal reasons, which required that someone keep the little girl busy in the waiting room. In the room were the girl, her mother, the fourth-year medical student I was following, and the Spanish translator.

Because I was clearly the least useful team member at that moment, I volunteered to baby-sit.

So there we were: a first-year medical student and a pint-sized 8-year-old with straight black hair down to her waist, and piercing eyes that seemed to cut through even the slightest hint of condescension. We stood in the middle of the tiny, crowded waiting room of the clinic—more of a trailer, really—because all the seats were occupied by patients waiting for appointments. Quarters were close enough that I could see the reactions directed my way, ranging from knowing nods



to smirks that seemed to say, “Let’s see you talk your way through this one, kiddo.” Man, this was not going to be an easy answer.

“Well, medical school is a place where people go to learn how to be doctors.”

“Right, I see. So you’re, like, students. Not doctors.” (Uh-oh.)

“Not yet.”

“OK, so then ... what if you ... like ... make a mistake or something?” (Man, this girl is astute!)

“Well, there are doctors here to make sure we do the right thing. They check our work, do the things that we can’t do yet, and also help us learn. There’s a doctor over there.” I pointed out Dr. Robert Miller, the clinic’s medical director. “You can tell because his coat is longer than mine. He’s on his way to talk to your mom.”

“Ooooh, OK. So, am I going to get a shot today? I heard that girl over there [the fourth-year medical student] say something about a flu shot.”

“Well, if the doctor thinks it’s a good idea, then we may need to give you one. It’s just a little stick to keep you from getting the flu.”

“How?”

Oh, man, she doesn’t quit.

“Well, do you know about germs?” I asked, going by the seat of my pants, as she nodded. “OK, so your body makes things called antibodies to fight germs. But first the body has to know what those germs are like. It needs a head start so it can get ready to fight off the bad stuff. So we give you a little sample for your body to use.”

“Oh, like a vaccine. I got those already

when I was a baby, and my mom said once you got one you couldn't get that type of germ for life. Right?"

"Well, sort of," I answered. "But the flu likes to change, so people need to get them every year so their bodies can keep up."

"OK ... I guess. Will it hurt?"

"A little," I said. My mother and my small-group discussion leader taught me never to lie. "But it is over really quickly, and you can squeeze my hand as hard as you can until it's over."

(Cue the nervous look and the quivering lip of doom. Waterworks are next. I need to think fast.)

"You can even hit me in the arm as hard as you want so it hurts me, too."

"OK."

We talked a few more minutes about where medical school was (right next to the

hospital), where I was from (faraway San Diego), and if it was fun to be a medical student (yes, except around exam time).

Back in the exam room, she took her flu shot like a champ and socked me in the arm like a pint-sized Joe Frazier. Hey, I asked for it.

"That wasn't so bad, right?" I asked.

"No, it was bad," she said with a smile. What a trouper.

But I wasn't out of the woods yet. The pharmacy was swamped, as is often the case at our tiny clinic, and there was no liquid ibuprofen for the

girl. And she didn't know how to swallow a pill. Not wanting to let her go home suffering and unable to take her medicine, I coached her through the process. After a few gags, she triumphantly stuck her tongue out and said, "Done!"

We said goodbye, and the mother and daughter walked toward the door. Just as I was about to rejoin my fourth-year partner, the girl turned back and asked, "If I come back, will you be here again?"

I barely even knew what to say. I managed something along the lines of "I'm usually here one Saturday a month," but truthfully I was too choked up to think.

It amazes me how such a simple gesture could affect me, a generally stoic med student, so deeply. That little exchange made my day, my week. I know it may sound a bit trite, like something you'd read in a medical-school admissions essay gone wrong, but I don't care. I was on cloud nine. This little girl with a cold had reminded me why I had gone to medical school.

I know that not every patient I encounter will afford me the same experience. I know that I need to learn from the tough patients, the ones who are harder to like, and harder to care for. But that doesn't stop me from hoping that I get to meet and treat many more like that kid. ▼



JOHN RUSSELL

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A.P.O.V.*

*Alumni Point of View

Against All Odds

Creating an industry in Central and Eastern Europe has restored hope and dignity for thousands—and given me a front-row seat on history.

