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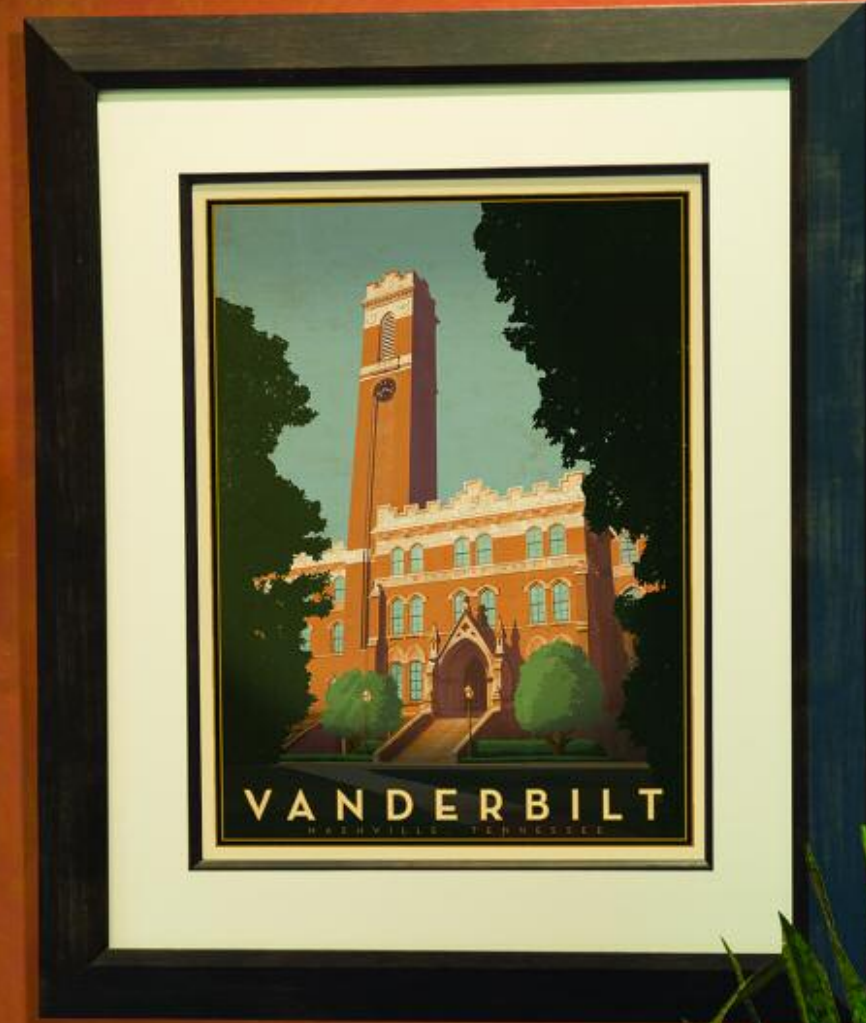
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Debra McKinney



A fourth-generation journalist, Oregon-born Debra McKinney became a feature writer more than 20 years ago for the *Anchorage Daily News*. In 1994 she and photographer Fran Durner won the \$10,000 Dart Award for coverage of victims of violence. McKinney was part of a team of reporters who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1989 for a series about alcoholism and despair in rural Alaska. In the summer she disappears to her off-the-grid cabin near Fairbanks, where she grows a huge garden and goes for days without writing a single word.

Gary Gerson

Gary Gerson, BS'85, majored in geology at Vanderbilt. After doing archaeology in Kenya, getting lost in the Nepalese Himalayas, and playing a season of football for the Amsterdam Rams, Gerson took a job teaching and coaching for Cranbrook Schools in Michigan. He and his wife, Shelley, are the parents of Maddie, 4, and Eli, 3. Gerson would love to hear from former Commodore teammates at ggerson@cranbrook.edu.



Ryan Farha



Ryan Farha is a junior in the College of Arts of Science. He hopes to graduate in 2008 with a major in history and minors in Islamic studies and French. Farha is on the staff of the *Vanderbilt Hustler* and is a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon, the Middle Eastern Students Association, and Dores for Palestine. He plans to return to study or work in the Middle East in the spring, and is considering careers in government, journalism or academia.

Audrey Peters

Audrey Peters graduated from Vanderbilt in 2004 with a B.S. in English and political science. As a student she participated in the McGill Project and was a copy editor for *Slant*, Vanderbilt's satire magazine. She spent the first two years after graduation as a portrait photographer and is now an adjunct professor at Northeast State Technical Community College's Regional Center for Applied Technology, where she teaches developmental writing and learning strategies.



Anthony Wilson



Anthony Wilson was born in Atlanta and spent his childhood there before moving to the swampier environs of Lafayette, La., at age 11. There he found a very different kind of South: a distinct blend of cultures marked by unique cuisine, music, and relationship to the landscape. He carried his interest in multiple Southern cultures into graduate school at Vanderbilt, where he received his Ph.D. in English in 2002. His book, *Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture*, grew out of his interest in the relationships between Southern culture and literature and ecology and environmental studies. Wilson is now an assistant professor of English at LaGrange College.

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Dore Ways

A forum for exchanging ideas

From the Editor

The Walk-on

WHEN I ARRIVED AT VANDERBILT in mid-August, an unusually hot Nashville summer was stubbornly refusing to relinquish its grip on the city. Nonetheless, the campus was aswarm with workmen feverishly preparing for the arrival of the incoming Class of 2010 some two weeks hence: replacing a window in the lobby of Carmichael East, grooming the lush carpet of grass on Alumni Lawn.

Having spent most of my professional life on college campuses, I am familiar with the ebb and flow of life at a university: the bustle of arriving students after a blissfully quiet summer, the welcome solitude of the winter holidays, the frenzied run up to Commencement. But the sights and sounds of *this* university were new to me, and I felt like something of a freshman myself.

I was warmly welcomed by my colleagues, but nonetheless I felt a little intimidated during my first weeks on campus. I was, after all, joining a team of professionals who had worked with each other for the better part of a decade. I was the newcomer, the rookie, the walk-on.

In some ways, I imagine I was feeling a bit like Gary Gerson, BS'85, who during his freshman year at Vanderbilt decided to join the football team—with virtually no experience on the gridiron. Gerson tells his remarkable story in our feature “A Pipsqueak Among Giants,” which begins on page 40.

“There was no turning back now,” Gerson writes. “All 5-foot-10, 145 pounds of me was going to be a football player for the Vanderbilt University Commodores.”

Gerson was embraced by coaches and fellow players alike, and he became part of the legendary 1982 Commodores team who played in the Hall of Fame Bowl. And though his cleats never touched the gridiron during regulation play, I am inspired by Gerson's tenacity—and his heart.

“I had never thought of quitting,” he writes. “On the field I had gotten a tiny bit of respect from men who were going to the NFL. It was worth every bit of pain—and not something that could be explained to most people who had never played football.”

The analogy to my own experience is not perfect. I am, in reality, no rookie, having spent the past 26 years editing a university magazine. But like Gerson, who struggled to fit into a pair of oversized shoulder pads, I realize I have some big cleats to fill. The magazine's former “quarterback,” Ken Schexnayder, and longtime associate editor, GayNelle Doll, had overseen a renaissance of the publication, and *Vanderbilt Magazine* is now firmly in the big leagues, successfully vying for the attention of our readers against mainstream commercial magazines and competing professionally for accolades with magazines from, among others, the Ivies and the Big Ten.

It may be hard to explain my feelings to someone who has never edited a magazine. Suffice it to say that, like Gerson, I hope to be part of a team that has a championship season, or two, ahead of them.

But also like him, I am grateful for the opportunity just to suit up.

—Andrew W. M. Beierle

From the Reader

Stretching a Point

LET'S SEE. Four out of five of the featured contributors to your Summer 2006 issue are men. The lead sports article is about a man. “Vanderbilt Holdings” is about a man. The “In Class” article is about a man. There is a moving feature called “Waiting in the Light” about Tom Fox, an amazing and very courageous man. Most of the sidebars and featurettes are about or include men (as well as women).

You'd have to ignore an awful lot of the content about strong men or strong people to declare that you see an emerging theme about strong women [From the Editor, p. 5].

Why not get off the political soapbox and focus on Vanderbilt, in which case the theme is clear and something to be proud of: Vanderbilt produces strong alums and is attended by strong students.

Men and women.

CHIP HEARTFIELD, BA'78
Bethesda, Md.

One Article, Two Views

ORDINARILY I FIND great pleasure in *Vanderbilt Magazine*. However, I am writing to express my disappointment in the article “Warriors in a Post-9/11 World” [Summer 2006 issue, p. 30]. What these ROTC students are undergoing and will undergo was covered as if it were a beauty contest instead of a deadly serious topic. War is not “a game.” People die; people are maimed.

Certainly the war occupying our attention today is not déjà vu. Except within the administration, there is little evidence of the arrogance that inhabited the American mind in the 1960s. After all, we were the saviors of the world—not once, but twice. We could do no wrong! How could we lose? America—love it or leave it. I don't hear that now. We know better.

Déjà vu? The Viet Cong did not crash airplanes into the Pentagon or the buildings in



New York nor murder almost 3,000 civilians living and working there. Like the Korean Conflict before it, Vietnam was a civil war which the United States entered ostensibly to curtail communist expansionism, among other reasons. This task was accomplished by sending 18-year-old children to the jungles to become sniper fodder. More than 50,000 of my generation perished in a never-declared war. Many were just poor young men who did not know how to use college to avoid dying in a rice paddy. War is seldom an equal opportunity slayer.

Déjà vu? No way! Were ROTC members targets of animosity? Yes. Were they the symbol? No, we did not need a symbol. We had the real thing—bloody death nightly on TV for the first time in history. Were Vietnam veterans who returned to school targets of animosity? Yes. Did we do everything right in our attempt to stop the dying? No. But we did learn from our mistakes. We do now know how to distinguish the executor from the

designer, and we have taught our children well (well, most of them anyway).

Is it déjà vu? No. Does the danger exist that parallels could emerge? Yes. Consider the recent discourse regarding the shortage of personnel given our all-volunteer military. A short-term solution is multiple tours of duty; on the horizon is reinstating the draft. Consider also that the national discourse is beginning to address the possibility that Iraq is experiencing a civil war (despite Secretary Rumsfeld's denial). Eventually, the critical mass will ask if our blood should be poured on someone else's civil war.

KRISTINE RENEE DERER, PHD'92
Las Cruces, N.M.

I REALLY ENJOYED the article on the ROTC programs you published in the summer issue, discussing the few but spirited group of dedicated brave students who continue the long Vanderbilt tradition of study and service. As a graduate of the NROTC program in 1975,

it brought back fond memories of my instructors and fellow classmates, prior to my starting a 20-year Navy career. I was in that generation that studied Russian, along with my chemistry major classes and required NROTC courses (which didn't count as credits for graduation the last three years). I always felt comfortable at Vanderbilt then, despite the Vietnam-era protests, and was happy to read of the continued support for ROTC students and programs from the Vanderbilt community.

I also enjoyed the various articles covering topics from movies to science and science fiction. Your history articles from the fortuitous or fortunate past with Commodore Vanderbilt ["The Commodore's Strange Gift," p. 46] and the tragic present of Tom Fox ["Waiting in the Light," p. 54] were also enlightening. I was at Vanderbilt at the same time as the author of the article on Bettie Page and also regret not meeting a Peabody girl [A.P.O.V., "Cheesecake and Apple Pie," p. 68].

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Your pictures were very enjoyable, as I was on campus when the Vanderbilt family members were posing in 1973 [contents page], and my father was on campus during World War II [The Classes, p. 70] as part of the Army Specialized Training Program held for 10 months during 1943–44. He enjoyed Christmas dinner in 1943 with Chancellor Carmichael, whose namesake dorms I later lived in for three years.

Thanks again for a great ROTC article. I look forward to other diverse and entertaining issues.

DR. HARRY BRAMMER, BA'75
Brookfield, Wis.

Family Ties

I WAS VERY PLEASED to read the tribute to Frank Crawford in the editor's column of the summer edition [p. 5]. This and the fascinating article by Michael McGerr ["The Commodore's Strange Gift," p. 46] is most welcome recognition, as is the news that one of Vanderbilt's residence halls is to be named after her.

Frank Crawford was my great-great aunt. Her brother, Robert L. Crawford, was my great-grandfather. Among the items in *Laurus Crawfordiana: Memorials of the Crawford Family 1660–1883*, compiled by R.L. Crawford, are a description of an interview the Commodore had with President Lincoln in March 1862, in which Lincoln asks if Vanderbilt "can stop the *Merrimac*," and a reprint of a newspaper article that appeared shortly after Vanderbilt's marriage to Frank which is highly complimentary to her but prophetic as well.

ROBERT L. CRAWFORD, '49
Bayside, N.Y.

Cover Criteria

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED the recent summer issue. However, I wonder about the criteria for determining the cover story. While Fonda Huizenga certainly appears to be an accomplished woman rooted in her faith, family and community ["Call of the Wild Blue Marlin," p. 38], the most compelling story in the magazine was about Tom Fox (a Peabody graduate), who literally gave his life in Iraq as a peacekeeper.



Surely the story of an alumnus who gave his life as an instrument of peace in Iraq deserves greater emphasis than a person's setting two world records for marlin fishing?

I realize there's more to Mrs. Huizenga than just marlin fishing. I also certainly celebrate strong Vanderbilt women, but the excerpts from Mr. Fox's blog, "Waiting in the Light" [p. 54], should be required reading for the entire Vanderbilt family. His writings bring the reader face to face with the realities of the war and one person's courageous struggle to build peace in a horrific situation. As the article states, he was a hero. Nothing against Mrs. Huizenga, but Mr. Fox's story should have been front and center on the cover of the magazine.

JONATHAN M. CROWDER, BA'90
Breckenridge, Colo.

Encouraging Words

Vanderbilt Magazine is the greatest! We enjoy the stories, which are so well written, as well as the selection and photographs. Print, art and placement are well done. Yours is beyond compare with the other magazines we receive.

FRANCES BAUCOM
Hermitage, Tenn.

YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, what you have done to our magazine. Well, all I can say is BRAVO! BRAVO! BRAVO! The entire body of alumni thanks you from our hearts.

JAMES R. TUCK, BA'40, LLB'47
Nashville

Spring Feedback

AS A DIEHARD VANDERBILT football fan living just 30 minutes north of Bobby Bowden's evil empire, I was delighted to see the Spring 2006 cover story, "Dores Who Love Too Much" [p. 54]. I am surrounded by obnoxious FSU and Georgia fans who need to be reminded that player arrest rates should never exceed graduation rates. My 7-year-old daughter understood the importance of Commodore

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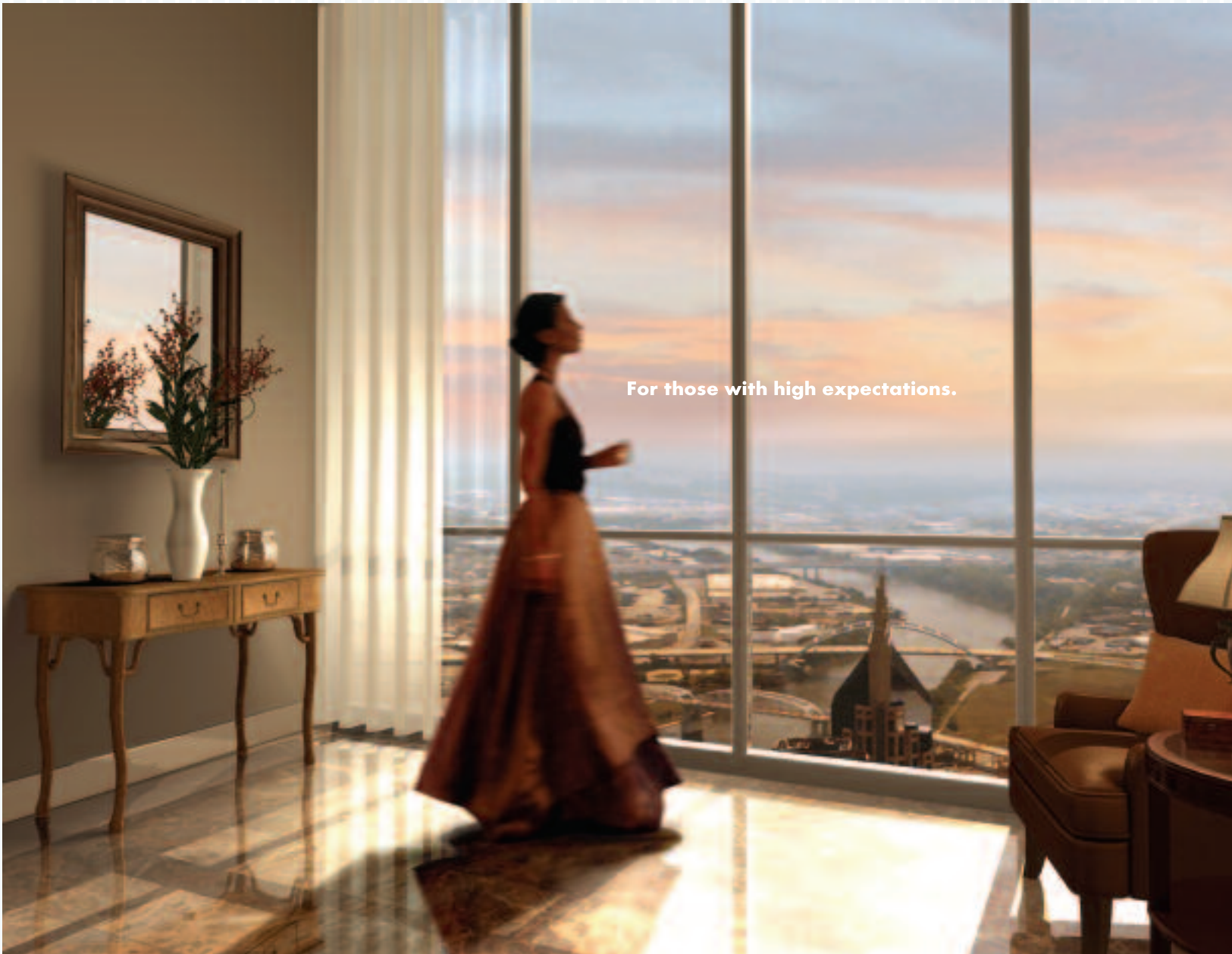
football when instead of reading the usual note from mommy in her lunchbox one day, her note simply contained the final score of the Vanderbilt-Tennessee game.

Go 'Dores!
ANNE VEREEN, BA'90
Thomasville, Ga.

MY WIFE (Beth Colvin Huff, BSN'74, MSN'79) and I are both Vanderbilt alumni. We very much enjoyed the article on evolution and creationism in your Spring 2006 issue ["Science Friction," p. 36] and are sharing it with a friend.

DR. JOHN G. HUFF, MD'77
Nashville

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*, VU Station B #357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or e-mail vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu.



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Star of David, Rising

As Vanderbilt's Jewish student population grows, so, too, does the challenge of making religion relevant in daily life. BY ARI DUBIN

WHEN I TOOK THE JOB of executive director of the Vanderbilt Hillel in the summer of 2005, I expected perhaps 450 or

500 Jewish students on campus. Instead, the undergraduate student body last year included nearly 700 Jewish students. About 15 percent of last year's freshman class was Jewish, an amazing statistic when you consider that just four years ago, the population of undergraduates was only about 3 percent Jewish.

The most significant factor in this increase has been the Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life, a 10,000-square-foot building located at the heart of campus. Dedicated in 2002 and named for Vanderbilt alumnus Ben Schulman, BA'39, who contributed \$1 million toward its construction, the Schulman Center houses the Vanderbilt Hillel, the popular Grins kosher vegetarian café, and space where all kinds of groups, Jewish and non-Jewish, come together.

Hillel is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, with a presence at more than 500 colleges and universities. Hillel takes its name from a first-century Jewish sage whose message was the love and pursuit of peace.

My phone conversations with Jewish parents who are considering sending their kids to Vanderbilt invariably include four questions: Is there a Hillel building? How many Jewish students are there? Do you have a rabbi? Do you have kosher dining?

Many parents do not expect their children to go to Hillel every week—but they want their kids to have the option to explore, to

get involved, to experience being Jewish.

For a smaller group of students who are very committed to a specific kind of Jewish life, Vanderbilt has been steadily building the support system they are looking for on campus. For the vast majority of Jewish students, though, what we have at Vanderbilt now is more than sufficient.

The sheer growth in numbers has also presented challenges. One example is our Shabbats—our Friday night Sabbath dinners. A few years ago they were held perhaps once a month. Then two years ago Shabbats were offered every week, alternating between a more traditional service and a less traditional service. Now we offer both services simultaneously, followed by dinner. In the past, somewhere between 20 and 40 students might have attended. Last year between 60 and 80 students attended each week. This year we have had more than 100 students every week.

Our social and cultural programs, pizza parties and bagel brunches have brought in many students we hadn't seen before. And we're going where the students are. When we organized a comedy night with a Jewish comedian, we originally planned to have it in the Schulman Center, but we brought in more students by having it at the Overcup Oak pub in the Sarratt Center instead.

Having Grins, the kosher vegetarian café (it's pronounced "greens" and means "vegetables" in Yiddish), in the Schulman Center brings people from many parts of campus into the building. Few Hillels in this country can say that virtually every Jewish student on campus will come into their building over



JIM HSEH

the course of the year. For us to be able to make that claim is a source of pride. But that doesn't mean we necessarily touch those lives in a Jewish way. We're always trying to find ways to reach out to Jewish students on campus and to get them involved.

Religion ought to mean more than going to synagogue on Saturday morning or to church on Sunday morning. When we compartmentalize religion, when we only let it touch us during those specific ritual moments until we have to pull it out again, then we aren't really experiencing religion in our daily lives.

For a minority group in any culture, the influence of the majority culture is enormous. We try to show students that religion can touch multiple aspects of their lives. If our students are into poker, we're going to figure out how to get involved with that experience: Can we do it as a charity tournament or a fundraiser, and somehow connect it back to Katrina or the tsunami or something related to Israel?

Last year during High Holy Days in October, those of us who work in the Schulman

continued on page 83



1,000 Words

One image frozen in time

People All Over the World, Join In

Marching bands from Tennessee State University and Vanderbilt joined forces during the first-ever football match-up between the two Nashville schools. The bands jointly performed the TSU and Vanderbilt fight songs as well as the O'Jays classic "Love Train." Photo by Neil Brake.

The Campus Fall 2006

“Twenty-five percent of the entering class scored above 1470 on the SAT, and that is remarkable.” —DOUGLAS L. CHRISTIANSEN, associate provost for enrollment and dean of admissions

First-Year Students Bring Diversity, High Scores

VANDERBILT'S 2006–07 enrollment of first-year students represents dramatic increases in quality, diversity and academic excellence, according to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions' annual 10th-day enrollment report.

Applications were up 4 percent from the 2005–06 academic year, rising from 11,688 to 12,192. Of those who applied, 1,590—or 33.9 percent—were admitted, down from 35.2 percent last year, a testament to Vanderbilt's increasing selectivity.

“We continue to be more selective and have a more robust pool as we make our selections,” says Douglas L. Christiansen, associate provost for enrollment and dean of admissions.

More than 77 percent of Vanderbilt's first-year students were in the top 10 percent of their graduating classes, representing an average GPA of 3.73 and an average SAT score of 1370.

“Our academic quality remains strong,” Christiansen says. “The entering class is the most prepared in Vanderbilt's history. Twenty-five percent of the entering class scored above 1470 on the SAT, and that is remarkable.”



A record number of underrepresented students—African American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American—enrolled at Vanderbilt this year. In 2000 just 18.2 percent of the first-year class was made up of minority students. In 2006 that number has increased to 28.6 percent.

“It went from less than a fourth to almost a third of the entering class comprising minorities,” says Christiansen. “We are making a concerted

effort to recruit underrepresented students.”

Financial aid also has increased. This year 59.4 percent of new students are receiving financial aid from Vanderbilt. In 2000, 52.4 percent received aid.

“When you look at the whole undergraduate class, more students are receiving need-based aid than no aid at all,” Christiansen says. “That goes against the notion that Vanderbilt students all come from wealthy families. Next fall they will spend one

“Although we do have that, it's important to know that if you are academically prepared and you can't afford Vanderbilt, that shouldn't be a deterrent.”

Of the 1,590 first-year students, 983 are enrolled in the College of Arts and Science, 313 in the School of Engineering, 236 in the Peabody College of education and human development, and 58 in the Blair School of Music. The first-year class comprises 840 women and 750 men.

Math and Science Whizzes to Study at VUMC

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY Medical Center will host a one-day-a-week science and math high school for the brightest public-school students in Nashville beginning next fall. A collaborative project of VUMC and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the science and math school will be funded by grants and other sources outside the public school budget.

Beginning next spring, students who are currently enrolled in eighth, 10th and 11th grades in Metro Nashville schools will be selected for the program based on grades, standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, interviews, written statements and original projects.

Next fall they will spend one

day a week at Vanderbilt, attending classes, conducting laboratory research, and participating in discussions and videoconferences with scientists and other students across the world.

“The school will serve those students who excel in science and math and [who] enthusiastically seek an advanced curriculum that will challenge them to go beyond traditional instruction,” says Virginia Shepherd, director of the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach, which is designing and implementing the school.

Within one year a curriculum will be provided for all four high school grades. Up to 25 students will be enrolled in each grade. Students who enroll following completion of eighth grade will be required to commit to a four-year program that will include increasingly intensive academic-year and summer programs.

Students also will be required to keep up with their studies in their home schools. “This won't excuse them from required work in their regular classes,” Shepherd says. “These students will have to commit to extra time.”

Shepherd, professor of pathology and medicine and associate professor of biochemistry, says the project recognizes the need to improve math and science education so the United

States can remain competitive in the global marketplace of technologies and ideas.

Web site:
www.vanderbilt.edu/cso

Owen Students Learn Business Side of Transplants

FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS, Ed Zavala, administrator for the Vanderbilt Transplant Center, has been thinking about the benefits of a specialized education program for health-care management students interested in transplant administration. This fall his determination is

finally paying off. A specialty program in transplant administration at the Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, established in conjunction with the Vanderbilt Transplant Center, is the first of its kind in the country.

Targeting second-year health-care M.B.A. students, the program will allow for in-depth training in clinical administration and the economic aspects of transplant. “Students will be able to do just about everything—oversee staffing, contract management with managed care, Medicare reimbursement and compliance, profitability, regulatory



compliance, and organ availability and allocation,” says Zavala, research assistant professor in the Department of Surgery at Vanderbilt for the past three years. “The role of the transplant administrator has evolved along with the complexity of organ transplantation. These students will be

“We cannot be ignorant of fact, we cannot be ignorant of issues, we cannot be ignorant of things that happen past the borders of our immediate reach if we are to be engaged in a truly vital, self-actuating civil society.”

—Kevin Klose, president and chief executive officer of National Public Radio, in a Sept. 27 address at Vanderbilt

QuoteUnquote

Inquiring Minds

The Downside of Community College Credits

Just 14 percent of students who start out at a community college with the goal of transferring and getting a four-year degree actually meet that goal. William Doyle, assistant professor of higher education, reached that conclusion after studying U.S. Department of Education statistics.



Doyle, who summarized his findings in July for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, says that 79 percent of community-college students planned to get a four-year degree and 66 percent of that group had transferred to a four-year institution within six years. Whether those students in fact earned a bachelor's degree, however, appears to be linked to how many credits transferred to the four-year school. The odds of graduating diminish the longer a student is enrolled.

Juices May Reduce Alzheimer's Risk

In a large epidemiological study, researchers have found that people who drank three or more servings of fruit and vegetable juices per week had a 76 percent lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease than those who drank juice less than once per week. The study by Qi Dai, assistant professor of medicine, and colleagues appeared in the September issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*.

Originally, researchers suspected that high intakes of antioxidant vitamins might provide some protection against Alzheimer's disease, but recent studies have not supported this hypothesis. Dai began to suspect that another class of antioxidant chemicals, known as polyphenols, could play a role. Polyphenols are non-vitamin antioxidants common in the diet and particularly abundant in teas, juices and wines. Most polyphenols exist primarily in the skins and peels of fruits and vegetables.

Researchers Map GI Disorders' Effect on Magnetic Fields

A team of Vanderbilt researchers has won the 2006 Nightingale Prize from the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine for the best 2005 paper published in the journal *Medical and Biological Engineering and Computing*. Their paper describes a new way to process information from tiny magnetic fields produced by electrical activity in the stomach and small bowel. The goal is to develop noninvasive techniques for diagnosing gastrointestinal diseases.

The Vanderbilt team developed a method for projecting three recorded magnetic-field components or "vectors" in different directions. By doing this, "you can separate out the fetal heart signal from the maternal heart when monitoring a pregnancy, and the stomach signal from the small bowel signal in a patient with a gastrointestinal disorder," says L. Alan Bradshaw, the paper's lead author and a research assistant professor of surgery, physics and astronomy, and an adjunct assistant professor of biomedical engineering.

able to spend an entire academic year learning the essential aspects of the job."

Zavala, along with Jon Lehman, associate dean of the Owen Graduate School of Management, will lead a small group of students in the first year of the program.

"This is a very real opportunity for these students," Lehman says. "We have the transplant center here, the specialized health-care M.B.A., and a group of people with the ability to take the concept and run with it."

"Our students will be well grounded in many aspects in transplant administration and will be able to go into a transplant center and be immediately productive," Zavala says. "Many places train transplant surgeons and physicians, but no programs exist for administrators."

The Owen transplant administration program joins two other transplant training programs: the transplant pharmacy residency program and the transplant nurse practitioner program, which is offered in conjunction with the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing.

VU Ranks Among World's Best

VANDERBILT MOVED UP 61 places to No. 53 in the 2006 World University Rankings by *The Times* of London, the most comprehensive and respected worldwide ranking of universities. The rankings were released Oct. 6. Vanderbilt, which was ranked No. 114 last year, was the sole university from Tennessee to make the list.

"*The Times* represents per-

haps the gold standard of university rankings," says Chancellor Gordon Gee. "Vanderbilt clearly stands side by side with the very best universities in the world, which is a tribute to the quality of our faculty and students."

Vanderbilt's improved ranking was buoyed by a strong score of 81 out of 100 for faculty/student ratio. The rankings also considered peer-review scores, graduate recruiter reviews, citations of academic papers, and percentage of international students and faculty.



Vanderbilt also was ranked the No. 26 university in North America, up from No. 53 last year, and the No. 9 university in the world for academic staff-to-student ratio. As of the fall 2005 semester, Vanderbilt had a 9-to-1 ratio of students to faculty.

The top 10 universities in the world as cited by *The Times* of London are, in order, Harvard University, Cambridge University, Oxford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale University, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, University of California-Berkeley, Imperial College and Princeton University.

Vanderbilt also has performed well recently in a num-



Alumni and Friends Get Plugged In

www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni

The Alumni Association has ramped up its Web site to better connect alumni, parents and friends. Check out the redesigned site to find Vanderbilt Chapter events in your area, network for your career, search the Dore2Dore online directory, take advantage of alumni discounts and more. All comments are welcome as the Alumni Association works to be a more valuable resource for the Vanderbilt community.

Virtual Vanderbilt

ber of other rankings. Kaplan/*Newsweek*, publisher of the *How to Get into College* guide, has selected Vanderbilt as one of the "New Ivies" for the 2007 edition of the guide. The "New Ivies" list was created this year to recognize the growing reputation and heightened selectiveness that academically outstanding schools have achieved in light of growing popularity among top students. Schools that made the list were selected based on admissions statistics as well as interviews with administrators, students, faculty and alumni.

For the fourth straight year, Vanderbilt ranked among the top 20 national universities in *U.S. News & World Report* magazine's annual "Best Colleges" rankings. Vanderbilt ranked 18th among national universities and again was recognized for its value, economic diversity and service-learning programs.

Moreover, despite a recent tightening of the federal research budget, Vanderbilt University Medical Center has maintained its position among the nation's top medical schools for National Institutes of Health funding for the fiscal year 2005. VUMC ranked No. 15 out of 123 med-

icals schools in the United States, according to the agency's most recent figures. VUMC received 586 awards totaling \$244.2 million, an increase from \$226.8 million in 2004.

Research by Vanderbilt mathematicians is also getting increased recognition via one of the top industry standards—the frequency of which published papers are cited in major mathematics journals. According to a recent analysis by *Essential Science Indicators*, Vanderbilt ranks in the top 1 percent in terms of journal citations. The number of citations a paper receives is generally considered an indication of its quality and importance.

An Oasis in the Nutritional Desert

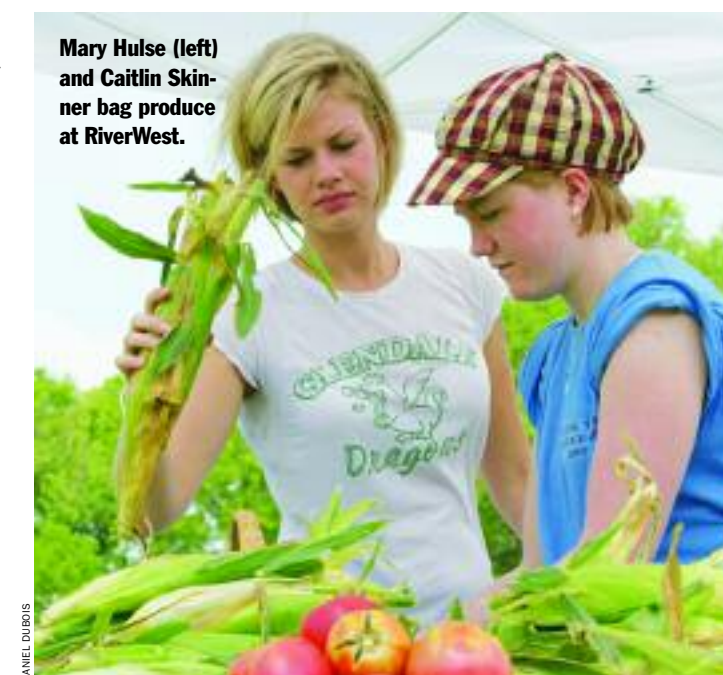
SANDWICHED BETWEEN North Nashville's gas stations and fast-food restaurants, an organic produce stand piled high with fruits and vegetables gave residents of three nearby neighborhoods the chance to buy healthy, affordable foods during the summer.

The RiverWest Produce Stand was the result of a partnership among Vanderbilt's

North Nashville Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC), the RiverWest Community Development Corp., and several other Nashville organizations. Darcy Freedman, a doctoral student at Vanderbilt, organized the project. The produce stand is an example of the action-research project model in practice at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, she says.

Freedman spent her first year at Vanderbilt and in the Nashville community researching methods for addressing

childhood obesity and consistently heard how difficult it was for some local residents to purchase high-quality, fresh produce in their neighborhoods. Last summer Freedman learned that COPC, in partnership with RiverWest Community Development—comprising the Preston Taylor, Hadley Park and Tomorrow's Hope neighborhoods—also was concerned about the dearth of healthy foods available in these neighborhoods. The three neighborhoods, along with several other areas in Nashville, are what



Mary Hulse (left) and Caitlin Skinner bag produce at RiverWest.

DANIEL DUBOIS

organizers call “food deserts”—areas without ready access to nutritious food.

“There are places where you can buy chips, beer, cigarettes and soda,” Freedman says. “If there are fruits and vegetables at those stores, they’re often poor quality and they’re very expensive.”

The produce stand offered residents a chance to purchase organic or locally grown produce in their own neighborhood. Produce came from the Nashville Farmer’s Market, a co-sponsor, as well as from local farms. Delvin Farms in Williamson County provided organic fruits and vegetables to the produce stand at no cost. Says owner Cindy Delvin, “We could sell this produce other places, but we felt this was such an important endeavor that we couldn’t take money for it.”

With ongoing support from the community, organizers hope to continue the RiverWest Produce Stand and branch out into other areas of Nashville in need of better access to healthy food.

“There’s tangible evidence that something good is happening here,” Freedman says.

Ladies of the Club Hang Up Their Dibbles

THE VENERABLE VANDERBILT Garden Club for Campus Beautification—the organization that helped grow a campus lush with magnolias, manicured lawns, and carefully tended flowerbeds and shrubbery—is dissolving after nearly 80 years of service. In recent years a sizable crew of full-time grounds workers has made the need for a garden club less compelling, but the group has

played an important role in Vanderbilt’s history.

In the decades after Vanderbilt’s 1873 founding on 75 acres of farmland, campus aesthetics were not a priority. Timber was cut from campus grounds and sold to supplement the university’s income from tuition, according to *The Real Dirt: A History of the Vanderbilt Garden Club for Campus Beautification*. Because money was scarce in the years after the Civil War, early administrators deferred maintenance on grounds and building upkeep.

In 1927, Mary Henderson



Vanderbilt Garden Club members (from left) Sharon Hogge, Virginia Holladay and Jean Wright.

Kirkland, wife of Vanderbilt’s second chancellor, James Kirkland, founded a group for wives of faculty members and trustees. “It was originally a very hoity-toity invited group of ladies who wore gloves and hats and had tea,” says Sharon Hogge, president of the Garden Club from 1996 to 1998, who compiled and edited *The Real Dirt*. From its inception, however, the focus was on improving

the appearance of the campus.

The Garden Club’s efforts gained a champion in Margaret Branscomb, wife of Harvie Branscomb, Vanderbilt’s fourth chancellor. She was the force behind one of the most significant tree-planting projects ever attempted by the university. In 1954 she proposed planting magnolia trees along West End and 21st avenues to create a natural barrier between campus and the city streets beyond. By 1959 two-thirds of the then-campus’ periphery was lined with magnolias.

Around the time Vanderbilt

merged with Peabody College in 1979, Board of Trust member Hall Thompson gave \$1 million toward a proposed \$2 million endowment to improve the “aesthetic qualities” of the grounds. Current Garden Club members credit the administration of Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt, which began in 1982, as the time when the university began its serious commitment to improving the grounds. The campus

was designated a National Arboretum in 1988.

Today the design of Vanderbilt’s grounds falls under the auspices of Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Planning Judson Newbern, who is assisted by Pam Sevy, the university landscape architect. “The women in the club have taught me a lot about Vanderbilt’s history, and their love of and desire to improve the campus landscape has certainly rubbed off on me,” says Sevy.

Today’s grounds maintenance shop comprises 45 employees, including an irriga-

tion specialist, two tree-maintenance specialists and two horticulturalists. And the Garden Club is closing its roll book. “When I am asked about the Vanderbilt Garden Club,” Hogge remarks, “I say ... it is a group of fine, crusty old ladies—and I certainly am included in that—who have affected the appearance of this campus over the last 80 years.”

Center to Study How Financial Incentives Affect Achievement

DO FINANCIAL incentives for teachers, administrators and schools affect student achievement? The new National Center on Performance Incentives at Peabody College, established through a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, will address that question.

“This center will give us hard data we can use to finally understand the relationship between performance and incentives and give policymakers real input on how best to invest resources to improve student learning and success,” says Camilla Benbow, the Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College.

The center’s first project will examine the effect of student achievement-related bonuses for teachers on individual and institutional behavior and dynamics.

James Guthrie, professor of public policy and education; chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations; and director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy, is the executive director of the new center. Matthew Springer, research assistant professor of public policy and education, is the center’s director.

“As a national research and development center charged by the federal government with



James Guthrie (left) and Matthew Springer

exercising leadership on performance incentives in education, our team is committed to a fair and honest evaluation, not some predetermined outcome,” Springer says.

Joining Vanderbilt in the center’s work is the RAND Corp., a nonprofit public policy research institute based in Santa Monica, Calif. The center is also working closely with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the Metropolitan Nashville Public School Board, the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, the Nashville Alliance for Public Education, and the Tennessee Education Association.

The new center makes Peabody the only education school in the country to host two national research and development centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. Peabody College is also home to the National Center on School Choice.

Top Picks

Neuroscientist Receives MacArthur ‘Genius Grant’

Kenneth Catania, a neuroscientist who studies odd-looking mammals for clues about the workings of the human brain, has been named a MacArthur Fellow. More commonly known as “genius grants,” the fellowships are awarded annually by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for creativity, originality, and potential to make important future contributions. Each recipient receives a total of \$500,000 “no strings attached” support over a period of five years. Catania, associate professor of biological sciences, is one of 24 individuals to receive this year’s awards. He was recognized for his study of the sensory systems of insect-eating mammals, particularly the star-nosed mole. His research could lead to a better understanding of how complex skills are learned and how the brain can recover from injury or strokes.



Vermund to Lead International HIV Trials



Sten Vermund, director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, has been selected to lead one of six new clinical-trial units created by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to combat HIV/AIDS worldwide. As primary investigator of the newly formed HIV Prevention Trials Network, Vermund will guide prevention trials around the world. Vermund’s own NIH-funded research projects involve the AIDS epidemic in Africa, India and China. He is the Amos Christie Chair in Global Health and a professor of pediatrics, medicine, preventive medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology. Total funding for the six new clinical-trial units is expected to reach \$285 million during the first year of operation.

What Is the Sound of One Hand Scraping?

The first week of October brought Centennial Professor of Psychology Randolph Blake two signal honors. On Oct. 7 he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences with former U.S. presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, and former poet laureate Rita Dove. Just two days earlier, Blake received the “coveted” Ig Nobel Prize from the Society for Improbable Research for a 1986 study that examined why nearly everyone cringes at the sound of fingernails scraping on a chalkboard. (His hypothesis: The offending sound mimics chimpanzees’ warning cries.) Perhaps he should consider a collaboration with Ig Nobel Peace Prize winner Howard Stapleton, who won for inventing an electro-mechanical teenager-repellent device, which makes an annoying noise designed to be audible to teens but not to adults.



Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

At Home on the Lanes

Bowling, a new varsity sport at Vanderbilt, is old hat to Michelle Peloquin.

BY NELSON BRYAN, BA'73

YOU CAN FIND Michelle Peloquin easily enough. Just listen for the sound of rolling thunder followed by the crash of splintering wood. The sophomore bowler is with her teammates, at home on the lanes.

Just a 25-minute drive from campus lies the Smyrna Bowling Center, home of the Vanderbilt women's bowling team, now entering its third year as a Vanderbilt varsity sport. The Smyrna location is a good choice, coach John Williamson says, because unlike closer bowling alleys, Smyrna lets Vanderbilt call the "shots"—the amount of oil used and where it's applied on the lanes. Collegiate tournament players require different standards than the local leaguers.

"This is like a brand-new, old-school bowling alley," Williamson says. "It's a bowling-only center, no arcade games."

But Vanderbilt and Smyrna are a lot farther down the road from Peloquin's hometown of Enfield, Conn., where she was valedictorian of her



class at Enrico Fermi High School and a member of the National Honor Society, and where she started bowling when she wasn't much taller than a tenpin.

"I started bowling when I was 5," Peloquin recalls. "I started playing soccer when I was 6. I did double duty all the way through high

school. Up to a point, soccer was definitely something I was a little more serious about. But once I got to middle school, soccer turned into a Monday through Friday event with practices and games after school. So my weekends really became dedicated to bowling. I started going to local and regional tournaments. Probably my freshman year of high school, I knew that bowling was the route I wanted to take."

She credits her father with sparking her interest in bowling. A bowler himself, he is an assistant bowling coach at Sacred Heart University, where her older sister, Nicole, was a collegiate bowler. Sacred Heart seemed like the natural destination for Michelle, but she was looking for more.

"I needed something a little bigger."

Sacred Heart's head bowling coach tipped off Peloquin that Vanderbilt was starting a new bowling program.

"She said it might be something I want to look into because I was really trying to get the best of both worlds," Peloquin says. "I wanted a good academic

institution that would also enable me to bowl competitively."

Peloquin's high school principal offered to put in a good word for her with Williamson.

"Coach called me later that night and asked if I wanted to come take a look at the school," she says. "It happened pretty fast."

The academics at Vanderbilt have been a good fit for Peloquin. A chemistry major, she is leaning toward a career in pharmacy. The bigger challenge for Peloquin was going from what had been a strictly individual sport to a team sport.

"Connecticut does not offer high-school bowling as a team sport," she explains, "so everything I competed in was individual. My league was individual, and I bowled in regional tournaments through an organization called the Junior Bowlers Tour."

The Junior Bowlers Tour doesn't distinguish between men's and women's divisions, and the number of female competitors was relatively few.

"I was basically bowling against males the entire time. It was probably a good thing. In order to stay in the pack, I really had to put a lot of effort into it and probably a good amount more than they did, just because I had that much more to make up."

In 2003 she won the Keystone Junior Bowlers Tour Tournament of Champions and in 2005 was the New England Conference Junior Bowlers Tour Bowler of the Year. She has bowled a perfect score of 300 on a number of occasions and says of the experience, "It's very cool."

There's an old coaches' saw that says, "There is no 'i' in team." OK, but there is an "m" and an "e," and after years of individual competition, Peloquin is happy to blend her "me" into a team environment.

"Last year we played almost entirely five

continued on page 83



Michelle Peloquin

PHOTOS BY NEIL BRADY

Organ Picked to Lead Women's Swim Team

Jeremy Organ has been chosen head coach of the fledgling women's swimming program, Vanderbilt's newest varsity sport. He comes to Vanderbilt after serving as head senior assistant/head masters coach at the Nashville Aquatic Club, one of swimming's most competitive club teams. A former collegiate swimmer himself, he was a six-time All-American at the University of North Dakota and was the North Central Conference Swimmer of the Year in 1995.

"We are excited to begin our women's swimming program and become part of a very competitive Southeastern Conference sport," says David Williams, vice chancellor for university affairs. "In Jeremy Organ we have a seasoned swimming expert who has both competed and coached successfully. He

has a record for developing young swimmers, and he will be an asset as we begin in this demanding league."

The 2006 team will be the first reincarnation since 1990, when the university dropped the swimming program due to inadequate facilities. The Aquadores will make the nearby Centennial SportsPlex their new home with a schedule that begins this winter.

Goff Football Jersey Honors Slain Teammate

Junior linebacker Jonathan Goff has been selected by teammates to wear a special jersey patch honoring the memory of former Commodore tailback Kwane Doster.

Goff, a mechanical engineering major from Salem, Mass., is the first player to wear the patch, according to Head Coach Bobby Johnson. A player will be voted to wear the

Doster patch each year throughout Johnson's coaching tenure.

Doster, the SEC Freshman of the Year in 2002, was killed by gunfire in his hometown of Tampa, Fla., on Dec. 26, 2004. Last year the entire Commodore squad paid tribute to Doster by wearing a "Dot 1" helmet decal.

"Jonathan is a perfect choice to honor Kwane," Johnson says. "He is a great teammate, academically responsible, and has a dedicated type of leadership." The designated patch features the Vanderbilt star logo through Doster's No. 1, surrounded by the initials KD. It appears on Goff's upper left chest, just above the C (designating him as a team captain).