By JOHN WIRTH, BA'92

“WELCOME TO GERMANY. Just three weeks until you'll be in Bosnia,” I was told by my battalion's personnel sergeant upon my 1993 arrival in Frankfurt.

I never imagined then how my longing to experience the adventures of transformational Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) would lead me through the dense complexities of nation building and the thrill and heartbreak of creating a new company, providing me with a front-row seat to the global financial crisis.

I have been exposed to corruption at the highest levels, industrial espionage and intrigue, and the joy and satisfaction of enabling thousands of needy people to live a richer and more fulfilling life. I never could have anticipated the transformative impact this path would have on my perspective and view of the world: My naiveté and raw idealism have transformed into a deeper, more balanced and respectful understanding and acceptance.

Back in my student days at Vanderbilt, the transformation of CEE was a daily topic of discussion for me and my fellow residents at Carmichael Towers II during the fall of 1989. Although none could agree on which

government would fall next and which revolt was genuine or staged, we shared a common yearning to be part of this history in the making. The events taking place across the Atlantic were so monumental, so dramatic, so exciting! Why couldn't we just be a few years older? And couldn't I find a way to defer my R.O.T.C. obligations to serve in the U.S. Army?

Although my departure to the former Yugoslavia was delayed by several years and my end destination in the service of the U.S.

Army changed to FYR Macedonia, it seemed that I would finally realize my dream to experience transformational CEE as a freshly minted 2nd lieutenant. Serving with the United Nations' Operation Able Sentry required immersion into the region's deep and complex history.

For centuries various Slavic tribes, the Ural-originated Magyars, the ancient Illyrians, and the dominant Ottoman Turks

often lived side by side, more frequently as oppressor and oppressed. As each side could point factually to numerous tragedies and betrayals suffered at the hands of the other, it quickly became apparent that no moral justice or higher truth could be claimed by any side. Objectivity, independence and balance were crucial to our ability to patrol safely through Albanian, Macedonian and Serbian villages.



AARON TAYLOR

to be reinforced on many occasions during the coming years.

I began exploring ideas while continuing with my official USAID role. Introducing coin-operated laundromats appeared very promising until I discovered that, even with boiling water and detergent, locals viewed sharing a washing machine with strangers as a filthy practice.

My plan to privatize and transform a naval shipyard into a yacht marina and repair facility almost became real—until management, union representatives and local officials began demanding personal incentives.

Throughout, I could not help but notice the dire poverty that the senior population (60 years and older) was forced to endure. Forbidden to accumulate wealth under the communist system, lacking private pensions, and facing inflation, currency devaluation, bank

crises, and numerous pyramid schemes and other scams, many seniors—even the well educated and accomplished—had been relegated in just 15 years from positions of seniority and respect to poverty, need and dependency. Upon investigation, I learned that seniors across the region were suffering a similar plight.

Aware of reverse mortgage and home equity models well established elsewhere, I recognized the opportunity facing me: a large, fast-growing demographic with unusually high home-ownership rates, unserved in the region by retail banks and insurance companies. I saw an opportunity to aid a suffering and marginalized segment of society.

So with an idea and a laptop, I relocated to Hungary, where there were more than twice as many seniors. And because Hungary was soon to be a member of the European Union, it would be much easier to raise financing.

I was completely alone, without a salary or knowledge of the Hungarian language, and had to be resourceful. Survival became very personal. Living not as an expat with a com-

fortable compensation package and the cod-
dling support of an established institution,
but competing with the locals on their turf
and according to their rules, gives one the real
experience of living abroad.

It can be overwhelming. There is some-

it better. Instead, I focus on how to ensure that a worse fate befalls my neighbor's cow." Little did I realize then how deeply this mentality penetrated the very souls of the region's citizens and how thoroughly it was reflected in business, political and everyday life.

Reaching out in all directions, tapping all possible resources—such as alumni networks and acquaintances from school—and even teaching entrepreneurship at Central European University, I began to weave a network of local relationships and alliances, creating substance where none had existed. While building my professional foundation, I began to develop my business concept—research, financial modeling, strategy, presentations and investor-ready reports.