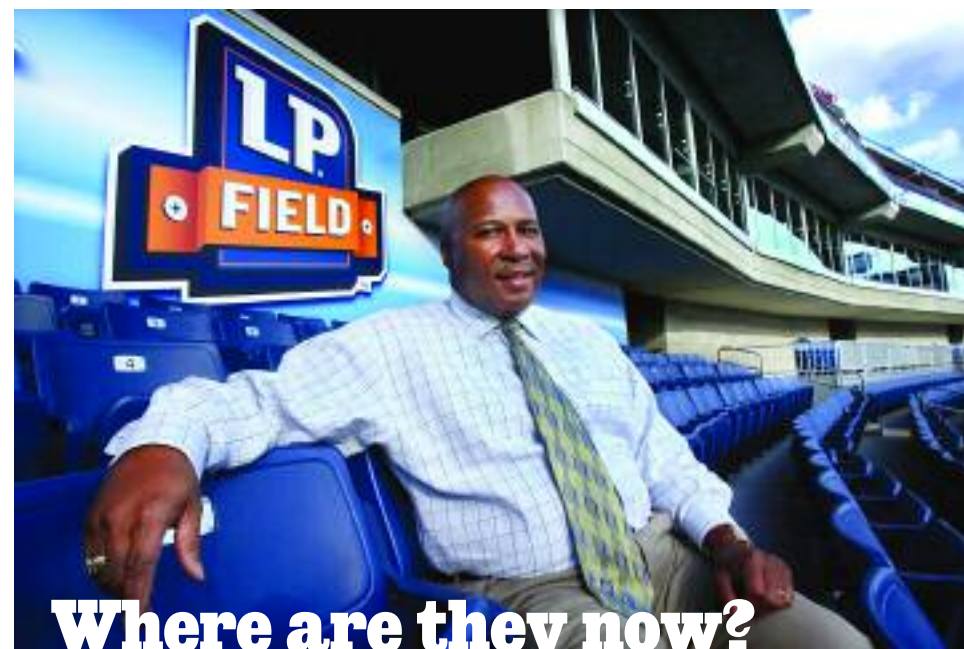
Scholarship to Honor Late Vanderbilt Voice Paul Eells

Several Commodore alumni are establishing a memorial scholarship fund in honor of former radio play-by-play announcer Paul Eells, who was killed in an automobile accident near Russellville, Ark., on July 31.

Eells was a former sports director at WSM radio and television and, from 1967 to 1978, the voice of Vanderbilt football and basketball games. Members of the famed "F-Troop" basketball team from the mid-'70s—Butch Feher, Jeff Fosnes and Joe Ford, along with teammate Dickie Keffer—are working to fund an athletic scholarship to commemorate Eells' contributions to the university. The group encourages all former student-athletes impacted by Eells to contribute.

"Paul was the type of person who made you feel like you were his best friend," says Keffer. "As a student and player, I found him to be very generous and gracious."

At the time of his death, Eells was sports director at KATV in Little Rock and had spent the past 28 years as the voice of the University of Arkansas football and basketball games.



Where are they now?

Thirty-some years after his playing days at Pearl High School and Vanderbilt University, **Walter Overton**, BA'74, is still integral to the football community in his hometown of Nashville. The former executive director of the Metro Nashville Sports Authority, he joined the NFL Tennessee Titans organization last March as general manager of LP Field, home stadium of the Titans and the Tennessee State University Tigers. He was the first black football player from a Metro Nashville school to receive a football scholarship at Vanderbilt and, as a quarterback-turned-wide receiver, led the team with 20 catches for 317 yards and two touchdowns in 1972. He also was present at the historic first-ever meeting between Tennessee State and Vanderbilt on the gridiron this year. "It's a dream come true," he says. "Having been exposed to both of these universities at an early age, it means so much to me for this to finally happen." By the way, Vanderbilt won the historic opener 38-9.



Sports Roundup

Women's Golf: Program Earns No. 4 National Ranking

The women's golf program has been ranked fourth nationally for junior golf prospects, according to a study compiled by *Golf Digest* magazine. "We're building a successful program at Vanderbilt," says Coach Martha Freitag, "and for us to have earned recognition as one of the nation's best schools validates the initial vision of where we could take this program." The two-time SEC Coach of the Year has guided Vanderbilt to three NCAA Championship finals and the 2004 SEC Championship while producing six All-America honorees and 22 SEC Academic Honor Roll selections.

Also, Jacqui Concolino was named second-team All-America by the National Golf Coaches Association last May, becoming the first freshman in school history to earn the distinction as one of the top 22 golfers in the nation. She also was the first Vanderbilt freshman to earn All-SEC first-team honors after finishing fourth at the SEC Championship.



Baseball: Price Named Summer Player of the Year

Vanderbilt pitcher David Price was named *Baseball America* magazine's College Summer Player of the Year in August. He was dominant on the mound for the *USA Baseball* National Team's pitching staff and helped lead the squad to a gold medal at the FISU World University Championships in Havana, Cuba. He logged a 5-1 record with a 0.20 ERA and struck out 61 batters with just seven walks in 44 innings



pitched. This was his second year to play for the *USA Baseball* National Team, which was coached this year by Vanderbilt's Tim Corbin and also featured Vandy third-baseman Pedro Alvarez.

Cross Country: Keith Called to Coach Commodores

Steven Keith has been named men's and women's cross country coach. A Vanderbilt alumnus, he lettered in cross country from 1977 to 1981. He has 20 years of coaching experience at the Division I level, most recently a five-year stint as head women's cross country coach at Alabama. "Vanderbilt has the potential to rise to an elite level on the national stage in cross country," says Vice Chancellor David Williams, "and we believe Steve Keith is the right person to lead us in that direction."

The cross country teams started the 2006 fall season at the Belmont Invitational with the men's team finishing second and the women's team finishing fifth.



Cross Country Coach Steven Keith, BA'81, preps his runners at the Belmont Invitational.

The women's swim team kicks off this winter after a 16-year hiatus.

Into the Wood

Vanderbilt's Fine Arts Gallery boasts an incredible range of prints made from images cut into wood. BY BONNIE ARANT ERTELT, BS'81



"Connecticut Pastoral" (1936) by Thomas Nason

mundane items as playing cards or mementos of saints for citizens making pilgrimages. Originally, woodcuts were associated with the common people. The anonymous artists making these blocks belonged to craft guilds reserved for woodworkers and cabinet makers.

The 1500s saw the introduction of higher-quality serial prints, each edition containing only a defined number of prints. Among the major artists working at the time was Albrecht Dürer, who not only designed but also cut the blocks for his prints. Vanderbilt owns several Dürer prints. "The Lamentation" (1511), from the collection given by Anna Hoyt, was on exhibit this fall in *Views from*

the Collection I, the Gallery's first show since undergoing renovations.

A number of Old Master prints by German artists, likewise donated by Hoyt, also were shown, including woodcuts by Albrecht Altdorfer, Lucas Cranach the Elder and Hans Baldung Grien, all done in the early 1500s and picturing Christ's Passion or other scenes from the Bible.

"To this day, they're really some of the better things we have in our print collection, as far as historic importance is concerned," says Joseph Mella, art curator and director of the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery. "They start early; I think our earliest print is from

1491. The Hoyt Collection goes into the 20th century, but its real strength is in the Old Master prints and those from the 16th through 19th centuries."

A number of Japanese woodblock prints also were shown this fall, the majority from the Fine Arts Gallery's extensive Asian Art Collection.

"Milan Mihal [professor of fine arts, emeritus], when he began teaching in 1968, gave a few prints to the collection, some 18th-century woodblock prints," says Mella, "and then that aspect of the collection slowly grew over time. Now we have more than 170 that are Japanese color woodblock prints. We established a fund some time ago for Japanese art, and with that money we have bought some really fine woodblock prints."

On view this fall were prints by Yoshitoshi, Hiroshige and Hokusai, all three well known in the pantheon of Japanese woodblock artists.



"Man with Spring Plants" (1922) by Leonard Baskin



"Ichikawa Kondanji V as Torii Matasuke" (1860) by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi

Yoshitoshi's "Ichikawa Kodanji V as Torii Matasuke" (1860) is in the vein of earlier *Ukiyo-e* prints that captured the interests of Japanese citizens at that time, particularly those prints that featured kabuki actors dramatically posed in their most famous roles.

Both Hiroshige and Hokusai were landscape artists famous for their numerous series of views. Hiroshige's "Tokaido Road" from *Pictures of Famous Places Near the Fifty-Three Stations* (1855) and Hokusai's "The Kazusa Sea Route" from *The Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji* (1830–32) both exhibit the finely toned color that makes the Japanese print look more like a watercolor painting than a print cut from multiple blocks of wood (each color printed from a separate block).

No matter how popular individual series of prints became, woodcuts continued to find a place in book illustration, and wood engravings in particular became the standard. While woodcuts were cut along the grain of the plank, wood engravings were cut using the end grain, which is much harder. As a result, much finer detail and quality of line could be chiseled, with the additional advantage that the harder end-grain blocks could withstand the pressure of the printing press much better than the less sturdy plank-grain blocks. Wood engravings were the preferred method for illustration in virtually all print media, including newspapers, until the advent of photographic reproduction.

Within the Fine Arts Gallery collection are numerous woodcuts and engravings that were used to illustrate great works of literature. One set by Salvador Dali, the famous surrealist, illustrates Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The largest set of engravings, by far, was given to the Fine Arts Gallery in return for its help in mounting the exhibition *Witness to Our Century: An Artistic Biography of Fritz Eichenberg* in 1997. Eichenberg, a well-known printmaker who provided illustrations for Dorothy Day's *The Catholic Worker*, also illustrated many great works of literature by Poe, Brontë, Dostoevsky and others.

"We have several portfolios by Fritz Eichenberg," says Mella, "including what's called in the trade 'the 248,' which means there are 248 prints in it. They were given to us by the Fritz Eichenberg Trust as payment-in-kind for helping organize the traveling exhibit. It's a series of volumes for which Eichenberg pulled prints from the original woodblocks of illustrations of great works of literature that he illustrated for Random House and publishers of that nature. There are portfolios of prints from *Crime and Punishment*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Idiot* and others."

These prints are distinguished by the movement of fine white lines within the rich black of the uncut block and the expressions on the faces of his figures.

continued on page 83



"In Praise of Folly: Portrait of Erasmus" (1972) by Fritz Eichenberg

Bright Ideas

“Maya farmers and Nashville consumers don't know anything about each other, yet are intimately connected.” —EDWARD FISCHER, anthropologist

The Crucifer of Desire

1 NEXT TIME YOUR children turn up their noses at the broccoli you put before them, try this tactic: “Eat your vegetables, kids. Poor children in Guatemala won't be able to attend Catholic school if you don't finish that broccoli.”

It turns out that Americans' desire to live well has a great deal in common with Maya farmers' desire to live well. In their new book, *Broccoli & Desire*, anthropologists Edward Fischer and Peter Benson, BA'01, trace the complex connections between the hopes and dreams of Maya farmers in Guatemala and the health and dietary choices made by shoppers in Nashville.

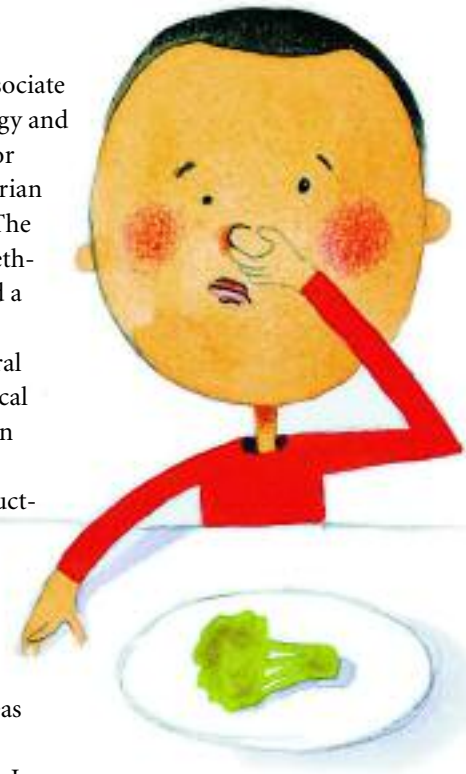
“The idea behind this book was to link Maya farmers with Nashville consumers who don't know anything about each other, yet are intimately con-

ected,” says Fischer, associate professor of anthropology and director of the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies at Vanderbilt. “The two groups are tied together in a web of desire and a web of economics.”

Fischer studies cultural anthropology and political economy, with a focus on the Maya of highland Guatemala. While conducting research there, he noticed that poor Maya farmers had started to grow new specialty crops such as broccoli, cauliflower and snow peas for export.

“After asking around, I learned that some of the larger, corporate agriculture operations in the area had tried to grow some of these crops, but gave it up because it was such labor-intensive, grueling work,” Fischer says. “They then started contracting it out to small-operation Maya farmers.”

Fischer found that hundreds, possibly thousands, of these farmers are now growing broccoli for export to the United States. He decided to follow the broccoli on its journey from field to grocery store, interviewing the farmers, importers in Miami and consumers in Nashville. He found that despite the obvious differences between the farmers and consumers,



both groups were bound by a common driver: desire.

“Consumers in Nashville and across the United States have a desire to eat healthy foods and live well. These desires are constantly present in popular discourse about living the good life,” Fischer says.

“We often think of the Third World as having needs, while we in the ‘first world’ have desires. Peasant Maya farmers, for example, are struggling to get by—how can they have desires?” he says. “But they do. They want to save money, buy a truck, send their kids to Catholic school. And these desires drive them to produce crops they know they can sell, like broccoli.”

In the book, Fischer and Benson explore moral, sociological and historical issues surrounding the economic connection between these two groups and that connection's roots in the victimization of the Maya people throughout history. Through profiles of individual farmers and consumers, they illustrate the stark differences between how the groups attempt to satisfy their own desires for a better life and the vastly higher level of risk the Maya must assume to do so.

One such profile involves a farmer named Pablo, a married, 39-year-old Kaqchikel Maya farmer.

“For farmers like Pablo, surviving—meeting the basic needs of human existence—is always present as an imperative that must be met and satisfied,” Fischer and Benson write. “But there is something else at work here. ... Export agriculture is compelling for farmers like Pablo not because it is the only way they can survive, but because it plays into the desire for ‘something more’ or ‘something better’—a diffuse desire with which the average American broccoli consumer would also be familiar even if the particular desiderata differ.”

Broccoli & Desire is published by Stanford University Press. Peter Benson is a graduate student in the Harvard

University Department of Anthropology and a former student of Fischer's.

For more information about the book, visit www.sup.org.

Constant Lighting May Disrupt Premies' Biological Clocks

2 EVERY YEAR about 14 million low-weight babies born worldwide are exposed to artificial lighting in hospitals. But a new study suggests that keeping the lights on around the clock in neonatal intensive care units may interfere with the development of premature babies' biological clocks.

The study, headed by Douglas McMahon, professor of biological sciences at Vanderbilt and an investigator at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, reports that exposing baby mice to constant light keeps the master biological clock in their brains from developing properly and can have a lasting effect on their behavior. The results were published in the Aug. 21 issue of the journal *Pediatric Research*.

“We are interested in the effects of light on biological clocks because they regulate our physiology extensively and

also have an important effect on our mood,” McMahon says. “This study suggests that cycling the lights in NICUs may be better than constant lighting from the perspective of developing their internal clocks.”

“Today we realize that lighting is very important in nursing facilities, but our understanding of light's effects on patients and staff is still very rudimentary,” says Dr. William F. Walsh, chief of nurseries at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospi-



tal at Vanderbilt. “We need to know more.”

Although older facilities still use round-the-clock lighting, modern NICUs, like that at Vanderbilt, maintain their lighting in a day-night cycle and keep lighting levels as low as possible. Covers are kept over the isolets that hold the babies in an effort to duplicate the

dark conditions of the womb.

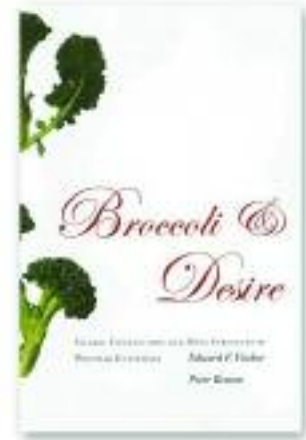
The finding that exposure to constant light disrupts the developing biological clock in baby mice points to an underlying mechanism that helps explain the results of several previous clinical studies. One study found that infants from neonatal units with cyclic lighting tend to begin sleeping through the night more quickly than those from units with constant lighting. Other studies confirmed that infants placed in units that maintain a day-

humans, the master biological clock is located in an area of the brain called the suprachiasmatic nuclei (SCN). It influences the activity of a surprising number of organs, including the brain, heart, liver and lungs, and regulates the daily activity cycles known as circadian rhythms.

The SCN is filled with special neurons that are wired in such a way that their activity varies on a regular cycle of roughly 24 hours. In a normal brain the activity of these clock neurons is synchronized to a single cycle that is set by the 24-hour day-night cycle.

Newborn mice provide a good model for premature human infants because baby mice are born at an earlier stage of development than humans, a stage closely equivalent to that of premature babies.

The researchers studied two groups of newborn mice. One group was exposed to a normal cycle of 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness for the first three weeks of life; the second was exposed to constant light for the same period. The researchers used a special transgenic strain of mouse with an artificial gene that produces a green fluorescent protein under the control of one of the genes associated with the biological clock. As a result, when the neurons are active they produce a bright glow. >>



This allowed scientists to determine that the SCN neurons in the baby mice who were exposed to a normal light cycle quickly became synchronized. By contrast, the clock neurons in baby mice exposed to constant light were unable to maintain coherent rhythms. However, when the constant-light mice were exposed to a day-night light cycle, the clock neurons rapidly fell into lock-step.

“This is a new area of research,” says McMahon, “so there are a lot of unanswered questions. For example, could disruption of a baby’s biological clock increase his vulnerability to associated mood disorders like depression and seasonal affective disorder? Could it make it harder for someone to adjust to shift work or suffer more from jet lag? All this is speculative at this point. But, certainly the data would indicate that human infants benefit from the synchronizing effect of a normal light cycle.”

The research was funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health.



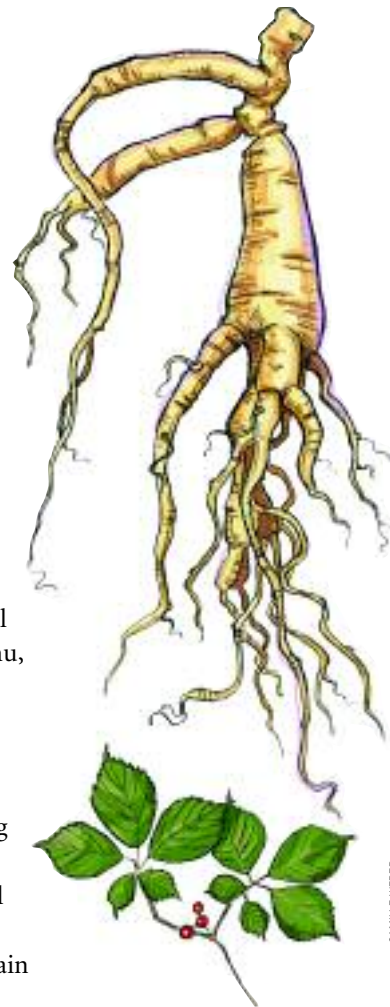
Douglas McMahon uses transgenic mice to study bioclocks.

Ginseng Found to Improve Breast Cancer Outcomes

3. GINSENG, ONE of the most widely used herbs in traditional Chinese medicine, may improve survival and quality of life after a diagnosis of breast cancer, according to a recent study by Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center researchers.

The large epidemiological study, led by Dr. Xiao-Ou Shu, professor of medicine, was published online recently in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Ginseng is a slow-growing perennial herb whose roots have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for more than 2,000 years. The two main classes of ginseng—red and white—have different biological effects, according to traditional Chinese medicine theory. White, or unprocessed, ginseng is used over long periods to promote general health, vitality and longevity. Red, or processed, ginseng provides a



CAMILLE WEBER

much stronger effect and is used for short periods to aid in disease recovery.

Both varieties contain more than 30 chemicals, called ginsenosides, which have anti-tumor effects in cell culture and animal studies, suggesting that the herbs may provide specific benefits to cancer patients.

Ginseng use has been increasing among cancer patients in recent years, particularly in women diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite the encouraging laboratory findings, scientific analysis of ginseng’s health benefits in patient populations has been lacking.

“There is a lot of skepticism about herbal medicine,” says Shu. “That is why we are taking the observational approach at this time to see whether there is any efficacy. If so, we can go to the next phase ... and

eventually go to clinical trials.”

Shu and colleagues assessed the effects of ginseng use in breast-cancer survivors as part of the Shanghai Breast Cancer Study, which followed 1,455 breast-cancer patients in Shanghai since 1996. Researchers evaluated breast-cancer patients for ginseng use both before and after their diagnosis of breast cancer. All patients who used ginseng had received at least one type of conventional cancer therapy such as surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Information about ginseng use prior to cancer diagnosis, which was available for every subject, was used to determine whether prior ginseng use predicted survival.

At follow-up—about three to four years after diagnosis—the researchers asked about ginseng use since diagnosis. That information, which was available only for survivors, was used to look at quality-of-life measurements, including physical, psychological, social and material well-being.

Before diagnosis, about a quarter of patients (27.4 percent) reported using ginseng regularly. After diagnosis, that percentage jumped to 62.8 percent.

The researchers also found significant improvements in both survival and quality-of-life measures in patients who used ginseng. “When patients used ginseng prior to diagnosis, they tended to have higher survival,” Shu explains. “Ginseng use after cancer diagnosis was related to improved quality of life.”

The findings suggest that ginseng may provide tangible benefits to breast-cancer survivors, but the study has limitations. The varieties and the methods of ginseng use and the

use of other complementary and alternative therapies could not be fully accounted for in the analysis. Also, the quality-of-life measures relied exclusively on patient self-reporting.

Although side effects of ginseng use were not recorded in this study, Shu warns that the seemingly innocuous root can create problems when improperly used and should be taken with caution.

“It’s not a ‘drug’ in terms of being managed by the FDA, but it was used as a drug in traditional Chinese medicine,” he says. “Any drug may have some side effects and may interact with other drugs. So, discuss with your primary care doctor before you decide to take ginseng roots or products.”

Shu hopes to confirm and expand the current findings through continued collection of data in this patient population, from another ongoing study of 4,000 breast-cancer patients and, eventually, in randomized clinical trials.

Scientific study of complementary and alternative medicines is tricky, though, says Shu. “Chinese traditional medicine is very individualized. It gives you different drugs based on your symptoms and your overall health. There is much to be learned.”

Other authors on the paper were Yong Cui, Hui Cai, Meng-Hua Tao and Wei Zheng from Vanderbilt and Yu-Tang Gao from the Shanghai Cancer Institute. The research was supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute.

For more on breast cancer treatment and resources at Vanderbilt, go to www.vicc.org/cancers/disease.php?id=7.

New Treatment for Age-Related Macular Degeneration

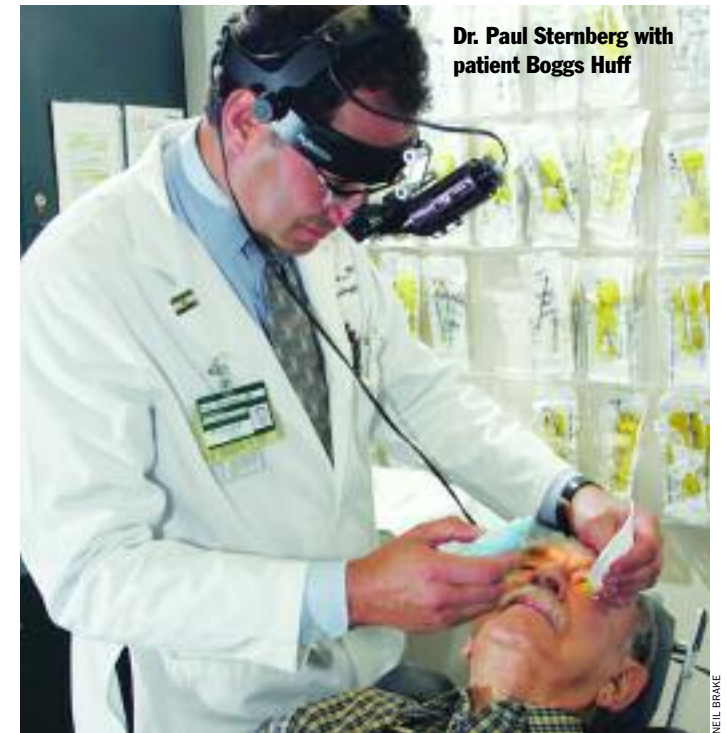
4. VANDERBILT University Medical Center recently began offering a new treatment for wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) that may improve—and in some cases restore—patients’ vision.