Good fortune enabled me to recruit my chairman and first investor. (Luck must have helped as well, as we had

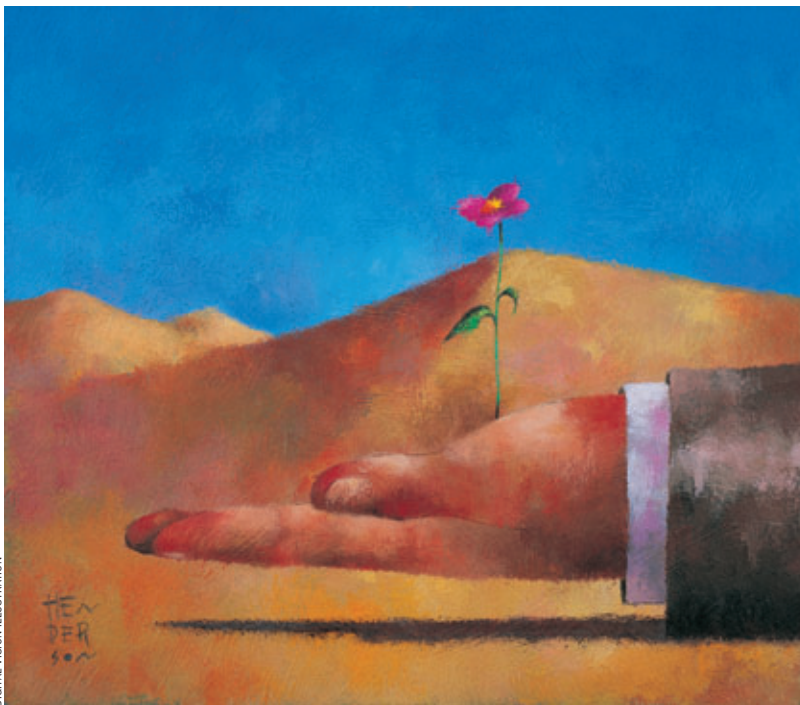
been next-door neighbors in Boston.) Over the following two years, we built a complete team, signed several contracts with seniors, and brought on Deutsche Bank as our primary institutional backer.

"It's too bad things are becoming difficult for your company," said an ex-government minister from within the region, now known widely as Mr. Ten Percent. "Working as your consultants, we could guarantee that things clear up for you quickly," he offered.

I had learned by then that "consulting" in CEE had become a euphemism for "bribe." Little did this ex-official understand that neither I, my board, nor Merrill Lynch, which by this point had become a shareholder, would even begin to consider entertaining his proposal. (The U.S. Commercial Service can be a great ally in such situations.)

In another of our markets, one of the region's largest banks, unwilling to accept an innovative startup entering "its" geography, employed various devious tactics from initiating regulatory reviews and manipulating

continued on page 78



DIGITAL VISION ILLUSTRATION

thing spiritual about the process of being broken to the basic elements of your core identity, then picking yourself up, evolving into a stronger, more complete being.

"If nobody's doing it, it can't be done!" and "Like everybody else, you just want to steal their homes" were the warmest words of encouragement extended to me in Budapest. This was not the enthusiastic support of individual innovation and creativity at the core of the American psyche. A general pessimism pervasive across Europe to varying degrees, residual feudal instincts of learned helplessness, and 40 years of surviving Communism through passivity and acceptance had created a population with a limited confidence in its own potential for innovation and growth. After decades of party spies, neighbor informants and doublespeak—along with questionable privatizations and all types of scams—trust in society had long been lost.

I found a deeper phenomenon underpinning this pessimism and mistrust, something known locally as the "neighbor's cow": "If my cow falls ill, I do not seek treatment to make

Alumni Association News

The President's Corner



Commencement is a high point of each year for the Vanderbilt community, and our 2009 ceremonies May 8 were especially joyous. The skies above Memorial Gymnasium were overcast, but the gathering inside was warm and ebullient. Chancellor Zeppos handed diplomas to the 3,380 graduates of the Class of 2009, welcoming them as the newest members of our alumni family.

This year's Commencement had special meaning for me as I joined members of the Class of 1959 who marched in the procession to mark their 50th anniversary as Vandy alumni. After the ceremony we had lunch at Hillwood Country Club with more than 400 distinguished Quinqs—Vanderbilt alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago. This event has become an important Commencement tradition, and the same university pride we saw in Memorial Gym was abundant at the Quinqs luncheon. It speaks volumes about Vanderbilt spirit that our Commencement is an occasion to come full circle by celebrating the achievements of our graduates and honoring the loyalty and support of our most senior alumni.

Speaking of alumni spirit, I am pleased to invite you to join our new online community, VUconnect. This innovation gives us an opportunity to offer a new array of career services and other alumni program enhancements. Find out more about VUconnect on the opposite page.

I hope you will stay further connected to the university through VUconnect, and I look forward to hearing from you.

BILLY RAY CALDWELL, BA'85
President, Vanderbilt Alumni Association

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The Commodore Tailgate Tour will visit three cities for away games this fall.



Commodore Tailgate Tour Is on the Road Again

The Vanderbilt Alumni Association and the National Commodore Club have teamed up once again to sponsor tailgates at three away games during the upcoming football season.

The three stops include Saturday, Sept. 26, at Rice University in Houston; Saturday, Oct. 10, for the Army game in West Point, N.Y.; and Saturday, Nov. 7, at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Tailgate and game packages will be available for all three contests.

The West Point tailgate is the highlighted event this year. Set for Columbus Day weekend, the trip includes a private chartered boat ride up the Hudson River. The group hotel in Jersey City, N.J.—at which a block of rooms has been reserved for participants—is a quick public-transportation ride into New York City for those who want to explore the big city on Friday before game day.

On Saturday the boat to West Point departs from the hotel's private dock. Vanderbilt fans will enjoy the three-hour trip up the Hudson, viewing fall foliage

along the cliffs of the Palisades and gathering with other Commodore fans.

Check the Tailgate Web site at www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/tailgates for game-package details, and make plans to join us on the road. You also may call the Office of Alumni Relations at 615/322-2929 or e-mail alumni@vanderbilt.edu.

AVBA Celebrates 25 Years

A yearlong slate of activities celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Association of Vanderbilt Black Alumni (AVBA) culminates Oct. 15–17 during Reunion and Homecoming Weekend.

The events kick off Thursday, Oct. 15, with a welcome mixer at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, and will continue on Friday with a presentation, "Lost in the Ivy," by Roosevelt Noble Jr., BS'97, PhD'03, director of the Workforce Investment Act for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and a former Vanderbilt sociology professor. Calvin Baldwin, BE'98, CEO and founder of EA Consultants, a Web-site design and online mar-

keting firm in Durham, N.C., will then moderate an alumni/student panel discussion, "Life as a Vanderbilt Alum."

Later Friday evening, guests will gather in the ballroom of the Student Life Center for cocktails before an AVBA recognition banquet featuring Bishop Joseph Warren Walker III, MDiv'92, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Nashville.



Bishop Walker

Following Saturday morning's annual AVBA business meeting, members will man AVBA's Homecoming parade float, join other alumni at the pre-game tailgate, and cheer for the 'Dores as they take on the Georgia Bulldogs.

For more information go to www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/avba or e-mail carolyn.dunlap@vanderbilt.edu.

Travel Program Announces 2010 Destinations

The Alumni Travel Program announces its schedule for 2010, offering the Vanderbilt community 11 all-inclusive getaways to diverse, culturally rich locales around the world. Each itinerary package is booked through trusted providers, and travelers

are joined by a Vanderbilt professor who will offer an exclusive "beyond the classroom" perspective on the journey.

Destinations for 2010 include Antarctica (Jan. 6–19); Australia and New Zealand (March 7–20); Egypt (March 9–22); the Canary Islands, Morocco and the Iberian Peninsula (April 8–16); Italian and Croatian cities along the Adriatic Sea (May 5–14); London and the English countryside (early May); Paris and the regions of Burgundy and Provence, France (May 15–26); Beijing and cities along the Silk Road, China (May 30–June 13); Alaska (June 20–27); a journey through Europe including Holland, Germany, Switzerland and France (June 30–July 10); and the wine country of Argentina and Chile (November).

The Vanderbilt Alumni Travel Program allows you to discover fascinating cultures and regions halfway around the world with knowledgeable faculty representatives and a group of like-minded travelers, many of whom return year after year.