Nearly 6 million Americans 55 and older suffer from AMD, with 1.5 million cases resulting in some vision loss. It is estimated that 100,000 people develop wet AMD each year.

Lucentis, also known by the generic name ranibizumab, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in June. The drug is administered by injection directly into the eyeball of patients suffering from wet AMD, a chronic condition caused by abnormal growth of blood vessels behind the eye. The disorder leads to leaking or bleeding within the eye, causing central vision loss and often blindness.

This is the first drug to show promise in significantly improving visual acuity for these patients, says Dr. Paul Sternberg, the George W. Hale Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, chair of the department, and director of the Vanderbilt Eye Institute. While other treatments slowed the progression of the disease, Lucentis helped improve vision by inhibiting the growth of blood vessels.

“This represents a tremendous step forward for patients with wet AMD,” Sternberg says.



Dr. Paul Sternberg with patient Boggs Huff

“In the past we have told patients there is nothing we can do. Now we are hopeful and excited that we can tell them there are drugs that might be able to help slow down the deterioration.”

“We now can offer a drug that has the potential to improve visual function,” adds Dr. Franco Recchia, assistant professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences, who was the first to administer the drug at Vanderbilt.

That’s just what Boggs Huff, BA’46, is hoping for. Huff, now 81, was diagnosed in 2000 with the beginning stages of AMD in both eyes. Last year he underwent cataract and corneal replacement surgery in his left eye, which was showing signs of worsening.

“Doing the surgeries worked great,” Huff says. “It was amazing—it changed my sight. I could read without a magnifying glass, and I could see the signs on the road.”

But it was short-lived. Three months later he developed wet AMD and came to Sternberg early this year.

“I feel hopeful,” Huff says. “I live in hope, but I am prepared to know that if it doesn’t help, I tried it all. When you start losing your eyesight, you’ll go through any route.”

In clinical trials of Lucentis, nearly 40 percent of patients experienced significant vision improvement.

Each injection costs nearly \$2,000. Many insurance companies are covering the treatment, Sternberg says.

Sternberg and his team, which includes Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology Dr. Anita Agarwal, have treated about 10 patients so far. All have tolerated the treatments without complication, says Sternberg. Each patient will return for at least three more doses for a total of four treatments, at which time they will be evaluated for visual acuity. ▼

For more information about stories in *Bright Ideas*, visit Vanderbilt’s online research journal, *Exploration*, at <http://exploration.vanderbilt.edu>.

InClass

A spotlight on faculty and their work

Lost in Translation

John Sloop uses a hit television show to help students navigate the maze of mass media, culture and consciousness. BY ANGELA FOX

IT'S A TYPICAL MUGGY Nashville afternoon in late August, and the fall semester is just getting under way. Rain threatens as students scurry back from lunch across 21st Avenue to the Vanderbilt campus, intent on getting to their next class on time. At 1:10 p.m. sharp in a small room on the second floor of Calhoun Hall, Vanderbilt professor John Sloop launches into discussion of his favorite topic—television.

Not surprising, since Sloop, head of the Department of Communication Studies since 2005, holds a B.S. in media/advertising from Appalachian State University, a master's in speech communication from the University of Georgia, and a Ph.D. in communication studies from the University of Iowa. He is an acknowledged expert on the rhetoric of the mass media, with 15 years' teaching experience, dozens of published articles, and several books to his credit.

What is a bit surprising is that the 16 freshmen in Sloop's seminar are there to hone their writing skills to college level through a study of the hit television series *Lost*.

Ah, a softball class with a pop-culture hook, you say. Well, hold on to that remote for just a second.

The class isn't more than a few minutes old when Sloop has introduced in rapid succession authors like Marshall McLuhan ("the medium is the message") and concepts like

Paul Du Gay's "circuit of culture." He also references *The Electronic Hearth* by Vanderbilt professor Cecelia Tichi and Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, both seminal books about television and its effect on culture. Not exactly the sources quoted in *TV Guide* or *Entertainment Weekly*. Then, just as the "uh-oh, what kind of course have I signed

up for" look begins to flicker in the students' eyes, Sloop almost winks at them with the question, "What character would you have killed off on *Lost* by now?" A light discussion ensues before Sloop steers the class back into deeper waters.



ultimately, it becomes clear the issues Sloop will ask these freshmen to confront during the coming months may be as confounding as those facing the castaways on *Lost* itself. Like that fictional group of strangers thrown together on an apparently deserted

island in a remote corner of the Pacific and faced with the common goal of survival, Sloop's class also will form a community and develop the skills and self-discipline necessary to survive—and thrive—in Vanderbilt's challenging academic environment.

"Lessons from *Lost*: A Case Study Introduction to Cultural Studies" is one of more than 80 first-year writing seminars designed to launch entering students into a new academic and social order.

"This course works on a number of levels to do that," Sloop explains. "First, students learn to write at college level. Second, the course eases the transition into college because of the small class size and the fact that students get to choose a topic they are passionate about—and that also gives them a built-in community a couple times a week."

Indeed, only one student in Sloop's class has never watched *Lost* and most, like Sloop himself, are avid fans who eagerly discuss characters and plot details from the past two seasons and speculate about what the third season will bring.

Still, as Sloop stresses in his overview of the course, this is not a class about a popular television show but rather one that will "utilize *Lost* in order to think about and criticize relationships between and among mass media, culture, economics, production and consciousness or ideology." To do this

continued on page 84



"If our reality is in large part ideas that humans have created," says John Sloop, "we should ask ourselves how we get these ideas. It isn't through other people but through mediated text—so we must deal with the media issue."

PEACE *through* PROSPERITY

*Thirty years ago, Muhammad Yunus loaned out \$27.
For millions of the world's poor, it was enough to start a revolution.*

By JIM PATTERSON

Muhammad Yunus, who earned a Ph.D. in economics at Vanderbilt in 1971, won the Nobel Peace Prize in October for his work combating poverty through a bank that gives small loans to poor people.

Yunus' concept of microcredit—small loans to poor villagers in Bangladesh to help them buy livestock or fund an enterprise—has grown from the \$27 he loaned out of his own pocket into the Grameen Bank, which has loaned more than \$5.7 billion to 6.61 million borrowers. Despite lack of collateral or signed loan documents, 99 percent of the loans have been paid back—a rate unheard of elsewhere in the banking industry. The Grameen Bank provides services in more than 71,000 villages in Bangladesh through 2,226 branches. Grameen was jointly named recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

"Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty," the Nobel Committee said in awarding the \$1.36 million prize. "Microcredit is one such means. Development from below also serves to advance democracy and human rights."

Yunus first arrived in Nashville in 1965, entering the Vanderbilt graduate program in economic development in the

Department of Economics after receiving a one-year Fulbright Fellowship. But he was encouraged to remain at Vanderbilt to earn a doctorate, receiving support from the university and becoming teaching assistant to Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, then Vanderbilt Distinguished Professor of Economics.

"It was the most fascinating period in American history as far as I was concerned: the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, flower children, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy," Yunus recalled in a 1997 *Vanderbilt Magazine* article.

"It changed me, too. I saw that one man could stand up and say, 'No, you are wrong,' even with the whole world saying, 'We are right.' The whole society could turn around from just one voice."

Yunus spent four years at Vanderbilt and three at Middle Tennessee State University as an assistant professor of economics. In 1971 he was awarded a Ph.D. in economics from Vanderbilt. He returned to Bangladesh the following year.

The Grameen (which means "rural" in Bengali) Bank began in the village of Jobra in 1976, when Yunus gave \$27 to 42 self-employed crafts workers. He reasoned that if financial resources

Muhammad Yunus, PhD'71 (center), celebrates Oct. 13 with jubilant supporters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after receiving word that he had won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006.



FARIJANA K. GODHLY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

were made available to the poor on terms and conditions that are appropriate and reasonable, "these millions of small people with their millions of small pursuits can add up to create the biggest development wonder."

Grameen takes banking to the customer. Its agents travel by bicycle to villages to find women whose circumstances might be changed by the means to buy laying hens or honeybees or materials to make fishing nets.

It is also part of the bank's mission to help educate women. Borrowers pledge to have small families, oppose child marriages and dowries, and to send their children to school, among other things.

Yunus has visited the Vanderbilt campus regularly since his graduation and was named the university's first Distinguished Alumnus in 1996. John W. Johnson, BE'68, who was then president-elect of the Alumni Association and one of those who

"I saw that one man could stand up and say, 'No, you are wrong,' even with the whole world saying, 'We are right.'"

—Muhammad Yunus
2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner

helped select Yunus as the first Distinguished Alumnus, recalls: "When we first heard his name suggested, he was something of an unknown to us. Bangladesh isn't a major focal point for media attention, and Muhammad Yunus, like few who have accomplished great things, does not call attention to himself. But he turned out to be an inspired choice."

Yunus is the author of an autobiography, *The Banker to the Poor: Micro-lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*.

"I once asked Yunus what he did for fun," recalls James Foster, professor of economics at Vanderbilt. "He told me he spent his spare time thinking of new strategies to help people help themselves. That's the kind of person he is." ▼

Four other Nobel laureates have been affiliated with Vanderbilt: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/publications/20gifts.pdf>

mysteries

As diagnoses skyrocket, researchers pursue new insights into the bidden world of autism

miracles

By LISA A. DUBOIS | Photography by NEIL BRAKE

Recently, 8-year old Tammi McDaniel asked her mother to buy her some red cabbage.

“What do you want red cabbage for?” Angela McDaniel asked.

“I want to make red cabbage water and apply lemon juice to it to test whether it is an acid or a base,” her daughter answered.

For the McDaniel family, this interchange between Tammi and her mother is nothing short of a miracle—well beyond a young child showing an interest in science. Two years ago Tammi had a large vocabulary, but she couldn’t carry on a conversation. Before that, her mother had to quit taking her to Wal-Mart because if Tammi heard another child cry at the far end of the store, she would become so distraught she’d put her hands over her ears and rock and moan, trying to block out the sound.

But the worst mental image, Angela says, choking back tears, was when her little girl was 3 and she suddenly let out a blood-curdling scream and began smacking herself in the head. Tammi’s parents had no idea what was the matter with their daughter.

Shortly before Tammi’s fifth birthday, the McDaniels had her evaluated at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, although by that time they were almost sure of the diagnosis. Confirming their worst fears, Kennedy Center researchers diagnosed Tammi as having mild atypical autism. Their little girl was, as people involved with autism now phrase it, “on the spectrum.”



Tammi McDaniel and her mother, Angela

Once thought to be extremely rare, diagnoses of autism have been skyrocketing since the 1970s, with reports of a 556 percent increase between 1991 and 1997 alone. Some experts argue that this is due to better diagnostics and improved access to services, but others aren't so sure that these alone account for such an astonishing increase. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that as many as one in 166 children born in the United States may have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which incorporates a series of developmental problems ranging from the severe form known as autistic disorder to the milder Asperger's syndrome. All disorders along the spectrum are characterized by varying degrees of deficits in communication and social skills and by unusually repetitive activities and interests.

First described as a neurological disorder in 1943, autism was thought to occur in only one in 10,000 children and was considered virtually untreatable. For the next 40 years, it was relegated to back-burner status among most behavioral and neurobiological scientists. Individuals with autism often were grouped under the broad umbrella of mental retardation. Over time, however, clinicians began to discover more and more children with autism who, despite having social and language deficits and exhibiting idiosyncratic behaviors like spinning, hand flapping and finger flicking, actually had average and above-average IQs. Children with an ASD, it turns out, are in a class by themselves.

Once scientists realized that, more and more of them began working together to decipher the brain architecture unique to people with autism. Consequently, they are spawning a revolution in new treatments and interventions. Many children

are now moving from the lower-functioning to the higher-functioning end of the spectrum and, in some cases, are making enough progress to "leave" the autism spectrum altogether. These children bear the torch of hope for others.

"We don't really know why, but more children are leaving the autism spectrum than ever before," says Wendy Stone, professor of pediatrics, director of the Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD), and co-director of Vanderbilt's Marino Autism Research Institute. "I think it's because intervention works."

Stone came to Vanderbilt in the late 1980s and spent years flying solo—the only

professional on campus focused on the problems of autism.

"I had nobody to collaborate with, which is very lonely for a researcher," she says.

She soon received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health that allowed her to begin identifying early characteristics of autism in children under 3 years old, but that only added to her frustration, as she witnessed the widening gap between what these children needed and what was available in the community.

Individuals with autism often were grouped under the umbrella of mental retardation—until clinicians discovered children with average and above-average IQs.

"Here I was telling parents, 'Your child has autism, but there's nothing here for you to do about it ... because there aren't many people around who do autism work,'" Stone says. "I almost left because it was so miserable."

Instead she petitioned Dr. Ian Burr, then pediatric chairman, to allow her to begin developing certain autism services that would be accessible to the public. In 1998 she founded TRIAD and, with Vanderbilt pediatrician Dr. Sue McGrew, began to offer new services and programs for autism and to contract with local school systems to train teachers and aides on methods for teaching students with the disorder.

Stone also began to investigate markers in young, pre-verbal children that might indicate a diagnosis of autism. She found that the stereotypical flagrant, repetitive behaviors like rocking and spinning are not good identifiers in toddlers. Instead, among the very young, autism is identified by the lack or absence of typical development in behaviors and social communication—a child doesn't make eye contact, or does not imitate sounds or gestures, or won't smile responsively, or may not point to a desired toy.

Stone developed the Screening Tool for Autism in Two-year-olds (STAT), which enables her to assess with remarkable accuracy the risk of autism in children as young as 24 months, and she is testing a newer scoring system that can be used down to 14 months. Investigators are finding that the key to success is to diagnose ASD as soon as possible because the earlier the intervention begins, the better the ultimate outcome.

Critical for clinicians is the ability to distinguish between autism and other forms of mental retardation. Professor of

Special Education and Kennedy Center language specialist Paul Yoder, who works with 2- and 3-year-olds, says children with autism communicate less frequently and in less sophisticated and socially acceptable ways than children with other developmental delays. Rather than pointing at a book, for example, a child with autism may take an adult's hand and throw it in the direction of the bookshelf. The adult then must figure out what the child wants. A cookie? A toy? To go play outside? A book? It's easy to see how these interactions become exasperating for both the child and the grown-up.

Yoder and others have discovered that one way in which young, pre-linguistic children connect with others is through the use of declaratives, and many times declaratives don't emerge naturally in children with autism. For example, when a typical toddler looks at an aquarium filled with beautiful fish, his eyes light up and he says, "OHHH!" That response is a social communication, a way for little ones to share wonder, interest and intellectual curiosity with others.

"One of the motivations for learning to speak is to share the contents of the mind—to share what I think about and what I care about. Not just to get things, but to connect. And that's hard to do without language," Yoder says. "All these gestures, grunts, vocalizations and tantrums [typically seen in children with autism] just don't serve the purpose as well as language does."

Yoder has found that declaratives can be taught. And, once taught, many children with an ASD can then generalize this knowledge to other situations. He and others are teaching groups of these youngsters how to play and how to indicate interest, and from there they can help broaden the children's inquisitiveness and desire to communicate through play. He recently completed a study of 40 children using declaratives as an intervention, and 39 of those children showed improvement in some measurable outcome by the end of the study. Importantly, different treatments worked for different types of children, depending on their level of communication when they entered the study.

"There were such big changes in some children's autism that it seems almost miraculous. All of a sudden these kids started to communicate intentionally in ways that included another person," Yoder says. "However, I've only seen three kids who've come from nonverbal communication to talking in full sentences within a year. So talking in complete sentences is not the ultimate goal of short-term treatment. But more frequent, clearer and more socially connected communication is an appropriate goal."

Socially acceptable communication is a bedrock of Camp TRIAD, a summer day camp for children with autism run by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Divided into two three-week sessions, Camp TRIAD serves children ranging from ages 6 to 18, comprising 70 percent who have autism and 30 percent who are typically developing. The camp offers these children exercises in social skills and the chance to work and play as

part of a peer group. For instance, they may participate in a game that requires them to stand in line to get ice cream, order their ice cream, and then pay for it. Later, they'll actually go outside and put these skills to use at an ice cream carnival.

They also rehearse using good manners, behaving appropriately in a large group or crowd, and performing relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety.

Researchers often articulate two long-term goals for children with an ASD. First, by the end of childhood, those with autism should have at least one good friend. Second, they should have acquired skill sets that enable them to be employable. These are not easy goals to reach. Yet, TRIAD camp coordinator Nicolette Bainbridge-Brigham reports that several school-aged campers became friends during the summer of 2006, and a few even set up play-dates outside of camp, a monumental achievement in the ASD world.

Twelve-year-old Grace Goad was first diagnosed with autism at age 32 months. Her parents, who are now divorced and share custody, realized that she played in odd ways as a toddler—banging her hands on every light post they passed or wanting them to rock and sing to a plastic silo from her farm set. She was hypersensitive on some areas of her body, such as her tongue, and markedly less sensitive on other parts, such as her head. After developmental experts confirmed that Grace was "on the spectrum," Leisa Hammett, her mother, embarked on a year of grueling, nonstop intervention.

"There's no one-stop shop for children with autism, and that's true all over the country," Hammett says. "You're driving from appointment to appointment. And it's maddening."

When Grace was 4, Hammett stopped and asked herself, "Where is the joy here? Where's the fun of being a child?"

Because it was necessary to intervene as aggressively as possible and to have Grace learn basic life-functioning skills, the family had lost all spontaneity. As Hammett puts it, they were sucked into the "autism vortex." Determined that her child should experience the joy of creativity and expression, Hammett signed Grace up for art, music and dance/movement therapy classes, and immediately recognized that Grace had talent as an artist.

Although Grace struggles with manual dexterity and has



Language specialist Paul Yoder's work improving children's communication skills has produced changes in some that are "almost miraculous."



Researcher Wendy Stone has developed a tool for assessing the risk of autism in children as young as 24 months.

trouble holding a pencil and writing her name, she can grasp a paintbrush and a glue stick and is capable of creating vibrant works of mixed media.

“Grace’s greatest artistic strength is her sense of color and composition,” explains her mother, showing off a living-room wall adorned with her daughter’s paintings. “Here you have a child who is communicatively, socially and cognitively challenged, but who can produce these beautiful expressions of art. Everything in her paintings is very methodically and thoughtfully placed. It’s not random.”

Grace’s artistic compositions have appeared in numerous art shows and exhibitions, and Hammett dreams of her daughter one day attending high school part time at the Nashville School for the Arts.

“But I’ve got to make a tremendous leap here,” Leisa admits. “I’ve got to get her out of one-on-one art production and into a group setting. And how do I do that? We’ve now hit that gap. We’re not in early intervention anymore.”

In truth, Grace remains positioned right in the middle of the autism spectrum. She can feed herself but still reads on a first-grade level. She understands most of what is said to her,



Although Grace Goad struggles with manual dexterity, she can grasp a paintbrush and is a talented artist.

but she is not yet conversational. Although she has not engaged in self-injury, such as the head-banging and arm-biting that is stereotypical of many older children with autism, she has gone through episodes of wetting her pants and ripping her clothes. Meanwhile her parents and teachers struggle to find a reason why a child who is normally so easygoing, sweet and compliant would engage in those behaviors.

Grace has now “maxed out” on many of the Kennedy Center studies that younger children with an ASD can participate in for free—and her mother is not happy about that. The cost of various ASD therapies and interventions can be exorbitant, upwards of thousands of dollars a year. Participants in studies at the Kennedy Center usually have access to a multidisciplinary team, a medley of therapists and behavioral analysts, as part of the study criteria.

Kennedy Center Director Pat Levitt acknowledges the fall-off all across the country in treatments available to meet the needs of pre- and post-pubertal children with an ASD.

“Life transitions have really been under-supported, under-researched, and we have a huge dilemma,” Levitt says, adding that the Kennedy Center is making plans for hiring experts in adolescent ASD. “There’s a period of time before puberty when some kids show aggressive and self-injurious behaviors, and then it gets better. Then all of a sudden it reappears again just after puberty or in their 20s, and we don’t know why.

“The way the medical world has been managing the behavioral issues is with pills. That’s bad because over time the pills lose their effectiveness. So they add another pill and another pill and another pill. In our Behavioral Analysis Clinic, [Director] Craig Kennedy has had teenage and adult patients who come to him taking many different psychotropic medications at the same time—at the extreme, up to 12! To be honest, I’m not sure we’d be allowed to do that in our experimental studies on mice.”

Once children with a severe autistic disorder reach adolescence, they can be larger and stronger than the grown-ups around them, and they may exhibit behaviors that are dangerous to themselves and others. Pills may temporarily allay the aggression, but they will not get to the root of the problem.

In fact, the genesis of ASD remains a mystery. Scientists do know this much: The structural architecture of the brains of people with autism differs from the typical person’s brain, but doctors aren’t sure whether this is a cause or a result of the disorder. The brains of children with autism tend to grow at a faster rate by age 2, although certain areas of the brain seem to grow at a slower rate. Using advanced computerized X-ray technology, researchers have found that certain portions of the ASD brain show signs of inflammation, and the section known as the amygdala, which controls emotion, perception of danger and social behavior, is enlarged. Yet, recent studies out of the University of California at San Diego indicate that the amygdala in males with autism appears to have a decreased number of neurons.

They can only guess as to how that is externalized in learning and behavior.

Without question, scientists agree that genes play a large role in autism. Through studies of identical twins, investigators have found that autism is one of the most “heritable” of all the neuropsychiatric disorders, meaning that if one identical twin has autism, there is an 80 to 90 percent chance that the other twin also will have inherited a vulnerability for the disorder. By comparison, the heritability between identical twins for schizophrenia is 45 percent and for depression, around 25 percent.

Geneticist James Sutcliffe, associate professor of molecular physiology and biophysics and psychiatry, has been examining abnormalities on various chromosomes that may be implicated in autism. Unlike Down syndrome, where the presence of an extra copy of a specific chromosome is responsible for the disorder, autism may be caused by a combination of discreet changes in individual genes or by larger chromosomal defects involving many genes. Sutcliffe and his colleagues have found a number of genetic mutations affecting levels of the chemical serotonin in the brain that provide a link between autism and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

“If you look at first-degree relatives of people with autism, that is, siblings and parents, you see increased rates of obsessive-compulsive disorder, of major depression and of anxiety disorders,” Sutcliffe says. “So there is growing and strong evidence that the genetic factors in autism are going to be related to the genetic factors in things like depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. In the parent or sibling, they may be mild manifestations of what is seen in the extreme in an autistic child.”

Given its strong genetic component, basic scientists are taking a multi-pronged approach to decoding the autism rebus. Sutcliffe is participating in the Autism Genome Project, a consortium of researchers collaborating to analyze “multiplex” families, where two or more members have been diagnosed with an ASD. Using genomic testing, investigators hope to discover unique genes these family members share.

Of course, defining the genetic culprits in ASD probably won’t have an immediate impact on families dealing day by day with autism. On the other hand, it might give scientists their first real foothold into the disorder. From there they can begin to identify risk factors, develop screening tests for earlier diagnosis, and design drug therapies that target specific abnormal molecules.

Complicating matters further are environmental factors that scientists are a long way from understanding. In other words, even with a genetic propensity towards autism, a child must have some outside exposure that occurs before birth and influences the cascade of events taking place during development. Says TRIAD Director Stone, “We don’t know what these environmental contributions are. It could be that more environmental toxins are creating more stressors *in utero*.”

For a while, some people argued that thimerosal, a mercury-based additive in childhood vaccines, was behind the rise in autism cases—but that theory has not held up under scientific scrutiny. Thimerosal was removed from American vaccines in 1999, and as far as anyone can tell, there has been no subsequent decline in ASD in children born after that time. Environmental factors have proved a formidable challenge to solvers of the ASD puzzle—first, because so many

People have blamed autism on everything from infections in the mother to toxins in pesticides, to the use of ultrasound, to allergens in the diet. The actual cause may be some combination of these or other exposures.

potential causes are out there, and second, because these exposures trigger genetic changes in only a subset of children. People have blamed everything from infections in the mother to toxins in pesticides, to the use of ultrasound, to allergens in the diet. Worse still, the actual cause may be some combination of these or other exposures.

Sutcliffe believes once scientists understand the biological mechanisms for autism, they very well may “back into” understanding the environmental agents that are also involved. They may find that a certain molecular pathway is interrupted in people with an ASD and then parse out which chemicals or infections can damage that pathway.

an understanding of autism is further obscured by the fact that the phenotype covers such a wide array of symptoms and behaviors. Diagnosed with an ASD, Evan Shouse, 10, has a twin brother, Brendan, who is typically developing and a 17-year-old sister, Emma, who is also typical. Long-limbed and athletic, with an acrobatic sense of balance, Evan is more even-tempered than his twin brother and adjusts to most transitions without a problem.

“He’s one of those kids who blows the autism stereotype out of the water,” says his father, John Shouse. “You hear how kids with autism won’t engage in pretend play. Evan loves to dress up, to wear a cape and sword. And he’s very affectionate.”

As if on cue, Emma walks into the room carrying Evan, who is draped around her thin frame in an adoring bear hug. Emma



Evan Shouse, with his parents, twin brother, Brendan, and sister, Emma, exhibits deficits in his expressive language but bucks other stereotypes of children with autism.

puts him down, and he chirps once and runs off to play.

The Shouses aren't sure where Evan falls on the spectrum because he has major deficits in his expressive language, although his receptive language is probably close to normal for his age. Says his mother, Janet Shouse, "I can't ask him how he feels and get an answer. I find out he's sick when he throws up on one of us."

Rather than verbalize his frustrations, anger or desires, Evan tends to break glass objects. He once set fire to a bath-

room wastebasket, which his father was able to put out, but only after it had caused a substantial amount of damage. When Evan acts out this way, his parents must backtrack mentally through recent events to figure out why he might be upset. Sometimes he goes for long stretches, months even, without any of these destructive episodes.

Evan also has a variety of interests. He observed his father using the search engine Google on his computer and imitated him. His family discovered this when he presented them with a list he'd written from memory while at school. It was a full credit scroll from the Disney animated film *The Emperor's New Groove* that included the names of all the directors, screenwriters, producers, voice talent, animators, composers and lyricists.

The Shouse family refuses to feel imprisoned by Evan's autism. They go to the movies, the mall, the toy store, and to certain restaurants (which is tricky because Evan is allergic to wheat, soy and dairy products and is on a gluten-free, casein-free, soy-free diet). Although they try not to let it dominate their lives, still, John admits, "I go to bed at night thinking about autism, and I wake up in the morning thinking about autism."

Their family dynamic is about to undergo a cataclysmic change. Emma—patient, compassionate, loving sister to her little brothers—will leave for college next year. Unless Evan has a remarkable breakthrough in expressive communication, he won't be able to convey how that makes him feel.

Many children are now moving from the lower-functioning to the higher-functioning end of the spectrum and, in some cases, are making enough progress to "leave" the autism spectrum altogether. These children bear the torch of hope for others.

Tammi McDaniel is one of those children with an ASD who did experience a breakthrough—an awakening, in the literal sense. Tammi was a turbulent sleeper. Her mother says she'd wake up in the middle of the night and hold a "mini-concert," singing for 30 minutes before going back to sleep. Willing to try any of the studies that the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center was offering, the McDaniels enrolled Tammi in a sleep study when she was 6. Neurologist Dr. Beth Malow, director of the Vanderbilt Sleep Disorders Center, diagnosed Tammi with obstructive sleep apnea, a disorder that causes sleep to be disrupted, taking a toll on a child's ability to function optimally during the day. Subsequently, Tammi had surgery to remove her tonsils and adenoids, which had been blocking off her nasal passages. It turned out her tonsils had been so enlarged that eating was an unpleasant activity for Tammi, and she would gag on her food because she was trying to breathe through her mouth and eat at the same time.

"A week after she had her tonsils out, she was eating like a horse," says her mother, Angela.

Tammi also was put on a gluten- and casein-free diet, whereupon she seemed to "come out of a fog," which led to quick improvements in some areas, but she also became overloaded with sensory inputs and regressed in other areas. She soon reached an equilibrium, allowing her to focus better and handle more demands. She became less whiny and anxious. Her coping, reasoning and social skills shot forward, and her rate of learning picked up speed.

"It's amazing what getting a good night's sleep will do for you," marvels Angela. Today Tammi is deemed "twice exceptional" because she tests out as academically gifted but attends special education classes for social-skills training. Her mother is now cautiously optimistic that Tammi may one day come off the spectrum.

"She'll always need extra help in learning social skills, and she is able to learn them now. She cares. She wants to learn how to fit in and how to make friends," Angela says. "Getting her tonsils out was a shot in the dark, and look what it's done for us."

Dr. Malow says at least half the children on the autism spectrum are affected by sleep disorders, but only a small percentage have obstructive apnea. Insomnia, she says, seems to be an intrinsic part of autism, and the disorder itself may be causing some children not to sleep well. Studies have linked sleep problems in children with an ASD with stereotypic autistic behaviors like repetitiveness and compulsiveness, and, in teenagers, with self-injurious behaviors—tempered with the knowledge that even typically developing children, when grossly sleep deprived, are likely to become hyperactive, inattentive and hypersensitive.

As a rule, Malow does not prescribe sedatives and narcotics to address the issue because of potential side effects and withdrawal symptoms. Instead she teaches good sleep

habits to parents. She also is preparing to conduct an early-stage clinical trial on the relationship between sleep disturbances in ASD and melatonin, a naturally occurring hormone that is reportedly deficient in autism.

"Our hypothesis is that the level of natural melatonin may correlate with sleep disturbance, and that giving children with ASD supplemental melatonin may help insomnia," she says. "What's really nice about melatonin is that it's natural, it appeals to parents, it's bio-friendly, and the side effects are minimal."

The next major breakthrough in autism research, says Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Director Pat Levitt, will arise from the collaboration of investigators like Paul Yoder, Wendy Stone and Beth Malow, who join forces with clinicians, pediatric sub-specialists, therapists, educators, geneticists, neurobiologists, electrophysiologists and engineers to tease out the myriad factors that place a child on the autism spectrum.

"Early identification and new techniques for intervention—that's where I think the big changes will be," Levitt says.

As therapies become more targeted to address individual cases, one by one, he predicts, more and more children will begin inching their way off the autism spectrum. ▼



Tammi McDaniel, second from right, is deemed "twice exceptional." She tests out as academically gifted but attends special education classes for social-skills training.

A Pipsqueak AMONG GIANTS

How a 145-pound walk-on went the distance with one of Vanderbilt's greatest teams ever

By GARY GERSON, BS'85 | Illustrations by KEVIN MENCK

At the beginning of my freshman year at Vanderbilt in 1981, I joined the marching band. I lasted about two weeks, when I figured out I was no longer the big band boy I had been in high school back in Morristown, Tenn. After the director told me he wanted me to move props around during the halftime shows rather than star on the xylophone, quitting marching band was an easy decision. I would have more time to goof off and wallow in self-pity.

I started hanging around with the football players in their dorm rooms at night, though they were usually too tired to do anything except telephone their moms and study a little and play bad electric guitar. These guys were huge and good looking and always tired out, but tired with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Though I hadn't gone out for football in high school, I had always read about college football players in *Sports Illustrated* and had glamorized them through my adolescence, worshiping them at UT while I was growing up in East Tennessee. Now I was living with football players, watching them drink beer and have girls around (usually not Vandy girls, who were a bit too demure and smug and off-limits) and be cool in that casual way.



I found a bit of substance at WRVU, where I got my own time slot, rising to become a very bad disc jockey who could only play Springsteen and The Who because I knew nothing else. Some of the freshman football players noticed me on the radio and got a kick out of knowing who I was: “Yo, dude, you were righteous on the radio, man.”

At the end of the first year, my grades stunk but I was happy to have joined a nerdy Jewish fraternity, where I was the star athlete during intramurals. I was a mediocre football and basketball player but very good compared to my frat brothers, the Jewish academicians of Alpha Epsilon Pi. I gained more confidence with every game and was thrilled that these guys counted on me athletically.

Eventually, I got enough nerve to joke to one of the varsity receivers about sort-of, maybe, trying out for the real football team. We both knew I would be the worst player on the worst team in the Southeastern Conference, probably in Division I, and perhaps in the whole NCAA. But it was possible that I could make the team, he said, since they rarely cut anyone who had heart and worked hard. I loved him for telling me I should go ahead and do it.

During the last week of school in the spring of 1982, I breathed in the bravest air I could find and walked with stony legs over to the McGugin Center. I asked a small gray-haired man where I might find Coach George MacIntyre. He smiled a pixie smile and told me I was speaking to him. I said breathlessly, “I’m sorry to bother you, sir, and I know you must be busy and I’m very small and have no experience, but I want to play football next year.”

I started to list more reasons why he should not have me on his team, but the coach cut me off and said he would be glad to have me, that there were lots of places I could help the team. “Coach Mac” told me to go find “Doc” in the weight room—and then he was off to a meeting and I was still alive. He had taken me seriously.

With almost no breath left, I staggered in a daze to the weight room, where E.J. “Doc” Kreis presided like royalty behind his desk, a knowing scowl behind a walrus mustache. He was a monster of a man who could have eaten me in one bite.

Doc looked me over with great skepticism, and his voice boomed, “Well, where the hell have you been all spring?”

I looked absolutely like I would wet my pants, I am sure. “Uh ... I didn’t know I was supposed to ...,” I began, feebly.

“Hell! You didn’t know you needed to be in this weight room, gettin’ yourself ready? What do you think, this is all fun? You think this is television?”

“No, sir.” That was the first time in my life I just stopped and shut my mouth.

“Well, let’s get your name and address on the list and get you a workout schedule. You stick to this good!” he bel-lowed, handing me a timetable of sprinting drills and lifting techniques, most in a foreign language of squats and shrugs and power-pulls. I stood there, dumb, until he commanded me to leave.

There was no turning back now. I was going to learn how to fly, to bench press a million pounds, to push intruders away at every turn, to sweat nobly like I had never sweat before. All 5-foot-10, 145 pounds of me was going to be a football player for the Vanderbilt University Commodores.

I worked that summer of 1982 at the Holiday Inn restaurant back in Morristown. I got off in the early afternoon and headed to the Nautilus gym for introductory weight lifting. After a few weeks, little biceps started to show up on my skinny arms. I ran wind sprints and speed laps on the high school track every day. I visited the coach at my old high school and borrowed a helmet and shoulder pads. At home I put on the helmet and pads and, with a tentative jogging start, ran into our garage wall over and over, trying to imagine what it would feel like to get hit. I made sure nobody was watching as I hit the brick: Wham! Wham! Wham!

Mom and Dad were quick to point out that no one was pressuring me to go out there on that field with those big men, only to get my neck broken and my leg pulled off. They said I could quit at any time; it was fine with them. It was kind of like reverse Jewish guilt, where they tried to get me *not* to do something. All the friends in our close-knit Jewish community let the folks know that I was insane.

Even though I was a sophomore in the fall of 1982, I was allowed to come to the freshman football camp a week earlier than the rest of the varsity. I walked into camp with the idea that I would do whatever it took to stay on the team. I would let everyone know that I was there to learn and help in any way, and that no one was to worry about me being disappointed.

I soon realized that the other walk-ons had been football stars at their high schools, while I had played the xylophone at halftime. Some of them were huge and muscularly defined, while others were just big goofy kids. They were all just like I was—nervous and excited and ready to earn a spot somewhere doing something, though many thought they would be stars by the time the season started.

Many of the new freshmen were humble and kind, like Will Wolford, who was the most likable and earnest of the freshmen. Will was an amazing athlete. He was 6-foot-6 and 280 pounds and could dunk a basketball. He would

eventually start at tackle as a freshman, hold that position for four years, make All-American, and later become the first million-dollar offensive lineman in the NFL with Buffalo and Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. He was probably Vanderbilt’s best football player ever, though linemen rarely earn that type of distinction. I got to eat chicken and french fries with Will at the training table in his first week of big-time college football, and he was tickled that I was trying this game out for the first time.

I took whatever padding the manager put on me, and that included two pairs of cleats, one for artificial turf and one for grass, that would be mine forever, no matter what. I got a gold helmet with “GERSON” spelled out in white athletic tape. In my locker basket was a mesh bag with skin-tight gray shorts, a gray half T-shirt, socks and a jockstrap. I had never worn a jockstrap before and didn’t know that your butt hangs out, uncovered.

There were shoulder pads (too big; I had to trade them in later, embarrassed) and leg and girdle pads, which fit into little slots in the uniform practice pants. For the rest of my life, I would have that bad dream where the game was starting and I could not fit all the pads into their proper places, frantically trying to make them go in, and I would always wake up in a panic. How many other football players have had that dream, years after their last game?

I was not a very good receiver, but I didn’t totally stink. Coach “Flip” [Gene DeFilippo] was patient enough to teach all of us the correct pass routes, and I listened hard and learned where to put my feet and hands and head on every step, becoming more confident every day. I loved, absolutely loved, being out on that field in the stadium. I got artificial-turf burns on my elbows and knees from falling and skidding on the fake grass that first week, and they stung in the shower when the water hit, as if someone were rubbing the wound with sandpaper as the skin contracted. I learned to tape my elbows before practice.

Other walk-ons quit and went home, frustrated because the coaches could not see how wonderful they were. When the rest of the varsity returned after my week’s introduction to the game, my old friends from the year before were astounded to see me on the practice field. From that first day they treated me like one of them, every man on the varsity respecting me for sweating and aching alongside them. I threatened no one else’s playing time, and that probably helped.

We ran pass-routes over and over. I learned that, while painfully slow, I could make a few head-fakes and get open when playing against the good defensive backs. Sometimes that would make the other receivers shout out my name in



I had never worn a jock strap and didn’t know that your butt hangs out, uncovered. There were shoulder pads and leg and girdle pads. For the rest of my life, I would have that bad dream where the game was starting and I could not fit all the pads into their proper places, and I would wake up in a panic.



Sometimes the receivers would shout out my name in delight when I made a decent catch or got the defender turned around. It was hard to tell if they were making fun of me or not, but it didn't matter. Getting a slap on the back or a high-five became my only goal.

delight when I made a decent catch or got the defender turned around and stumbly. It was hard to tell if they were making fun of me or not, but it didn't matter. Getting a slap on the back or a high-five from a teammate became my only goal, and I got to catch some passes from Whit Taylor, the second-highest-rated passer in the country that year (behind the great John Elway), every day in practice. He was the best quarterback in Vanderbilt history, some say, though Jay Cutler in 2005 was pretty darned good. Whit was the same size as me, though a little thicker. One of his linebacker friends, Joe Staley, used to call out to him whenever he completed a great pass, in falsetto, "Oh, Whit honey, kiss my baby!" The whole team would crack up.

As September arrived it started to sink in that I had not been dismissed yet. Coach Mac, while busy with important matters of running the team, seemed to like me, and the rest of the team adopted me as sort of a pet, a curiosity. My parents continued to worry, but there came a fabulous satisfaction when the school year began and the harsh pre-season practices ended. My parents could tell their friends that I was healthy and an honest-to-goodness member of the football team. The smart Jewish boys at the Alpha Epsilon Pi house teased me ceaselessly about becoming the jock amongst them, and I could tell they were happy to have me

hanging around the frat, a sort-of real football player.

After a while, when the depth chart got established and I was in place in the far basement, I got moved over to the scout team with the other bottom dwellers to help teach the defense what to expect from each upcoming opponent's offense. I took this role very seriously and worked hard each practice. Once I got to be Willie Gault, the world-class sprinter from Tennessee, and I was assigned an orange jersey with number 80 on it. That's probably where the comparisons stopped, but I wore it with pride as the varsity boys pounded me.

One day I was told to run a post-corner pattern against our first defense, which meant I was supposed to run a long route, first looking over my inside shoulder to fake the defender and then suddenly turning to the outside. As I came out of my final turn, the ball was in the air and coming over my outside shoulder. I jumped higher than I ever had before and made a one-handed snatch, flipping over in mid-air and landing on my shoulder and head just in-bounds, ball in my grasp. The first offensive team and coaching staff across the field had just taken a water break and happened to be looking my way, and they let out a shriek of delight at my catch. I trotted back to the scout-team quarterback and looked so cool as I casually flipped him the ball and re-

joined the huddle, slapped and shrouded in praise by my teammates. Moments like those became my Saturdays.

As the season began it became clear that this Vanderbilt team was special. Doc had made the players strong and fast with his demanding off-season strength program. Our offense was innovative, relying on a short passing attack in place of an inside rushing game, especially after our star running back, Ernie Goolsby, went down for the season in the opener at Memphis State. Our offensive coordinator, Watson Brown, who had been a former *wunderkind* quarterback at Vanderbilt a few years earlier, was the true leader of the team, getting extra yards and touchdowns out of men much smaller than the ones at Tennessee and Michigan and Notre Dame. After an early season loss to Alabama, our season started to take shape.

Highly ranked Florida came to Nashville on a perfect night, and our bend-but-don't-break defense held them in place for much of the game, even though the great James Jones of the Gators (and later the NFL Detroit Lions) had over 200 yards rushing. We won 38-31. Forty-two thousand loyal fans went crazy, and it was obvious that this team was going to be different from every other Vanderbilt team in recent memory.

We lost "between the hedges" down at Georgia after leading into the fourth quarter; had we won that game, we would have been conference champs and gone to the Sugar Bowl. Against Mississippi, linebacker Joe Staley intercepted a pass to preserve a narrow victory. Some say that was the play that made our season. With every dramatic win a possible bowl invitation loomed closer. People around the country were starting to talk about us. Gamblers in Las Vegas won a lot of money betting on Vanderbilt.

I got to suit up against Virginia Tech in the middle of the season because they were non-conference. We destroyed them. Leading 45-0 in the final minutes, my teammates started to chant my name. Holy cow! Were they going to put me in?

Coach Mac called me up on the sideline. "Gerse," he said with his pixie grin and sad-dog eyes, "I'd love to put you in, but I didn't have a chance to check your eligibility, so I can't do it. You understand?"

He could see how shaken and relieved I was. "Coach, I'm so glad, 'cause if you put me in, my heart would probably come right out of my jersey."

That quote made the Monday *Tennessean* in an article about how this Vandy squad was made of real team players, from superstar quarterback Whit Taylor all the way down to little Gary Gerson. My parents were sent copies of the paper from friends all over the state.

After that game we went into the locker room and listened to Coach Mac. He told us with great excitement that we had been invited to play in the Hall of Fame Bowl in Birmingham on New Year's Eve. The coaches were teary-eyed and hugging each other and jumping around. It was the first winning season in 10 years for Vanderbilt, and I would get to go with them to Birmingham.

There were a bunch of important-looking men in the locker room that day after the game. One man, wearing a sticker on his lapel that said "Hall of Fame Bowl," offered me congratulations. I thanked him and asked if he was on the bowl committee. He said, "No, son, I'm the chancellor of Vanderbilt." It was Joe B. Wyatt, whom I had not recognized. Guess I should have paid attention to the campus newspaper more often.

On the way out the door, Doc handed me an envelope—\$10 in meal money. I was getting paid for all this, too! I showed the \$10 bill to my folks outside the stadium with great pride at what I had "earned." Dad reminded me that another \$10,990 would repay that year's tuition loan.

We beat Tennessee in the rain to end the season, and the newspaper picture of Whit Taylor with the ball held over his head as he crossed the goal line with the winning touchdown

was symbolic and satisfying. Our final regular-season record was 8-3, the best in decades for starving Vandy fans.

I figured if I drove to Birmingham from my grandmother's condo in Fort Lauderdale, I could sell the airplane ticket that had been provided by the bowl committee and put a few dollars in my pocket. I had the nerve to beg a ride to Birmingham from Allama Matthews, the tight end, and big cornerback Leonard Coleman, the interception king, two All-Americans who lived in Florida. Allama reluctantly said yes, but only if I drove part of the way while he slept. I said I would be glad to. I had never driven a stick shift before.

I spent Christmas with my family at my grandmother's condo, proud to be out on the beach with my new body, which had some decent muscles from all that running and lifting. I loved going to the beach just so I could show off a little, no longer a little squirrel inside my shirt. My weight was up to about 170, and there was no fat.

Allama picked me up near the interstate in Fort Lauderdale, and we continued on to Boynton Beach for Leonard. When we got there I saw that Leonard, who would be in the NFL in a few years, lived in a tiny house and had a little boy a few years old. This was shocking to me, naive kid that I was, that a college student could have a child who was fathered in high school. Mean Leonard, who scowled at me during practice and never hesitated to bury his helmet between my shoulder blades when I tried to catch the ball, was kissing his little boy over and over as he said goodbye. It was a moment of confusion to me, Leonard living in the housing projects of Boynton Beach and loving his little boy so much.

We decided to drive overnight and reach Alabama in the morning. I got behind the wheel of Allama's Celica about midnight, hoping they wouldn't notice my gear-shifting skills amounted to grinding hamburger. As they slept I cruised down Interstate 10, focusing on not falling asleep. I didn't notice that the car I passed at 80 miles per hour had blue lights on top.

The Florida state trooper was kind as I nervously explained that the two sleeping giants in the car were Vanderbilt stars on the way to a bowl game. He let me go, unimpressed, warning me to turn off my brights if I decided to pass another car. Allama awoke just as we were driving away. I told him to go back to sleep, that everything was all right, except for my racing heart and dry mouth and the thought that I almost got a ticket in his car.

We stopped near the Alabama border at 3 a.m. to see Allama's relatives. We woke the whole household just to say hello. I felt sheepish as I realized I was the only white person in this tiny, crowded house in the middle of the night.

The two littlest children stared at me with open mouths, and a smiling man, perhaps their father, sat in a pair of shorts on the arm of an easy chair, gently stroking the head and face of a sleeping infant on his lap. Nobody really said anything, but it was understood that the dropping-in was accepted and appreciated. After refusing a cold drink and some food, we continued on. Our visit there was soon only a dream, a world I would not know. But these visits meant that I would never begrudge the money these two men would earn in the NFL.

In the lockers before the game, the coaches were walking in circles with tears in their eyes. They had just learned that Watson Brown had accepted the head coaching job at the University of Cincinnati, a great loss for our team. That meant the breakup of an exceptional coaching staff that had brought our tiny school a great season, a bowl invitation, and a rare win against the Big Orange.