The 2009 travel season is still in full swing, with vacancies available for excursions to the Great Lakes of America, ancient cities of the Mediterranean Sea,

New VU Online Community Launches

Vanderbilt has launched VUconnect, a new online community for alumni and students. Replacing Dore2Dore, VUconnect includes new and expanded features to help get you connected more easily across the country and around the world.

With VUconnect, you can share your latest news, find old friends and classmates, build networking relationships, get and share career help, obtain an "@alumni" Vanderbilt e-mail forwarding address, locate a Vanderbilt Chapter, and sign up for Vanderbilt events.

Registering for VUconnect is easy. You'll create your user ID and password using a four-digit VUconnect code. If Vanderbilt has your e-mail address on file, you should have received this code in June via e-mail. To get started, go to www.vuconnect.com and click "First time here?" Your code will help you create a password; it is *not* your password. If you need help, contact the VUconnect Help Desk at 615/322-5578 (8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Central time) or vuconnect@vanderbilt.edu.

Registered Dore2Dore users will need to create a *new* user ID and password for VUconnect. The user name and password you had for Dore2Dore will not automatically register you for VUconnect, and Dore2Dore is no longer active. Biographical information from Dore2Dore has been transferred automatically to VUconnect with the exception of Career Advisor profiles, as VUconnect includes a new, improved system for this resource. Alumni with an "@alumni.vanderbilt.edu" e-mail address will continue to have e-mail forwarding service.

Users of OwenConnect, the online community of Vanderbilt's Owen Graduate School of Management, also will need to register for VUconnect to gain access to this comprehensive community system.

Vanderbilt is committed to the privacy of its alumni, and registration for VUconnect is only open to Vanderbilt alumni and students. Go to www.vuconnect.com today to join—and stay in touch with Vanderbilt no matter where you are.

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Spain, the French countryside, and Patagonia. For more information visit www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/travel or e-mail alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu.

Call for Award Nominations

In 1996 the Vanderbilt Alumni Association began granting the Distinguished Alumni Award—not only to honor worthy recipients, but also to inspire students and alumni. You are now invited to submit nominations for the next award.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes an alumnus/a whose accomplishments and contributions have had the

broadest possible impact and a positive effect on humankind. Recipients have made a choice to go beyond a successful vocation to do something of greater benefit for the universal community.

To nominate someone for the award, please provide the nominee's name, address, degree and graduation year (if known), along with your own name, address, daytime phone number and e-mail address. Also provide details about the individual to support your nomination, based on the criteria above, and e-mail everything to alumni@vanderbilt.edu by Sept. 1, 2009.



The Alumni Travel Program visits India and the Taj Mahal in 2008.

TheClasses

News for this section should be sent by mail to Nelson Bryan, class notes editor, at *Vanderbilt Magazine*,

PMB 407703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7703; by e-mail to vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu; or by fax to 615/343-8547. Please include your degree, class year and, when applicable, maiden name. You also may send us news, submit a photo, access other class notes, or update your address and other biographical information electronically through Vanderbilt's online alumni community at www.vuconnect.com. Your submission may be posted in both *Vanderbilt Magazine* and on VUconnect's password-protected Web site unless otherwise specified.



Left to right: J.P. Day (BE'07), Grafton Day (BA'09), Jeff Day (BA'81) and Liz Day at the new home they helped to furnish.

'Extreme' Generosity

On each episode of ABC's popular *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, the show's designers and a cast of hundreds of volunteers race against time to transform—and often rebuild—the home of a family in need in just seven days.

This year's season finale, which aired May 17, focused on a single father of three sons whose Indianapolis home had deteriorated to the point of being unsafe. When ABC needed a furnishings sponsor for the episode, Jeff Day and his family business, TLS by Design, stepped up to the challenge.

Based near Indianapolis, TLS by Design provides custom wood furniture (casegoods) and upholstery to interior designers and wholesalers. With just four days' notice, Day and his crew produced 40 pieces of furniture and all the custom upholstery—worth nearly \$50,000 retail—for the show.

"In every episode of the show up until this one, when the house is revealed, the family has run straight for the house to check it out," says Day, whose son, J.P., and daughter, Grafton, are also Vanderbilt graduates. "But in this one, the father ran back into the crowd of neighbors and volunteers and spent 15 minutes personally thanking, hugging and high-fiving as many people as he could.