And so the game began. I stood on the sidelines while 75,000 people cheered us on. In the third quarter Norman Jordan scored another touchdown on a pass from Whit Taylor as we were appearing to dominate our opponent. On the sideline after the play, I heard Norman say to his old buddy Whit with a knowing smile, "We're just showin' off now!" Little did he know.

We were stunned when the Air Force quarterback turned a third-down sneak play into a very long touchdown run. That put the Force up for good, and they won by eight points. There was not much sadness, really, as the game seemed anticlimactic compared to the season as a whole, especially when held against the Tennessee win, but it still stung.

Whit Taylor was saluted as player of the game, despite the score, having thrown for more than 500 yards in a truly remarkable performance. This overshadowed, unfairly, the 20 receptions by Norman Jordan, the tiny, dedicated running back who had been the X-factor in Coach Brown's offense the whole season. These two players had been friends and teammates forever, and it was the last game Norman would play in pads. Whit got drafted into the USFL and was a backup with the Michigan Panthers (Bobby Hebert was the first-stringer), came back to coaching at Vandy for my senior year, and then played a bit more in the Arena Football League. Everyone admired those two and their quiet leadership and how far they had taken little Vanderbilt. Norman soon became a Nashville stockbroker and I'm pretty sure made a lot of money. Playing on the same team with them and Will and Leonard and Allama and Joe was a huge honor for this little walk-on.

So we all went home, but not before Mom took all kinds



I had the nerve to beg a ride from the tight end and the big cornerback. Allama said yes, but only if I drove part of the way while he slept. I said I would be glad to. I had never driven a stick shift before.

of photos of me and my teammates, with me looking embarrassed the whole time. What a year it had been, the best year in Vanderbilt football in forever, and I had been told by Whit and Norman and others that I had been a key part of our success.

Looking back, it all came at a price, as football always does. You never play football for free. You may pay for it when you are 16, 40 or 70—but you pay. All season I had been getting beat up on a daily basis. There was the helmet underneath my shoulder pads that knocked everything around my right deltoid out of place, my shoulder aching nonstop for the next several years. I had smashed every one of my fingers at some point, and there was practically no skin on my knees and elbows from

the unforgiving artificial turf. Looking back at all the scabs and stingers and ice baths, there was no doubt I had regularly gotten the hell kicked out of me by huge men.

But I had not quit. I had never thought of quitting. And I had gotten stronger and faster and smarter. I finally had some arms with a little meat on them. On the field I had gotten a tiny bit of respect from men who were All-Americans and going to the NFL. It was worth every bit of pain—and not something that could be explained to most people who had never played football. ▼

Gary Gerson is a science teacher and head football coach for the Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. This article is taken from a memoir, Scoring Points: Love and Football in the Age of AIDS.

By DEBRA MCKINNEY
Photography by MARC LESTER

The Woman Who Welcomed *Strangers*

*Lynne Ballew provides
sanctuary for the homeless
of Anchorage, Alaska—
no questions asked*

Lynne Ballew's home is a hotel room with no kitchen, no dining table, not even a closet. She doesn't mind because she has no need for such things. She eats on the fly—whatever the local soup kitchen delivers that day—and she owns only two pairs of secondhand jeans. She doesn't even have what most people would consider a proper bed: Books stacked in plastic milk crates and cardboard boxes full of grant proposals and scholarly papers serve in lieu of box springs beneath her mattress.

• She lives this way entirely on purpose.

What she values in terms of “things” is a wall of floor-to-ceiling books, heavy on Homer and other works of classical antiquity. Because she would never flaunt it, the homeless men, women and children staying in the rooms around her have no idea that the 60-year-old Ballew has a Ph.D. in classical philology from Vanderbilt or that she taught Greek philosophy at Boston College. Or that she translates the astrological writings of Marsilio Ficino from Renaissance Latin into English for kicks. That she loves opera. That she once dated Frank Zappa.

What’s led her to this bare-bones life is empathy, compassion and outrage. And Anchorage, Alaska, is a better place for it.

Ballew, BA’68, MA’74, PhD’75, first traveled to Anchorage in 1977 and has made a long list of contributions to the city ever since. Among them was creating a soup kitchen where people could get a hot meal and a warm place to be without any preaching or judg-

ment. She then turned her attention to housing. The place she helped create, and now calls home, is Safe Harbor Inn. There’s nothing else quite like it in the country.

Safe Harbor isn’t a homeless shelter or a housing project. It’s a nonprofit hotel, a kind of sanctuary where people coming out of shelters or off the streets can work things out before moving into homes of their own.

Ballew’s vision was to create a place that wouldn’t get the life smothered out of it by government rules and regulations. Above all, she wanted a place that radiated dignity. That’s why Safe Harbor has the ambiance of a country inn rather than a transitional housing facility, with rooms decked out in used-but-classy solid wood furniture, cheery bedspreads, and walls painted in warm Tuscan colors.

“None of those bad-day-out-on-the-tundra colors,” she says. “The nicer it is, the better it works.”

Safe Harbor offers no social services on site,

so problems don’t define who people are. But those who stay must be referred by one of nearly 50 social-service agencies hooked into the Safe Harbor mission. Even so, they’re guests, not clients. They arrive to find chocolates on their pillows, private bathrooms decked out with tub toys, and people behind every door facing some of the same struggles they are.

More than a hotel even, Safe Harbor is a neighborhood.

“Sort of a cross between *Fawlty Towers* and *Cheers*—without the booze,” as a guest once put it.

With her education, Ballew could be making a living that affords a nice house, with a bathroom as big as the room that’s now her home. But she’d be miserable. This is where she wants to be.

“It’s the least phony place in the world,” she says.

Ballew lives in one of the smaller rooms, a stone’s throw from the office. As project direc-

tor she works the noon-to-11-p.m. shift, making sure guests have what they need, helping them navigate a maze of bureaucratic paperwork and offering physical labor—hauling boxes, bedding and donated couches when they finally move into apartments of their own.

Actually, it’s more like the 24/7 shift. When her day is done—which never really happens because she’s always on call—she heads home to do the books and other computer work, usually until about 3 a.m. Then, if she has any brain power left, she pulls out Greek or Latin poetry because, as she says, “you can never read Homer too many times in Greek.”

She sleeps late, until noon if she can—and she’s finally learned to stop apologizing for that.

She doesn’t get paid for any of this. Everything she has ever done for Safe Harbor, from the time the board formed seven years ago until this very moment, she’s done as a volunteer. So she can go about fundraising with a clear conscience and no conflicts of interest.

That’s how important Safe Harbor is to her. She lives off small pensions from previous jobs and a little income from some property she sold. She eats the same food and dresses the same way as those living around her.

“I squeak by,” she says. “My wants are small.

I guess I’m just fortunate in that the things I really love, enjoy, and think make life worth living don’t cost anything.”

Safe Harbor has been a dream more than 25 years in the making. “She’s worked so hard for this to happen, it was natural for her to move in,” says her daughter Leesie. “It’s the meaning of her life. It’s what gives her the most joy.”

Although countless others have contributed to the creation of Safe Harbor, Ballew is the reason it exists. Those who have seen her in action consider her an organizational genius. Whenever the city or state bestows honors upon her, she’s gracious enough to show up for the ceremony, but she doesn’t really like that sort of thing. She prefers keeping a low profile, being the engine under the hood rather than the ornament upon it.

Neil Olson, who came to Safe Harbor after decades of drinking and living on the streets, doesn’t know about any of that; he just can’t get over how strong she is.

“You wouldn’t think so since she’s not very big,” he says. “The more I hang around her, the more she amazes me. I asked her some time back, ‘What’s your deal? How come you’re here? You don’t drink, you don’t have problems?’

“Workaholic,” she said.”

Safe Harbor isn’t a homeless shelter or a housing project. It’s a nonprofit hotel, a kind of sanctuary where people coming out of shelters or off the streets can work things out before moving into homes of their own.

Lynne Ballew grew up in the same consumer society we all did; she just never bought into it. “I was raised by people who had too much money, and it made them miserable,” she says. “So I learned from very early on that money doesn’t buy happiness.”

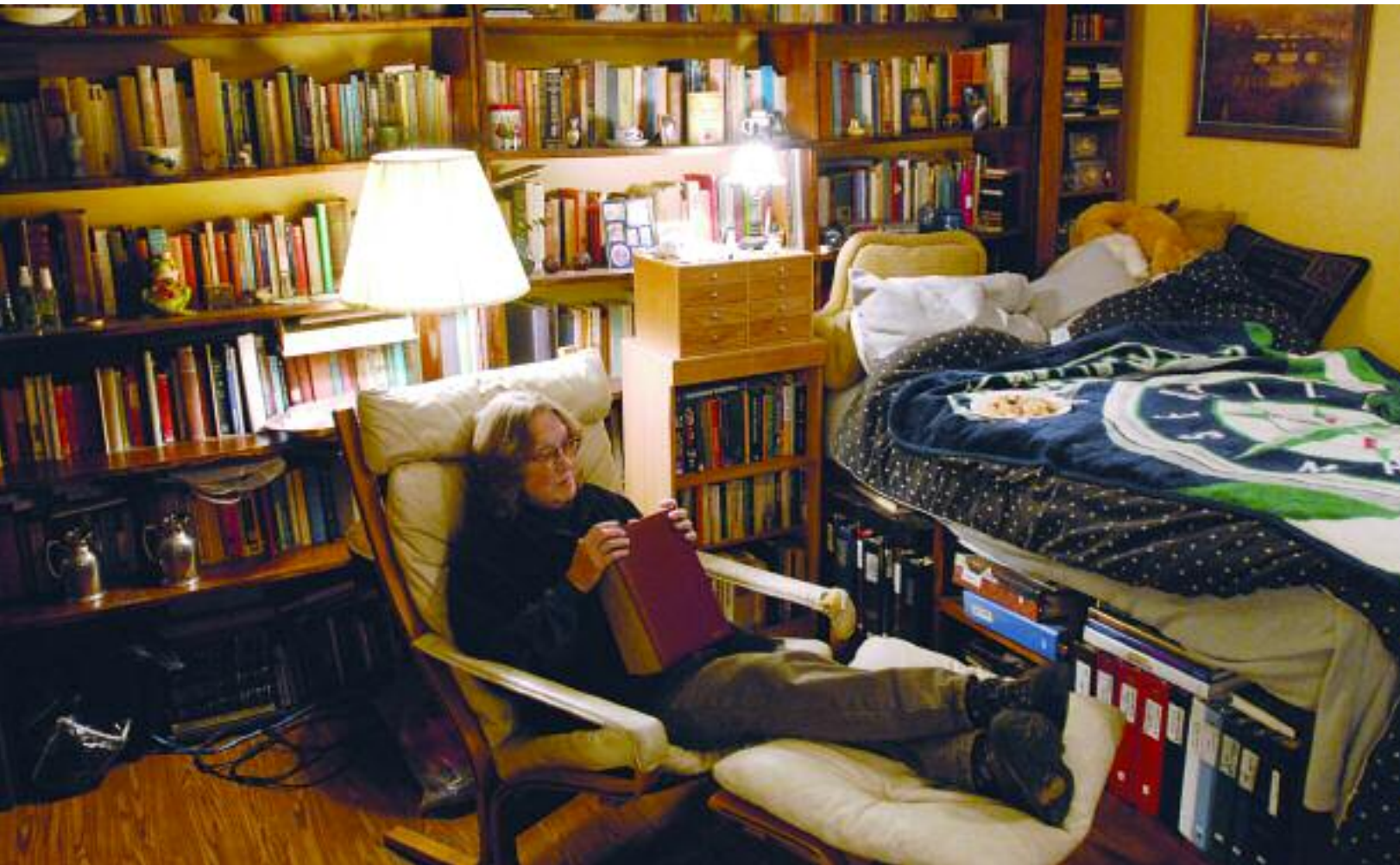
She, along with a twin sister, was born in San Francisco and adopted into a home she doesn’t like to talk about too much.

“Unfortunately, my adoptive parents, who were consumers first, last and foremost, always made it very clear that if we weren’t really good we’d be taken back. You know, like we were a purchase and, if defective, we were going back to the adoption agency. So the contingency of existence and the fragility of life on earth was something I always knew. And I never wanted to perpetuate that.”

Ballew was a triple major in Latin, Greek and philosophy at Vanderbilt. Then she entered graduate school at Yale. There she became one of the founders of the *Yale Review of Law and Social Action*, one of only two women on the board of editors, the other being Hillary Rodham.

“From there I went on to be a welfare mother, and she went on to Bill Clinton.”

That “welfare mother” stint came in 1970



What Lynne Ballew values in terms of “things” is a wall of floor-to-ceiling books, heavy on Homer and other works of classical antiquity.





All of Ballew's dogs, including Dolly, have been rescued from shelters.

“What impresses me is that she lives right where she works. That’s the test, isn’t it? I don’t think ‘sacrifice’ is a word I’d use. She’s very intentional in what she does and always has been.”

—Professor Susan Ford Wiltshire

when her daughter Leesie was born. Ballew eventually returned to Vanderbilt, where she earned her master’s in Greek in 1974 and her doctorate in classics in 1975.

Susan Ford Wiltshire was one of her classics professors. “I don’t think there’s any doubt that she’s one of the smartest people I’ve ever met,” says Wiltshire, who now chairs the Department of Classical Studies. “My memory is that some time ago she read all of Plato in Greek. Twice. That’s huge.”

The two of them have kept in touch all these years, and Wiltshire keeps a file full of their correspondence. Although Ballew has always shown extraordinary imagination and empathy, Wiltshire wouldn’t have guessed she’d be living the life she is today.

“Anything Lynne does I respect, so I’m not a very tough critic,” she says. “But what impresses me is that she lives right where she works. That’s the test, isn’t it? I don’t think ‘sacrifice’ is a word I’d use. She’s very intentional in what she does and always has been.”

In 1977 Ballew was teaching philosophy and social action at Boston College, as well as volunteering at a Haley House soup kitchen, when the road beckoned. That summer she and 7-year-old Leesie, whom she started calling “Bean” as a baby, drove up the Alaska Highway in a blue Ford pickup named Tucker.

“That’s a quirky thing about Mom,” says Leesie, now grown and living in Seattle. “We

always named everything. It was never ‘Go sit on the couch and turn on the lamp.’ It was ‘Go sit on Loafy and turn on Wanda.’”

On their cross-country trip, “Bean” set up shop in the bed of the truck under the canopy. At mealtime she’d slide open the glass window, lean into the cab and announce: “Bean’s Cafe is now open for business. May I take your order?” Her mom would say something like, “A granola bar, please,” and Leesie would rummage through supplies, and find one.

Ballew was smitten with Alaska: “the space, the mountains, the clarity.” She was also moved by what she saw in downtown Anchorage. It didn’t take her long to figure out that the street people she encountered had nowhere to go but the streets.

She and Leesie returned to Anchorage the following summer to do something about it. Ballew got a job with the Anchorage Community Council, started making connections, and set about founding Bean’s Cafe, the soup kitchen named for her daughter. She spent her savings securing a five-year lease on a windowless warehouse next to an old boarding house. She and a crew of volunteers, many of them from the streets, got to work fixing up the place with new paint—orange—secondhand tables and used maroon carpet. They clashed like crazy but were free.

Bean’s Cafe opened in 1979. Six years later it moved into a brand-new, much larger building at its present location, across the park-

ing lot from the Brother Francis Shelter, a facility Anchorage opened after a succession of people froze to death on the streets.

Leesie has only fond memories of times spent at the old Bean’s Cafe, helping her mother and hanging out with the “Beanies,” as the patrons came to be called, playing cards and listening to their stories. That’s where she learned to play pinochle.

Her mother never worried; she never felt down-and-out people were less worthy of trust than anybody else.

But not everyone saw things the way she did. “I realized years later that her parents and other people came down hard on her for exposing me to ‘those people,’” says Leesie. “And that’s when it really hit me what she was up against.”

Ballew left Alaska in the fall of 1980 to return to teaching and other pursuits in the Lower 48. She was seven months pregnant as she drove back down the Alaska Highway. Her second daughter, Nava Rio, now living in Seattle, was born that December. With no child support, at times Ballew worked multiple jobs to provide for her two girls.

During those years she learned to speak a whole new language as the “token bleeding heart” at the Federal National Mortgage Association. There she helped create the low- and moderate-income housing program now

known as Fannie Mae’s National Housing Impact Division.

When she returned to Alaska in 1995, she set about making Safe Harbor happen. What she learned at Fannie Mae is that a project like this didn’t need to be complicated.

“The secret to our success can be summed up by saying that we are not in the social service business; we’re in the hospitality business,” she says. “It’s so simple.”

Although making it happen really wasn’t. The original effort to buy an old hotel, for instance, crashed and burned after a year of negotiations. That was a huge disappointment.

“I may be inconvenienced, but I’m never stopped,” she said at the time.

Forging on, the board she helped assemble eventually bought another hotel. The deal went through in October 2001, and after some sprucing up, Safe Harbor Inn opened for business less than a month later with 21 rooms to offer. Instantly, the inn was full, with a growing waiting list.

Construction of a new three-story building came later, giving Safe Harbor 55 rooms, enough to house 120 to 130 people at a time, about half of them children.

Guests or their sponsoring agencies pay \$380 a month for a private room with real beds, firm mattresses and clean sheets, a microwave, a small refrigerator, a coffee maker and cable television. Some new arrivals take one look at their accommodations and cry.

With capital funding and startup costs behind it, Safe Harbor now operates on very little public money, only about 6 percent. The rest comes from rent and the private sector—individuals, foundations, corporations.

As far as he knows, there’s nothing quite like it anywhere in the country, says Paul Carlson, regional coordinator of governmental agencies dealing with homelessness.

With their necessities covered, and Bean’s Cafe delivering two meals a day, guests’ time and energy are freed up for more important things, like getting their lives back on track. Nobody’s on vacation here. Guests must be working on their program, whatever it may be, and pursuing permanent housing. They sign a contract including the phrase “I agree to work diligently... ”

As long as they’re trying, they can stay at Safe Harbor as long as they need.

“The rules are pretty minimal,” says Ballew. “No alcohol, no drugs, no visitors in your room. Mind your manners. Be nice to people. Keep your room reasonably clean.”

Safe Harbor staff members, most of them former guests, do safety inspections.

“If it looks like a grenade has gone off in the room, then SpongeBob will be waiting for you on your sink when you get back,” Ballew says. “If you get more than three visits from SpongeBob, it disqualifies you for our security-deposit assistance.”

With a grant from Alaska Housing, Safe Harbor can offer help with deposits when guests do move on. Safe Harbor also helps stock their new apartments with beds, couches, and other furniture and household goods donated by the community and delivered by Ballew in her trusty old pickup truck, Lefty.

Ballew has no plans to live anywhere else, except maybe in a yurt—a traditional nomad home—on a nice, quiet piece of land someday. Even so, she wants this to be her final resting place. She’s saved the ashes of all the dogs she ever loved, all rescued from shelters, naturally. And when the time comes, she wants her own mixed in and the whole lot sprinkled among the flower beds at Safe Harbor.

“I think it’s an enormous mistake, a meta-

physical mistake and an ethical mistake to assume that stuff is the key to happiness,” she says of the way she chooses to live.

“The travel writer Bruce Chatwin has this piece in his book *The Songlines* about how nomadic people are happier than settled people because they only take with them what they absolutely need. Their riches are in their stories, their memories, and their interactions with others.”

Here’s where the Greek philosophy comes in.

First, according to the ancient practice of gift giving, anything that comes to you as a gift, whether it’s time, talent, energy, money or things, must be passed along. “An accumulation of wealth is almost an oxymoron,” she says. “Your wealth is what you give away.”

Second, in ancient Greece, strangers and beggars were from Zeus and were sacred to the gods. “Your most sacred and important obligation as a citizen, as a human being, was to welcome strangers and to give them what you had that they needed. Not to do that is literally, for the Greeks, a crime against nature, a crime against the gods.”

“And when you think about it, that’s very good social policy.” ▼



Ballew has no plans to live anywhere else, except maybe in a yurt—a traditional nomad home—on a nice, quiet piece of land someday.

CRYSTAL MENACE

A ruthless drug takes its toll on users and hospitals

Tennessee is well known for country music, the Great Smoky Mountains and Elvis, but during the last few years, the state has received another distinction—one that comes with no pride: It's one of the top five states for methamphetamine-lab seizures. And where meth is made, it's used in abundance.

While the drug has been present in the area for decades, the new millennium brought a flood of methamphetamine into Middle Tennessee. In the last few years, doctors, nurses and counselors at Vanderbilt have increasingly seen the effects of the drug as it has made its way into Vanderbilt clinics, hospital rooms and operating suites. Nowhere has meth made its presence felt more visibly than at Vanderbilt's Regional Burn Center.

The exact number of patients brought to Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) for meth-related illness or injury may never be accurately tallied, but what is known is that Vanderbilt has provided millions of dollars in uncompensated critical care—surgeons, nurses, intensive-care bed space, therapists, social workers and medications for victims of meth-related explosions and fires.

The impact of this phenomenon extends far beyond meth users and those who manufacture the drug in home laboratories. It also includes the innocent victims of meth: children whose parents lose themselves in the labyrinth of its addiction; families torn apart by its ravages; others who have their lives shattered by drug-related criminal activity or by meth users driving while impaired; and, finally, the taxpayers and health-care consumers who ultimately pick up the tab for treating drug addicts who rarely have health coverage and whose bills can easily run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In these pages John Howser, assistant director and media director for the Office of News and Public Affairs at VUMC, reports on the cost of Tennessee's meth epidemic in economic terms as well as human lives.



A derivative of amphetamine, which was first synthesized in 1887 by Romanian chemist Lazar Edeleanu, methamphetamine was developed in 1919 by Japanese chemist Akira Ogata, who was able to purify and distill the more powerful form of the drug simply by the reduction of ephedrine and other commonly available chemicals. Today's street chemists find recipes for meth readily available, cheap, and extremely easy to duplicate with appropriate access to key, if highly toxic, ingredients.

Methamphetamine's history was checked from the very start. The drug was widely distributed during World War II to soldiers in Germany as a stimulant and was used heavily by Nazi SS personnel. Adolph Hitler received daily injections from his personal physician.

After World War II methamphetamine moved into commercial use. During the 1950s it was sold as the prescription drug Pervitin, which was prescribed for narcolepsy, alcoholism, depression, Parkinson's disease and obesity. Prescriptions reached a peak of 31 million in the United States in 1967.

Illegal manufacturing of meth in the United States started in Southern California in the early 1960s as a cheap, easily synthesized, effective and highly addictive stimulant. Following a west-to-east migration, the drug crossed the Mississippi River and is now a common scourge of rural American life nationwide.

A 2002 survey from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that more than 12 million people in America aged 12 and older reported they had used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime. Of those surveyed, 597,000 reported meth use during the past month.

Legally manufactured methamphetamine is a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substance Act of 1970, which means it is accepted for medical use but has a high potential for abuse. Its use may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.

An overdose of meth causes increased blood pressure, rapid heart rate and euphoria—even hallucinations if the dose is high enough. But perhaps the most serious consequence, leading to morbidity and mortality, are these symptoms

in concert with a significantly elevated body temperature, perhaps as high as 106 degrees, for a prolonged period.

Long-term meth use typically results in drug tolerance, requiring users to take larger doses to achieve the same effect. Chronic use of meth can lead to psychotic behavior, including intense paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and rage-fueled violent episodes. Research has shown that long-term meth use can severely damage dopamine-producing cells in the brain.

"PET [positron emission tomography]-scan studies have confirmed that chronic use of methamphetamine actually decreases the amount of dopamine transported and, therefore, the amount of dopamine in your brain," says Donna Seger, Vanderbilt's chief clinical toxicologist. "That's one of the chemicals you need in your brain to feel good."