"I still choke up talking about it. The family was so gracious—it was just an awesome experience."

Find out more: www.tlsbydesign.com

—Phillip B. Tucker



Mark Loomis, BA'89

Game Face

"When I was making my 3,000th copy on the second day of my first job, I realized the one course they didn't teach at Vanderbilt was how to fix the copier," says Mark Loomis. That first job, with ABC Sports, saw Loomis running errands, making lots of copies, and sharing hotel rooms on assignment with other young assistants.

Today, with 20 years' experience under his belt, he is a coordinating producer with ESPN, a job he started in May after stints with ABC Sports and the NFL Network.

Loomis has produced NFL games, British Opens and basketball. However, he says nothing compares to SEC football.

"When you go to a night game in the SEC, the atmosphere surrounding the game is like no other," Loomis says. "As a television person, I love being around that."

During the course of his career, Loomis has met and worked with countless star athletes and announcers. Dion Sanders, Tom Brady and Keith Jackson are among his favorites.

"You have to work hard and accept the fact that you're not going to make a lot of money at first," Loomis says when asked about careers in sports broadcasting. "But if you can forget all that and get lost in the fact that you love your job, it's well worth it."

—Cindy Thomsen

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**Jasbina Ahluwalia,
BA'91, MA'92**

PRACHETA SHARMA BHATIA/THE INDIAN EXPRESS

The Business of Love

Making time for personal relationships while juggling the demands of a busy professional life led attorney Jasbina Ahluwalia down a new career path several years ago. The second-generation Indian American is founder of Intersections Matchmaking, which caters to single South Asian professionals nationwide.

"Finding time for a personal life can be a common issue for young professionals from South Asian backgrounds—people whose cultures discourage early dating and teach them to focus first on their educations and other self-development," she says.

After practicing law in San Francisco and Chicago, Ahluwalia married, became a certified matchmaker, and founded Intersections in 2007 in Palo Alto, Calif.

Intersections is not an online dating service, she asserts, but a "premium service involving a highly personalized consultative and feedback-centric process." Clients have comprehensive consultations with her, and potential matches—who come from an extensive network of singles pooled from numerous sources—are prescreened before any introductions are made.

"At Vanderbilt I felt encouraged to hone both my intellectual abilities and interpersonal skills, to value both physical fitness and mental acuity, and to take care of others while nurturing myself," says Ahluwalia, who studied philosophy at Vanderbilt. "This holistic approach to life is extremely valuable in serving our clients."

Find out more: www.intersectionsmatch.com

—Phillip B. Tucker

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JOHN RUSSELL

A.P.O.V. continued from page 65

press relationships, to registering complaints against supposed anti-competitive practices. These attacks began only after this bank had lured away several early employees in an effort to acquire our intellectual property.

Corruption and unethical practices are not beyond the purview of the common citizen and business in CEE. An elderly lady once tried to extort money from us in an effort to earn her support for a partnership with her association of retirees. After receiving ungrounded attacks in a local newspaper, we learned that this paper was hoping to generate some advertising revenue. To this day I still wonder how this approach can be so widely preferred over the simple sales call.

Despite the multitude of challenges in establishing a new industry in CEE, we have raised more than \$150 million in financing from Merrill Lynch, Deutsche Bank and leading venture capitalists. We have built teams of outstanding and capable nationals in three countries—with two more under way. And we have signed thousands of seniors. With substantial financing from us, our seniors have been able to realize long-forgotten dreams,

reassert themselves as family providers, and enjoy the comfort of a secure retirement.

By pooling together many disparate senior associations, we have replicated the cost-savings programs of AARP, creating discount programs with our numerous commercial partners to enable millions of seniors to benefit from discounted pharmaceuticals, travel, medical care, food, banking services, insurance, toys for their grandchildren, and other products and services.

Each of our offices serves as a social center where afternoons are filled with entertainment such as senior karaoke, English lessons, and even senior belly dancing. We also have partnered with leading health-care providers to make available quality and responsive medical attention which, unfortunately, is often lacking in the region. Sometimes it's difficult to know whether a business truly meets its customers' expectations and provides good value. Considering the many plates of home-baked cakes and cookies I have enjoyed through the years, it seems that we have hit the mark.

What started as a quest for adventure morphed into a desire to help and, through

the years, evolved into a life's journey of experience and personal development. My natural inclination to view the world in absolutes has transformed into challenging the various shades of gray, differing points of view, hidden motives and layered meanings. There are so many warmhearted, talented and ambitious people in the region. And I continue to be amazed by the number of natural entrepreneurs I have encountered here.

It was naive for us in the West to assume that things would change overnight, or even in two or three generations. Nonetheless, with more people willing to embrace the challenge, to forge new ground, to demonstrate how business can be done fairly and ethically, things will change for the better.

Still idealistic, but now with a measured idealism, I believe each of us can change the world in our own way. But I also have learned that others are not helpless, our way is not the only path, and we should only help those who ask for it. ▼

John Wirth welcomes feedback from other alumni. Contact him at john.wirth@alumni.vanderbilt.edu.



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From “The Choir Director Affair (The Baby’s Teeth)”

By KEVIN WILSON, BA’00

This is the baby, and yes, those are teeth. They are not important. Don’t think about them. Nothing special, this baby with teeth. Usually it is only a snaggletooth, a single, perfectly formed tooth in the tiny mouth, unlike the full set on this baby. Still, it has happened before, it is happening now, will happen again, Jesus Christ, get over it. It is nothing to get upset about. They are only teeth. So forget we even mentioned it because it doesn’t matter: the baby, the teeth, the pacifiers gnawed until they are unrecognizable.

The story isn’t about the baby, anyway, but the father of the baby. He is having an affair with the choir director of the girls’ chorus at the private school where he teaches biology. There is guilt and lust and deceit and the things that stories are made of, the condition of our collective lives laid bare. And yet, this baby.

When you are invited to visit the parents just a few weeks after the birth, you walk into the newly decorated, mobiled, yellow-hued room and you coo and baby-talk over this new thing, this well-made construction of genes. And then the baby flashes those teeth and you ... well, you scream.

The father, who is sleeping with a beautiful, red-haired woman who sings like a bird, calmly informs you about the teeth, repeating what the doctors said, the pamphlets the hospital had to order from a medical oddities supplier. The wife, who does not know about the affair but knows her husband has things he keeps from her, starts to tear up, until she has to excuse herself for a moment. You feel like a real son of a bitch, but why wouldn’t someone have mentioned this beforehand? A small warning: This baby will smile, and it will startle you.

Later that night, while the mother flosses the baby and prepares it for sleep, you sit in the kitchen and drink beer while the husband tells you about the choir director. You think you hear the father say that he is falling in love with this woman, but you cannot concentrate. You want to. You know this is the thing that matters, the thing that will affect all their lives in myriad ways, but you cannot do it.

You excuse yourself, blame the beer, and seek the bathroom. Upstairs, down the hall, and into the room, quiet save for the hiss of a humidifier. The baby is still awake, eyes wide open. You smile a little nervously, not wanting to cause alarm. And the baby, goddamn, smiles right back. Big and wide.

If, in less than a year, this baby were to sprout its teeth naturally, you would think nothing of it. In fact, you’d be a little annoyed, the constant crying, the blue plastic toy pulled from the freezer and jammed into the mouth. Now, however, in the dim light of the baby’s room, they are inexhaustibly fascinating. Calcified, enameled, not yet cavitated. They really are the color of a pearl. You have heard that cliché of toothpaste commercials that show the tube, the brush, the tiny sparkle that shines off the front tooth, but now you understand the phrase. You think this baby’s teeth could be used as a necklace, something beautiful and perfect.

Now your hand is moving toward the baby, slowly, index finger extended, as if pointing to a place on a map. You touch the smoothness of one of the teeth, the rounded edge on the bottom. The baby’s eyes stay open, calm, but you do not see them, only the teeth. And then the teeth closing around your finger, quickly. Your finger is still there, in the mouth, and now there is skin to be broken, cries to be muffled, shots to be considered.

This was not supposed to happen. You were supposed to stay downstairs with the father and listen to him go on and on about this singing adultress. Instead, you are wrapping your fingers in tissues, bounding quickly down the stairs, wondering aloud where the time went, hugging the father in order to avoid a handshake and reveal the offending finger, and running to your car before you sit there in silence. You are not listening to the father and his newfound desire to perhaps leave his wife and child and run off to Europe with this choir director to visit old opera houses. You are not there to witness this total lack of judgment and decency and advise yea or nay.