"When we see meth patients in the emergency department, it is often heartbreaking," says Dr. Corey M. Slovis, chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine. "We see broken-down young adults who look much older than their stated years. They often have really bad teeth due to a condition we refer to as 'meth mouth.' We see patients looking to detox again and again when they run out of options. This is a drug of abuse about which one cannot really say anything other than, 'What a waste to the person, the community and our society.'"

Within the Intensive Care Unit at Vanderbilt's Regional Burn Center, a patient lies motionless in her bed. Her swollen face is held together with strips of carefully placed sterile surgical tape, forming a criss-cross pattern that leaves exposed only her eyes, a small portion of each cheek, and her lips. Beneath the dressing her face resembles a horribly scorched piece of red, raw meat.

The woman was "cooking" a batch of methamphetamine when her experiment in home chemistry went horribly awry. But other than the damage to her face, which will now bear the scars of her drug addiction for the remainder of her life, she is one of the lucky ones: She will survive. Countless others have not been so fortunate.

What crack cocaine was to the nation's inner-city minorities during the late 1980s and early 1990s, methamphetamine has become to rural white America. Typically seen in powder or rock form (called "ice"), methamphetamine

can be taken orally, smoked, snorted or injected. The drug is a powerful stimulant, which in a matter of minutes overwhelms the central nervous system, producing an intense high. The "rush" from the drug is caused by the release of high levels of dopamine into the part of the brain that controls pleasure.

The ease with which methamphetamine can be manufactured is a major contributing factor to the increase in its production and use. It is easily "cooked" by anyone in makeshift labs hidden in mobile homes, warehouses or even motel rooms. No specialized equipment or advanced technical training is needed. Sparsely populated rural areas are popular sites for production because strong odors are produced during manufacture, and small, locally controlled laboratories have become more numerous, especially in the Midwest and rural South. "Mobile" labs also have begun to appear in a number of states, making seizures more complicated.

No matter the size of the lab or who runs it, processing methamphetamine is dangerous. Ignitable, corrosive, reactive and toxic chemicals can cause explosions, fires, toxic fumes and damage to individuals' health and the environment. Nationwide, the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) reports that methamphetamine-related admissions to the nation's emergency departments have been steadily on the rise since 1995. DAWN identified 17,696 meth-related emergency-department admissions in 2002.

It was in that year that Dr. Jeffrey S. Guy, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care and director of Vanderbilt's Regional Burn Center, first began to see an influx of patients who had been horribly burned while cooking meth or while handling the volatile precursor chemicals necessary to manufacture the drug.

The burn center's patients are typically younger adults, predominantly male, almost exclusively white, and mainly

What crack cocaine was to the nation's inner-city minorities during the late 1980s and early 1990s, methamphetamine has become to rural white America.



DANA JOHNSON

from rural areas in and around Middle Tennessee, although some patients come from as far away as Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama due to a lack of available burn-care beds in surrounding states.

A smaller percentage of patients are children, critically burned by being present when their parents' meth labs explode.

One patient, a 15-year-old girl, arrived at the burn center cocooned in melted plastic and burned clothing. She had been in a room with large sheets of plastic covering the walls (to hide the stench of the cooking drug) when an explosion occurred, covering 85 percent of her body with molten plastic. Thanks to the

"This is a home-grown problem," says Donna L. Seger, Vanderbilt's chief clinical toxicologist and director of the Tennessee Poison Center.

burn center, she survived the incident.

"Definitely, from the aspect of impact on the staff, the toughest ones we see are the truly innocent bystanders, the innocent children who are burned in structure fires from lab explosions," Guy says.

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's Clandestine Lab Seizure System, a centrally collected database of local, state and federal records, and the Tennessee Governor's Meth Task Force, there were 1,574

meth-lab seizures in Tennessee in 2004. This placed the state second only to Missouri that year. In 2005 the FDA reported 897 such seizures through August.

When asked to describe the extent of the meth problem in Tennessee, Donna L. Seger, Vanderbilt's chief clinical toxicologist and director of the Tennessee Poison Center, simply states, "Real big."

As director of the poison center, Seger oversees a state- and federally funded 24/7 telephone triage system of trained poison information specialists who serve as a resource for civilians as well as for the state's law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

Seger says the incidence of meth use in Tennessee is on the rise dramatically among white males in their mid-20s. She recalls a patient she met when asked to perform a medical competency evaluation to determine if he was fit to enter jail. The man told her he'd been using meth since age 13, when his father, a meth "cook," used him to deal drugs. Surrounded by meth constantly, he started using.

"He was high for several days in a row on a meth run. So he and a friend kidnapped some people and held them at gunpoint for two days while they were high," she says. "With chronic meth use, you really do lose rational thought."

Seger says that with all the clandestine meth labs currently in operation in Tennessee, many such young meth cooks are learning their craft from their parents—not just for the money, but also for their own use.

"This drug is called 'the poor man's cocaine,' and it has a very similar action to cocaine," she says. "It gives users a feeling of euphoria, and a real feeling that you can do more while on the drug."

And unlike cocaine, methamphetamine is a local drug. "It doesn't have to be brought in from some other place. It is not a drug that is traveling. This is a homegrown problem," she says.

The legal issues surrounding meth use complicate treatment and rehabilitation efforts.

"Some patients do not readily, if ever, acknowledge the cause of their burns due to concern there may be a criminal investigation," says Dan Ramage, a licensed clinical social worker at the VUMC Burn Center who helps patients and their families heal the psycho-social aspects of their injuries. "Only after we spend some time with them, and perhaps develop some trust through counseling, do some of them disclose what happened."

"Some of these patients are very ashamed of what happened to them as a result of their drug use, or the way they have been living their lives. Maybe their drug use led to

continued on page 61



Innocent Victims

As the pediatrician in charge of child-abuse diagnosis for the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, Dr. Chris Greeley, assistant professor of pediatrics and medical director of the Child Maltreatment Program, routinely sees the handiwork of the worst of human behavior. Almost every day he must look into the eyes of children who are victims of willful neglect or assault at the hands of those charged with providing love and care.

To play this unenviable-yet-critical role as a detective of child abuse, Greeley has undergone specialized training to teach him how to seek out not only the obvious but also the subtle signs and symptoms of abuse in children.

Almost since his arrival at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, Greeley has seen children who were exposed to methamphetamine by parents who were users or cooks, or babies who suffered exposure during pregnancy due to the mothers' drug use.

"Here at Vanderbilt the smaller of these two groups is the children who are exposed to meth after they are born," he says. "This is a small but quite significant population who comes in with postnatal exposure."

Typically, these children continue to be exposed to meth and other drugs in their living environments. "It's not just the meth itself, but the environment in general that's harmful."

These children are exposed not only to the finished product but also to the toxic solvents and chemicals used to manufacture it—chlorine, phosphorus, and other fertilizer-caliber materials—thus placing them in direct contact with materials that can explode or cause lung disease, burns, or cognitive and intestinal problems.

While recipes for making meth can vary, many of the essential and highly toxic base chemicals are the same. And according to the

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), production of 1 pound of meth typically results in 5 to 7 pounds of toxic waste.

At Vanderbilt, toxicologist Donna L. Seger and the Tennessee Poison Center are working to distribute educational materials to emergency departments statewide that provide a consistent reference on how to treat children rescued from a meth-lab environment.

When children are discovered by law-enforcement officials in a dwelling used for cooking meth, no standard evacuation protocol is followed. Frequently, if children are present when a lab is discovered, well meaning law-enforcement personnel may add further emotional trauma by taking a child outside into the yard, stripping them and hosing them down. Seger says this behavior is excessive in many instances.

"When we look at a child exposed to meth manufacturing, we know what he's been exposed to in terms of broad categories of chemicals," she says. "The immediate reaction by some people is to want to take usually unnecessary action on the child. That's why we're producing a poster—so folks will have accurate information."

The other risk factor for children living in a meth environment is exposure to their parents' erratic behavior.

"Living with parents who are meth addicts exposes children to needles around the house, booby-trapped houses and guns. The parents themselves have such poor health that neglect becomes a big issue," Greeley says. "Especially when they are high, and subsequently when they crash, parents are not providing nutrition or hygiene."

More frequently than he sees meth's effects on young children and preteens, Greeley sees the end result of babies who have been exposed to meth and other illicit drugs during gestation.

"Pregnant women who are drug users, specifically meth users, have significant problems with their own health from doing drugs or trading sex for drugs, which often leads to sexually transmitted diseases," he says. "Then the baby, much like during postnatal exposure, is living in an environment inside the mother

where he is exposed to drugs and the shrapnel from the mother's lifestyle, which is poor nutrition, infections and perhaps even trauma."

Babies born from an *in utero* meth environment can suffer withdrawal symptoms, which range from subtle (being jittery or sensitive to light) to pronounced symptoms such as seizures that may require tube feeding until withdrawal symptoms pass.

Other telltale signs of exposure to meth *in utero* include prematurity and low birth weight.

As disturbing as all this sounds, Greeley says the meth problem at Vanderbilt Children's



ANNE RANKER

"It's not just the meth itself, but the environment in general that's harmful," says Dr. Chris Greeley, medical director of the Child Maltreatment Program.

Hospital is not as pronounced as in some other large children's hospitals in the Southeast, or even as pronounced as the problem in other large city hospitals in the East Tennessee cities of Knoxville and Chattanooga. And, proportionally, Vanderbilt's incidence of pediatric meth patients is likely not as prevalent as in some smaller hospitals in rural Tennessee communities being ravaged by the drug.

"During the past year it seems the incidence of the problem has reached a plateau here, at least for now," he says. "However, it's too early to call that a trend."

Over the Counter

In 2004, Tennessee legislators changed the availability of pharmaceutical products essential to the manufacture of methamphetamine—such as cold medicines containing ephedrine—from over-the-counter to behind-the-counter. Despite this change, the patients never stopped arriving at Vanderbilt's Regional Burn Center.

"Initially, before the cold-medicine ban, it got so bad that as many as 25 or 30 percent of our patient census was because of meth," says Dr. Jeffrey S. Guy, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care and director of the burn center. "After the state's Meth Task Force banned the sale of these cold medicines over the counter, the number of meth-related patients seemed to go down, but now it's going back up again."

"Different theories are out there as to why this is occurring. I don't think people stopped using. One theory is that manufacturing moved away from home cooking and went to industrial labs south of the border. Some folks in law enforcement have told me the meth users don't like the grade of the product, that mass-produced meth doesn't have that zing they crave. So now, more are going back to home cooking."



High Behind the Wheel

For Tim and Twila Hurst, the world was looking up. Tim had just accepted a new job as publisher of the *Glasgow Daily Times* in Glasgow, Ky., and the couple was in the process of looking for a house so they could relocate from the town of Henderson.

During the course of the house hunt, Twila was riding with Glasgow real estate agent Sybil Leamon, who was driving a GMC Jimmy. The women pulled away from a rural intersection on Highway 31 East on Friday, Aug. 20, 2004.

Twila Hurst remembers nothing from that point until about four weeks later.

What others have told her is this: The vehicle in which she and Leamon were traveling was smashed head-on at high speed by a 19-year-old man high on methamphetamine. The teenager lost control while behind the wheel of his full-size Ford F-250 pickup truck, send-



ing the vehicle across the highway's center line and head-on into the front of the vehicle carrying the two women.

Sybil Leamon was killed instantly. Twila Hurst was badly injured.

The 19-year-old man who caused the accident and an 18-year-old passenger also in his truck were not hurt.

Twila and Tim credit her survival to a fortunate series of events that quickly brought emergency medical personnel to the accident scene: the staff of the community hospital in Glasgow, and then the quick-response crew of Vanderbilt's LifeFlight air ambulance.

"My head was cut from about the middle at the top, and the cut went almost completely halfway around my scalp," Twila says. "The left side of my pelvis was shattered. My right wrist was fractured. My right thumb was fractured. My right femur was shattered into two pieces. My right ankle was fractured, and my left arm was broken."

Hurst spent 10 days in Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Trauma Unit as surgeons worked to piece her broken body back together. Her recovery was followed by weeks in a physical rehabilitation facility back home in Kentucky.

Tim Hurst says his wife likely would not have survived the accident if the SUV in which she was traveling had not had a sunroof.

Twila Hurst's life was shattered when the SUV in which she was riding (below) was hit by a truck driven by a man high on methamphetamine.

"Twila's severe scalp laceration came from her head shattering the sunroof," he says. "However, the paramedic on the scene said that if the vehicle's roof had been metal instead, Twila's neck probably would have been snapped in two during the wreck."

Fortunately, after months of recovery and rehabilitation, and more than \$400,000 in medical expenses, Hurst has made a remarkable physical recovery. Today her lingering physical effects include a limp from where her pelvis and leg bones were screwed back together, and a few less-obvious physical limitations. However, her effort to remember the accident and the several weeks immediately afterward has proven futile.

"I know it would be all bad memories. But to have bad memories would be better than no memory at all," Twila says.

The young driver of the pickup pleaded guilty, receiving an eight-year sentence for manslaughter in the second degree and assault in the second degree. The Hursts believe this sentence isn't nearly enough.

"Our nightmare lasted months," says Tim.

"Twila spent 10 days in the trauma center and another 11 weeks in a

nursing rehabilitation facility because she could not use either of her legs or her right arm due to the extent of her injuries."

Tim says that while his new boss was accepting and supportive during Twila's hospitalization, the ordeal was too much for the couple—physically, emotionally and financially. The exciting new job didn't work out. After 16 months Tim resigned from the paper.

"During my exit interview my boss said, 'I just don't know what happened to the man I hired.' But I knew. Meth happened," he says. "I didn't take it. My wife didn't take it. We knew little about it. But because a young man from Glasgow thought it was a good idea to take meth and get behind the wheel of his truck, meth changed our lives forever."



divorce or to losing their children to foster care. So there is an element of shame with these patients that perhaps we don't see in others."

Ramage says many of the meth-burn victims he counsels suffer from poly-substance abuse and are in dire need of substance-abuse treatment once they are ready to be discharged from the hospital. Because virtually none of these patients has health insurance, the need for counseling poses a significant problem.

"In addition to their dependence on drugs, these patients are often disfigured as a result of their injuries," he says. "So they leave the hospital with an additional set of problems such as body-image issues coupled with related depression and social anxiety."

Ramage recalls a recent patient who is typical of the problem, a young man in his early 20s who, despite his meth use, was trying to turn his life around. The man was employed and engaged to be married.

"He told me he was trying to get off meth, and at the time of his accident was in outpatient counseling," Ramage says. "But he had not been able to stop the abuse. In the midst of all this, he has the explosion and is now out of a job, his fiancée left him, and he is living with his mother so she can care for him. He's become something of an invalid. He has no medical insurance and doesn't have any real way to get into a drug treatment program."

Surgeon Jeff Guy says the lack of community resources to address drug addiction leaves patients adrift and ready to go back to previous illegal acts.

"No community resources exist to help these people once they leave the hospital. None! So what happens is no surprise. They go back to the same risk-seeking behavior," he says. "It's a vicious cycle."

But in addition to being concerned about the well-being of his patients, Guy is worried about the financial impact to the burn center for treating uninsured meth-burn victims. Conservative estimates put the cost of care for these patients into the millions of dollars, with much of this expense borne by Vanderbilt—a financial burden that could impact the burn center's long-term mission.

"These people can cost the hospital several hundred thousand dollars each. And that's just the acute-care portion," he says. "Then comes the chronic-care portion of treatment. Do they need reconstructive surgery or ocular surgery? They all need physical rehabilitation therapy and drug counseling. In terms of insurance coverage, all of them are not eligible."

In fact, virtually none of the patients has any form of health insurance. By the time most arrive at the burn center, the drug has robbed them of every asset they ever owned.



Burn Center social worker Dan Ramage, left, and surgeon Dr. Jeff Guy say the lack of community help for substance abusers leaves patients adrift.

"They can't get TennCare [Tennessee's managed-care program for low-income individuals], they can't get Medicaid, so we wind up as their catchall for everything," Guy says. "You can't turn them away, so we do the very best we can to meet some of the other medical needs these patients may have."

Perhaps one of the meth-burn patients most exasperating to Guy was a man in his mid-30s, treated at Vanderbilt during late 2004 and early 2005, who wound up in the burn center. The total charges for the uninsured man's care at Vanderbilt

Meth-burn patients seldom have health insurance. Conservative estimates put the cost for their care into the millions. The financial burden could impact the burn center's mission.

far exceeded \$500,000. This was on top of an equally large bill Guy later learned the patient racked up at another hospital. The man survived and hasn't been back to VUMC since.

"If you had a big building on fire in your community, someone would do something about it," Guy concludes. "The local, state or federal government would step in to help. But here you've got these people's lives who are being burned up and nobody seems to be taking responsibility for it but Vanderbilt." ▼

The Arts Culture

“We can look at the arts ... as making pictures, [or] we can look at the arts as tasks which develop the mind because of the kinds of thinking they evoke, practice and develop.”

—ELLIOTT EISNER, Chancellor's Lecturer

Dance: An Irish Dance Equation

For some, the connection between math, music and dance is found in their shared structure of numbers and rhythms. At Vanderbilt the connection between the three could be said to be alumna Wendy Windsor-Hashiguchi, BS'87. A math major during her undergraduate days, Windsor-Hashiguchi is a numbers cruncher by day and teacher of Irish dance by night.

She has taught Irish step, set and social dances with the Vanderbilt Dance Group since the late '90s. A few years ago she founded her own school, the Scott-Ellis School of Irish Dance (www.scott-ellis.com), and she plays hammer dulcimer with The Jump Gypsies, an Irish band she and her husband, Franko Hashiguchi, co-founded.

One might assume that someone so immersed in Irish

Wendy Windsor-Hashiguchi



NEIL BRAKE

Irish dance until I was 30 years old and pregnant with my first child,” she says.

A gymnast and member of a drum and bugle corps in high school (“I played flag,” she says), she became intrigued with Irish dance after seeing a dancer perform with the legendary Irish band The Chieftains not long after she finished her undergraduate work at Vanderbilt. Enthusiastic, but finding no teachers in Nashville, she tried the closest thing she could find: Scottish Highland dancing.

“I started really late. I mean 22 back then was ancient to be starting Highland. I was competing in the ‘12 and over’ category,” she laughs, “but I kept doing it because I wanted to do it, and I wanted to do it well. And I competed up to championship level, though I did not win any championships.”

When her husband pointed her to classes in Irish dance at the Augusta Heritage Center in West Virginia, she was finally on her way. She became a certified *ceili* (pronounced kay-lee) teacher, or one who teaches Irish social dances, in 2000 and received her full certification as a TCRG—*Teasgicoir Choimsiúin Le Rinci Gaelacha* (Gaelic Commission Dancing Teacher)—through the Irish

Dance Commission in Dublin several years later by passing a rigorous weekend-long exam in four parts: written, music, teaching and dance.

“I think they do it like that so that you really have to want it or you wouldn’t subject yourself to it. I could teach Irish dance no matter what my certification was, but if I want my students to be eligible to compete at a *feis* [pronounced fesh], which is an Irish dance competition, I need to be fully certified.”

At Vanderbilt, Windsor-Hashiguchi teaches mostly college students and some staff, but at her studio in nearby Franklin she has taught kids as young as 3. One of her adult students won the adult championship in Washington, D.C.

In addition to her work as a human resources analyst at Hospital Corporation of America and teaching Irish dance at Vanderbilt, at her Franklin, Tenn., studio, and in Franklin, Ky., she’s now learning button accordion to go along with her hammer dulcimer work for The Jump Gypsies. She encourages all her dance students to play music as well as dance.

“I think being a musician makes you a better dancer and being a dancer makes you a better musician, because they’re really two sides of the same coin,” she says. “But given my druthers, I’d rather be dancing.”

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

Visual Art: Common Ground Comes Full Circle

Lain York, director of Zeitgeist Gallery in Nashville, sits before a group of eager artists, parents of artists and art enthusiasts who have come to the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC) to hear about his experiences as a painter, to discuss marketing, and to brainstorm about the possibilities that could arise from creating a community of artists with special needs in Nashville.

“I know what it is to want to pursue painting in an environment with limited prospects of sales and subsidies,” says York, who for years has served as the

identify common goals and to share resources.”

“Creating Community and Opportunity for Artists with Special Needs” was just one in a series of workshops that has been offered through the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center University Center for Excellence, thanks to a Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission grant. Judging from the ideas that were shared and the enthusiasm among workshop participants, a community of artists seems not only plausible but necessary.

Leisa A. Hammett, mother of an 11-year-old visual artist with autism, has been advocating for some time to meet the need for an established community in the form of an art center for people with disabilities in Nashville. (See related story, p. 32.)

“I came here tonight thinking I could plant a seed,” Hammett said. “I want to have a place where people with disabilities can go and experience the joy and the therapeutic nature of making art. I know that creating art has been right there with speech and behavior therapy, with occupational therapy and education as being an important factor in my daughter’s development.”

The advantages of creating a community of artists with special needs are many, say supporters. Not only would it



“Mandala”

VKC’s preparator of art exhibits featuring artists with developmental disabilities. “What works is identifying and stressing what makes you different. It is a matter of coming together as a community to

Upcoming

Visual Arts:
Harold Lowe Jr. shows civil rights photographs at Sarratt Gallery Jan. 15–Feb. 16, 2007. The collection contains



powerful black-and-white photographs of civil rights activities in Nashville taken by Lowe for *The Tennessean* between 1960 and 1964, including the well-known Kresge’s lunch counter photograph.



Music: **Jon Hendricks and LHR Redux** bring jazz to the Great Performances at Vanderbilt Series on Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. in Ingram Hall. A vocal innovator, Hendricks has been dubbed the “Father of Vocalese and James Joyce of Jive.”

Theatre: Vanderbilt University Theatre presents *The Playboy of the Western World*, John M. Synge’s rustic, irreverent commentary on Irish rural life at the turn of the 20th century, Feb. 16–24 at Neely Auditorium.

provide a supportive atmosphere in which to create, share experiences, and develop stronger survival skills as artists, but it would also benefit parents, caregivers and friends who are often given the task of marketing the art.

One window into the world of the artist with special needs opened in the form of the *Common Ground* art exhibit. The exhibit, held this summer

at the VKC, was the product of a series of workshops facilitated by Full Circle Art. In the workshops, participants first invited and engaged the artistic muse through drumming and movement. They then carried out the Full Circle Art mission to “communicate a shared vision of peace, love and hope” with paint brushes and canvases, ceramics and stained glass. The result was a colorful and

Verbatim

“What we need in American education is not for the arts to look more like the academics ... but for the academics to look more like the arts. We need programs that pay much more attention to the imaginative, to the playful, to the stimulation of curiosity, to the pursuit of unanswered questions, to the opportunity to work to the edge of incompetence. We need schools that promote risk-taking of an intellectual kind and in which meaning matters.”

— Elliott Eisner, the Lee Jacks Professor of Education and professor of art at Stanford University, delivering the second of the 2006–07 Chancellor’s Lectures Sept. 29, titled “What Do the Arts Teach?”

Accolades

Frye Gaillard, BA'68, writer-in-residence at the University of South Alabama, author of 20 books, and frequent contributor to *Vanderbilt Magazine*, has won the prestigious Lillian Smith Award for his most recent book, *Cradle of Freedom: Alabama and the Movement That Changed America* (University of Alabama Press). The Lillian Smith Award recognizes authors whose work challenges all Americans on issues of social and racial justice.



Virginia Derryberry, BA'73, MA'76, a noted painter and University of North Carolina-Asheville art professor, returned to Vanderbilt for a solo exhibition at Sarratt Gallery during the month of October. The paintings for *Second Nature* featured complex figure scenarios in Eden-like landscapes and were begun during Derryberry's 2004 residency in Auvillar, France. The exhibit, held in conjunction with Derryberry's award of the

2005–06 juried Southeastern College Art Conference Artist Fellowship, coincided with SECAC's annual conference in Nashville. Derryberry held her first professional solo exhibition at Sarratt Gallery in 1980.