As of this moment, you in the car, staring at those teeth impressions on your finger, you think the father’s dalliance will not last much longer and will hopefully cause only a small amount of unhappiness, which is not true, of course. Why would we be telling this story if that were the case? But none of this matters to you now as you speed through the night, the radio playing in your car, the windows down, your finger in your own mouth, your tongue finding the impressions left by teeth much smaller than your own.

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B SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY

Why wouldn't someone have mentioned this beforehand?

*A small warning:
This baby will smile,
and it will startle you.*

Southern Journal

Reflections on the South

Narrative Drive

When the words finally fall into place, it's almost as good as spontaneous combustion.

By KEVIN WILSON, BA'00

I STARTED WRITING STORIES because I was lonely. I wish there were more artistic and noble reasons that I put pen to paper, but the truth of the matter is that I wanted people to kiss me and I had the unfounded notion that, if I wrote a good enough story, people would be compelled to make out with me. This was not a sound theory.

I signed up for a creative writing workshop at Vanderbilt; the first story I wrote was about a boy who was stuck in a tree and a hobo who taunted him from the ground. People, amazingly, were able to resist the urge to have sex with me. The second story I wrote was about a kid who has sex with his sister's stuffed animal. People were now actively avoiding me. I was lonelier than when I had started writing stories. Clearly, I had not thought this through.

Were my mechanics unsound? Had I not grasped the art of telling a story so complex and emotionally resonant that people could not help but love me? I did some research. I found the short list for *Granta's* Best Young American Novelists. Fifty-two authors. I read at least one book by all of them. In this manner I discovered the work of Sherman Alexie, Rick Bass, Antonya Nelson, Ann Patchett, Jill McCorkle, Michael Parker, Elizabeth McCracken, Tom Drury, Lorrie Moore, Brian Kityely, Joanna Scott, Randall Kenan, Jeffrey Eugenides, Edwidge Danticat, David Bowman and Chang-Rae Lee, all writers who I imagined as movie stars or baseball players, signing autographs and cashing novelty-sized checks. I wanted to make out with all of them. I wanted them to want to make out with me. I wrote harder.

I wrote a terrible story about a group of teenagers who take animal tranquilizers. I wrote an even worse story about a Buddy Holly impersonator who gets mugged. I was eating nothing but candy bars and sleeping on the floor of my apartment. I bought novels and short-story collections as if they were self-help books or how-to guides. If I wasn't reading, I was writing. If I wasn't doing either of these things, I was practicing kissing my reflection in the mirror. "This," I told myself, "is what writers do."

Tony Earley, the professor in my [Vanderbilt] creative writing class, took an interest in my work. I told him that I wanted the stories to be so good that people would make out with me. He nodded. He asked why I was wearing a beeper. "My mother likes to keep track of me," I told him. He said that getting rid of the beeper would be even more effective than if I had written "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." Then he looked over my stories and told me why they weren't very good and how I could make them better. I got rid of the beeper. I wrote harder.

Slowly, my stories got better. There were still no takers in the "Make Out with Kevin Wilson" sweepstakes, but I found that I did not care as much as before. I was writing stories that were slightly better than awful, and I felt happiness previously unknown to me. I concentrated on writing stories that were marginal and yet somewhat memorable. I read every literary journal I could find, attended bookstore readings, and pored over author interviews. I started sleeping in an actual bed. I went on a date that turned out to not actually be a date. I wrote a story about a person



whose parents spontaneously combusted. It was not bad. It was kind of good. I felt like I might spontaneously combust.

This is how I came to writing. For people who love literature, it is probably not an uncommon story. I wrote draft after draft of bad stories until they became something readable. I read book after book by authors infinitely more talented than myself and tried to learn from them. The only strange detail was that, as I was writing and reading, I was saying to myself, *Kevin, this is going to get you laid*. It did not. This was for the best.

I'm married now. I ask my wife if it was my stories that first made her want to kiss me. She says it was perhaps the second or third thing, and I'm happy with that answer.

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Turn to page 79 for another excerpt from *Tunneling to the Center of the Earth*.

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