An album produced by **Dale Cockrell**, professor of musicology, and **Butch Baldassari**, adjunct associate professor of mandolin at the Blair School of Music, is the first music selection to be added to a National Endowment for the Humanities collection of works that are perceived to strengthen students' understanding of American history and culture. *Happy Land: Musical Tributes to Laura Ingalls Wilder* is part of the new *We the People* collection from the NEH. This year's collection has the theme of "Pursuit of Happiness," and includes *Those Happy Golden Years* by Wilder, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and other classics of literature. The NEH will distribute the chosen works to 2,000 public, school and military libraries in the United States and overseas.



Baldassari and Cockrell

energetic display of common ground among the Full Circle artists and youth and adults with developmental disabilities. (View the exhibit online at kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/art/art0406.)

"As the University Center for Excellence grows, there will be an increased number of workshops in the areas of education and the arts," says Elise McMillan, the center's associate director. "It is an exciting time, and we are honored to contribute all we can to help forge relationships for community artists with special needs."

—Courtney Evans

Music:

Sound Space

Sept. 9 marked the grand opening of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, a new, \$123 million centerpiece for music performance in downtown Music City. For the more than 20 members of the Nashville Symphony who are also teachers and professors at the Blair School of Music, the occasion was the culmination of many weeks of practice for a singular opportunity to perform publicly in a brand-new space specifically designed acoustically to enhance symphonic music. Not least in the list of first-ever experiences was performing with the interim music director for the Nashville Symphony, renowned conductor Leonard Slatkin.

"I couldn't be happier with the sound in the hall," says Bobby Taylor, the symphony's principal oboist and Blair associate professor of oboe. "It allows us to play the full range of dynamics with confidence. I thought Mr. Slatkin was the perfect choice to navigate



Blair faculty members and Nashville Symphony musicians William Wiggins (left) and Bobby Taylor inside the symphony's new, \$123 million performance hall

through all the gala activities for the opening of the hall—with the experienced perspective that allowed the orchestra to stay focused on the most important thing, the music."

William Wiggins, the symphony's principal timpanist and Blair assistant professor of percussion, echoes Taylor's sentiments.

"It was the most rewarding experience to be able to hear my colleagues while playing—and play in an unforced manner to produce the best sound possible from my instrument," says Wiggins. "The sound is wonderful: resonant, yet clear and clean. Everything can be heard—that's the good news and the bad news!"

Mark Wait, dean of the Blair School of Music, serves as

chairman of the Nashville Symphony's official committee searching for a permanent music director in the wake of the death last spring of Kenneth Schermerhorn, for whom

the hall is named. Slatkin has agreed to serve in the interim and assist in the selection process of the permanent director.

—Cindy Steine

The Nashville Symphony includes more than 20 Blair faculty members, in addition to Bobby Taylor and William Wiggins: Jeff Bailey (trumpet*), Denise Baker (acting assistant concertmaster*), Larry Borden (trombone*), Cynthia Estill (bassoon*), Gerald Greer (acting concertmaster*), Erin Hall (acting associate concertmaster*), Charlene Harb (keyboard/harp*), Cassie Lee (clarinet*), Erin Long (first violin), Gil Long (tuba*), Brad Mansell (cello), Ellen Menking (oboe*), Leslie Norton (horn*), Gil Perel (bassoon and contra bassoon), Dan Reinker (viola*), Joel Reist (bass*), Norma Rogers (piccolo), Chris Stenstrom (cello), Julia Tanner (cello*), Glen Wanner (bass*), and Roger Wiesmeyer (English horn).

*Indicates either principal or assistant principal

All Souls' Eve

Polish Military Cemetery, Kraków

Dusk and so many flowers, lit votives, mourners who come leaning leggy baguettes on headstones with vodka shots, steaming containers of soup—some open their gifts directly on the graves. One woman, a friend, upends the local pilsner, her dead man's pleasure, and the piss-steam hisses a hillside specter. I'm here but somewhere else: my mind, racing, moves at the speed of dreams. The woman's son climbs from my shoulders and sprints the length of cobbled graveyard wall toward some inscrutable fury, becoming all voice—like the white-bearded cantor on Rosh Hashanah who for one vast moment arrived at a resonance I could almost taste as it held us alive and at the brink of shattering.

—Rick Hilles, senior lecturer in English, from his book *Brother Salvage: Poems*, published in September by the University of Pittsburgh Press and winner of the 2005 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize

Symphony Honors Alumna Amy Grant

On Sunday evening during the new symphony hall's opening weekend of gala festivities, a sold-out crowd enjoyed "An Evening with Amy Grant," the hall's first truly public performance. Vanderbilt alumna and Grammy-winning performer Amy Grant, '82, was surprised by Nashville Symphony executives during her performance with the announcement that the hall's stage has been named the Amy Grant Performance Platform.

The honor recognizes Grant's many contributions to the symphony through the years. When the symphony was struggling to overcome a bankruptcy in the 1980s, Grant began pairing with the symphony for a series of concerts and turned over net income to the organization, single-handedly paying off the debt, says the symphony's president and CEO. Numerous collaborations between Grant and the Nashville Symphony have followed ever since.

Peace to Beirut with All My Heart

A year's exploration in a reborn city had scarcely begun when Lebanon's fragile peace crumbled. BY RYAN FARHA, CLASS OF 2008

AROUND 11 O'CLOCK on the morning of July 17, 2006, I received a call on my Lebanese mobile phone from a number I didn't recognize.

"Is this Ryan Farha?" asked the voice on the other end of the line, an American woman. "Yes."

"The U.S. embassy is evacuating a small group of American civilians today. Can you be ready by 3 p.m.?"

"Yes," I answered, calm yet clearly excited. After the woman instructed me not to tell any of my fellow students about the evacuation plot, the conversation ended abruptly, with few details about the actual evacuation procedure itself. Regardless, I wasn't concerned. I scurried up to my dorm room to pack the one bag I was allowed to take with me. Clothes, books, and



DANIEL DUBOIS

souvenirs I had purchased in Lebanon had to stay behind. Hunched over from the weight of my stuffed backpack, I left my room and ventured out to find a restaurant where I could enjoy one last chicken *shawarma*.

That night I was one of 34 Americans headed for the island of Cyprus on board a Greek cruise ship chartered by the French. My plans to spend a year studying in Lebanon had come to a crashing halt, just as Israel began to intensify its devastating offensive on Lebanon and her people.

I had arrived in Beirut on June 26, eagerly anticipating the year I was to spend studying at the American University of Beirut. I was enrolled in an intensive Arabic language program for the summer, to be followed by a year of liberal arts courses in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

I was not a complete stranger to the city. My father, a doctor who fled Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of 1982, had brought me and my family there several times before. Nevertheless, I was excited to finally explore the country on my own.

Beirut went above and beyond my expectations. The Arabic language program was truly intensive. We spent most of the day in class, received several hours' worth of homework, and our teachers spoke to us almost exclusively in Arabic. Still, my evenings were free to explore the charm and craziness of the city's rebirth following the years of war it had seen. I wandered through marketplaces, past cafés and courtyards, and visited countless restaurants and street vendors, devouring chicken *shawarma*, *baba ghanoush*, *falafel* and other Lebanese delicacies.

Although it is nestled on the tranquil Mediterranean Sea, Beirut pulsates with energy at night. My classmates and I frequented the city's hotspots, visiting nightclubs with names like Crystal, Taboo and

Starlet. Beirut's charms kept us constantly busy; I can hardly recall an idle moment.

What struck me most about the city were its remarkable, continual contrasts. The road from the airport passes through grimy shantytowns, congested urban areas, and finally reaches the pristine downtown district, built with the dollars of wealthy Gulf Arabs and other investors. Walking down the street, one could pass gorgeous, scantily clad Lebanese women locking arms with their completely veiled friends and family members. The city is a fragile compromise between tolerant Western liberalism and the conservative, religious and family-oriented society of the Middle East.

Because of my admiration for and attachment to the city, my first impulse was to mourn for Beirut's seemingly unavoidable fate when I heard the Israeli bombs dropping. It was as if Israel were not attacking Lebanon itself, but unraveling the 15-plus years of peace and progress that had grown since fighting ceased in the 1980s. Lebanon had flourished into a safe and attractive vacation hotspot during the past 20 years, and just as it geared up for its most bustling and profitable summer in years, violence penetrated its borders, infecting Beirut's still-fragile, carefree atmosphere.

While the Israeli armed forces gained steam, both students and faculty at the American University avoided discussions about the conflict and its politics. When "the situation," as our instructors referred to it, broke out, classes continued with little more than a two-

minute briefing on how Lebanon had seen far more appalling catastrophes, and that these kinds of "events" were "normal" in the country. Several days later, as bombs fell closer and closer to the university, classes were finally canceled, though even then, some fearless instructors held impromptu Arabic sessions.

Violence is nothing new to Lebanon. The country has suffered through decades of conflict and warfare with Israel and other Middle Eastern powers, and the Lebanese have adapted to the persistence of aggression that plagues their country. During the five days of the conflict I experienced, I learned a great deal about the Lebanese people and how they survived decades of war. They would do anything possible to downplay the threat, or find ways to forget about the impending danger. As bombs fell right and left, life in Beirut continued. Even I fell into their tradition of willed disregard for the brewing violence, continuing my life as normal. Once classes were canceled, my friends and I, instead of sitting in our dorm rooms and waiting, played soccer, ate whatever food we could get our hands on, partied all night on our dorm's balcony, and searched for places to go out near the university.

One night a few of us were walking toward a nearby café called Prague when we clearly heard at least four shells fired, most likely from the Israeli ships off the coast. We paused and looked at each other silently, wondering if we should return to campus, but without a word we continued walking once the loud explosions ceased. This experience was representative of our time in Beirut during the war, which was dominated by long periods of what my friend Daniel called "painful tranquility," interspersed with moments of distant explosions and screaming Israeli jets flying over. In fact, we came to find the "kabooms," as we innocently labeled them, relieving in a sense, for they provided a strange sort of respite from the uneasy restraint of silence.

The following day was perhaps the clos-

est we ever came to being under fire. I was in my bathroom brushing my teeth when I heard jets roar overhead as our building shook. Instantly, everyone in the dorm ran out to see what was happening. A leaflet canister that failed to explode in the air had ripped a large hole in the soccer field next to



NATALIE COX WHEAT

our dorm, where we had been playing the previous afternoon. We hurried down to the field. Scattered everywhere were leaflets that proclaimed in Arabic, "The resistance protects the country? ... The country is a victim of the resistance!" The leaflets had little effect in convincing the students that Hizbullah was the enemy; most of them simply mocked the poorly drawn cartoon, which ironically showed Lebanese citizens dodging Israeli bombs.

The next day the Israelis attempted another leaflet drop at the university. The canister burst this time, but the leaflets all fluttered into the Mediterranean. It was fairly symbolic, I believe, of the failed propaganda campaign waged by the Israelis. In the first leaflet drop, the canister did not work properly. In the second leaflet drop, the canister worked but missed its target. Either way, the Lebanese were not going to accept Israeli propaganda as long as their bombs continued to pound the country.

The streets of Beirut had become eerily

silent several days into the conflict, after the Lebanese mostly fled to the mountains. Most of the American students in the city, forced to wait for their government while it stumpled over evacuation plans, stayed near the university campus. On one of my last days in Beirut, I ventured out to a hole-in-the-wall crêpe store to get some food. The gruff shopkeeper nonchalantly asked me a question that has stuck in my head: "Are you going to stay for the war?"

"Do you think this will be a war?" I responded.

He gave me an incredulous look, as if there were no other option but war. While I was still hanging on to the hope that the situation would calm down and I could resume my studies in Beirut, the Lebanese seemed to believe that war was inevitable—my family included. The day after the Israelis first bombed the airport, my father called me and told me he thought the situation would quickly escalate. He had already planned

to fly to Damascus and whisk me away from the danger.

Despite their pessimism about the coming days, life continued for the Lebanese. The day before I was evacuated, some of my relatives picked me up and drove me across Beirut (parts of which were being bombed) to their apartment to have a pleasant lunch. Their apartment afforded a wonderful view of the southern suburbs, the primary target for the Israeli bombs. Between courses of *fat-toush*, grape leaves and *kibbe*, remarkably loud bursts went off periodically as puffs of smoke rose in the distance, in plain view through the balcony doors.

Following the meal, my great-aunt drove me back to my dorm, and while it was strange in itself to be driving through a city under attack, what amazed me most was the fact that she insisted we stop on the way to buy a box of pastries. When I bashfully insisted that it was not necessary, and hunger was not the

continued on page 85

A.P.O.V.*

*Alumni Point of View

A Fork in the Road

One graduate grapples with the “quarter-life crisis.”

BY AUDREY PETERS, BS’04

AFTER RECEIVING my diploma on a sweltering morning in May 2004, I found myself filled not with a sense of hope but with trepidation. I had been having nightmares in which I had forgotten I was signed up for a required class—and the final was about to start. This dream, however, was not the cause of my unease. With a bit of shock, I realized that neither was it due to the fact that I had yet to pack my dorm room, despite knowing I had less than 24 hours to move out. Not only did I have no idea how I was going to pack in time, but I also had no idea where to go from there.

In many ways my college experience was a prolonged adolescence; Vanderbilt was a safety net between me and the real world. Thanks to dorm living, I didn’t have to face the realities of rent or utility payments; my life was highly structured, with well-defined parameters of what was expected of me; my social network was essentially provided; and I had ample opportunities to expand my circle of friends and explore my interests.

It is no real surprise, then, that I found myself completely unprepared for life after college. The few bills I had to pay filled my stomach with a cold knot of dread. Most of my friends from high school no longer lived in my hometown, and I had absolutely no

idea how to make more. Perhaps most important, I had no job prospects—and no clue how to get any.

My parents were nice enough to let me move back in with them, rent free, and drive their car to the job I had yet to get. I was grateful but also a bit downhearted: This wasn’t how it was supposed to be. I was supposed to graduate with a plan for life in hand along with my diploma. I was supposed to be living my dream in some bright, shiny city of the future, not sleeping in the same twin bed in the same room in which I had slept for more than 20 years.



Although I found a job within a few months, I became depressed. I ached with homesickness for Vanderbilt. I missed conversations about politics, philosophy, theology—often with people I’d only just met. I missed (and still miss) my college friends dearly, for they watched me grow and know the hows and whys of who I am today. I definitely miss being able to put my work-study paycheck towards whatever I want, rather than student-loan payments. I felt more financial freedom working 20 hours a week than I do now, working full time.

I was struggling to find where I should be, struggling in this vast world beyond the Vanderbilt bubble, where I was basically alone and everyone was looking out for his own best

interest. I was suddenly outside a support system, and it was hard. It was easy to fall into ennui. It was easy to sit at home after work, apathetically glancing through the want ads without intending to follow through on anything. It was easy to waste spare hours watching *South Park* rather than trying to get a grip on my life.

I was afraid. I was afraid to stay in this circumstance that made me so unquestioning and full of self-doubt. I was afraid, too, to take that chance—the giant leap of faith—and step out naked into the real world, trying to find my bliss. Disoriented in this new world, and fervently hoping to break through ennui and into the life I was meant for, I did nothing. Add to that the insult that Comedy Central’s “Adult Swim” kept changing its lineup every time I got used to it, and I knew this was not the way it was supposed to be.

I had no idea where I was going. What happened to my life plan? I was supposed to graduate, then set forth on a great adventure—the career of my choosing, sunny apartment in a fabulous city, lots of friends and lots of wealth. But here I sat, lacking even a basic knowledge of where the road to the future lay. I was working in a job I wasn’t particularly fond of—OK, a job I hated with the fire of a thousand suns—back in my hometown, living with my parents, with no idea what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go. (I did, however, buy my very first car two weeks before my 24th birthday. So, theoretically, I could go anywhere as soon as I found the road.)

I wanted to go to graduate school, was accepted into several, but did not receive financial aid. There was simply no way I would be able to absorb the additional debt burden, especially considering that nagging sensation I had in the pit of my stomach that maybe—just maybe—graduate school was just a way for me to put off the real world for a while and regress into the little cocoon of security I always felt at Vanderbilt.

As I look around at my friends, I find that almost the only ones living successfully are those who got degrees in engineering or science. The great glittering liberal arts degrees are wonderful, and I don’t regret mine, but it’s simply not as easy to find decent work with a degree in medieval philosophy, for example. Even those who have the jobs they had planned for are barely making enough to get by. They are working two jobs, living at home, or fitting four people into a one-bedroom house to pay the bills. Many of them went to law school just to have something to do, some pretense at moving forward. And most of the ones who didn’t are planning to go in the future. Our lives are filled with apprehension and self-doubt—

the world will reach its limit on lawyers eventually, after all, and I think critical mass is scheduled for two weeks from now. What will we do then?

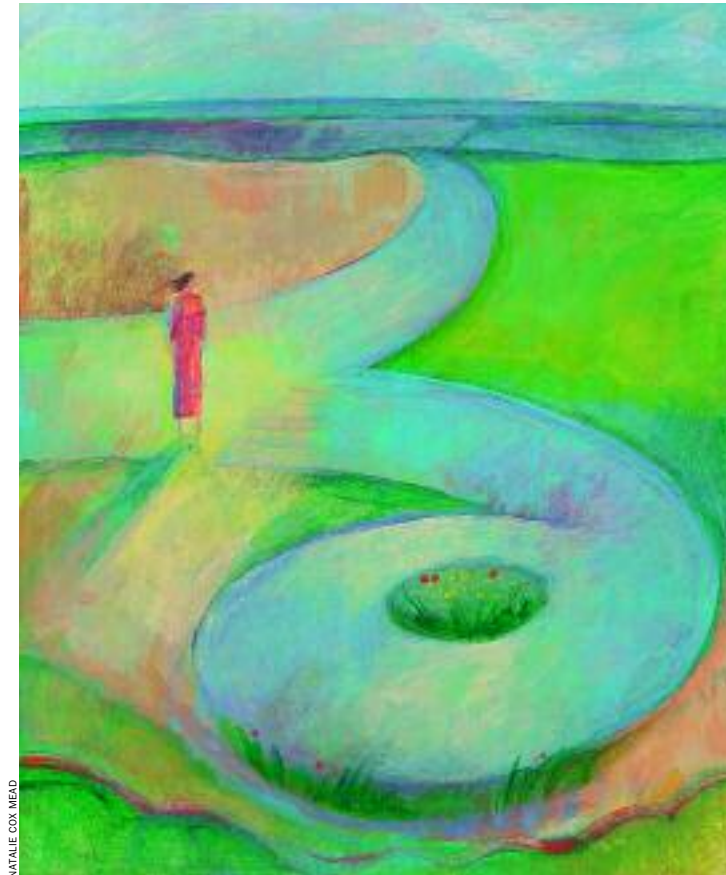
Call it the quarter-life crisis.

In his book *Generation X*, Douglas Coupland describes this occurrence as “a period of mental collapse occurring in one’s twenties, often caused by an inability to function outside of school or structured environments, coupled with a realization of one’s essential aloneness in the world.”

Yes. Yes. A resounding yes. We live in a complex and multiple-choice society, which can make choosing from our options a daunting task. (If we can’t pick between five entrees at Ruby Tuesday, how are we supposed to choose a career?) So daunting is this task, in fact, that many recent graduates (like myself)

fail to choose at all, allowing our lives just to happen to us.

More-established adults say to imagine what you would do if you had unlimited resources and didn’t have to work, and that’s what you should pursue as a career. For me, however, and I imagine for many others like



NATALIE COX MEAD

me, the answer to that question is simple: nothing. I would do nothing. I would lie around on a beach somewhere writing poetry or travel the world.

It’s not that I’m lazy. No one with a degree from Vanderbilt is lazy. It’s more that I have been trained to think critically about the world, how and why it functions, and I don’t really know how to do anything else. I can’t build a carburetor, but I can write a 30-page paper on the Kabbalistic influences on Dante’s *Paradiso*. How can I transfer that into a career? And how, especially, can I transfer that into a career that wouldn’t render my expensive degree completely useless?

We are facing the bitter truth that our educations, although among the best in the world, don’t mean as much as they did in our parents’ generation. Sadly, our parents don’t seem

to understand that fact. Although around half of us live with our parents, according to the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, our parents seem to think we are just being lazy about seeking a high-paying, high-powered job. This is compounded by the media image of recent graduates, embodied by those

Taco Bell “Good to Go” commercials, featuring a 20-something whiling away his time on his parents’ couch playing video games. The cold, hard truth, however, is that the job market is tough, there is heavy competition, and college degrees don’t mean as much as they did 20 years ago—unless they are advanced or professional degrees.

Perhaps the answer is in searching. Sure, the job market is tough, but it’s been tough before and will eventually get better. Sure, a lot of my peers are still relying on their parents for financial support, but maybe we should be counting our blessings that our parents are able to do this for us, that they held education as a priority.

The process of writing this article has helped me tremendously in dealing with my emotions. I’m not alone. I’m not a freak. Maybe those nightmares

that I’m the last kid picked for kickball in gym class will slowly end.

I’ve quit my dead-end, joyless job, and I’ve not been happier since graduating from Vanderbilt. So maybe I haven’t figured it all out, and I still don’t really know where to go—but I’m not paralyzed anymore by my fears of being stuck in a job that I hate until I die from sheer boredom. I can keep searching. Jobs and cities—these things work themselves out in the end (I hope). I have within my power the ability to seek and strive and eventually find that job that provides a suitable standard of living and emotional fulfillment. But anyone who knows of a well-paying job in a sunny city involving something like touring beaches, high-stakes poker, or being a professional moviegoer is more than welcome to call me. I’m game. ▼

TheClasses

“ Charles Plosser, BE’70, has been appointed president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. ”

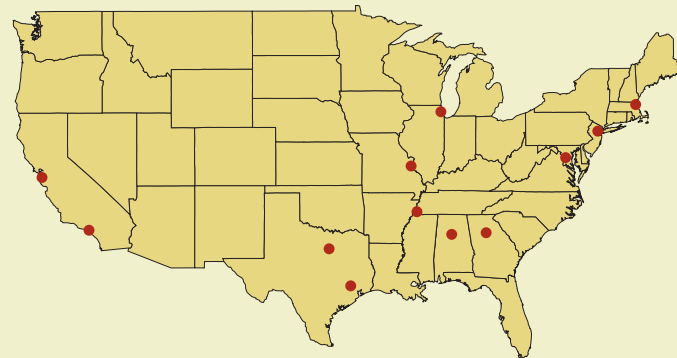
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Alumni Association News

Alumni Interviewing Program Expands

The Office of Alumni Relations and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions have expanded the Vanderbilt Alumni Admissions Interviewing Program. All students applying to Vanderbilt have the opportunity to request an interview with an alumnus or alumna.

The two offices jointly launched the program in the fall of 2003 in Atlanta, Chicago and Houston. It was doubled the following year to include Birmingham, Ala.; Dallas; Memphis, Tenn.; and the Metro New York area. Last year the program was expanded again to include Boston, London, Los Angeles, San Francisco, St. Louis and Washington, D.C. In 2005–06 more than 1,000 students requested interviews in the above-mentioned areas.



The program serves as an informal exchange of information between Vanderbilt applicants and alumni. It also allows alumni to serve as a personal link to prospective students and their parents in local communities. Much appreciation is due to everyone who participated in this program during its first three years.

Interviews began in October. Vanderbilt expects a record number of applicants this fall, and alumni interviewers can help personalize the application experience for prospective students.

If you are interested in becoming an alumni interviewer for the 2006–07 application season, please complete the required online training session at www.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/AIP.



Karen Thomas Fesmire, BS'80

NEIL BRAKE

Invested for Life

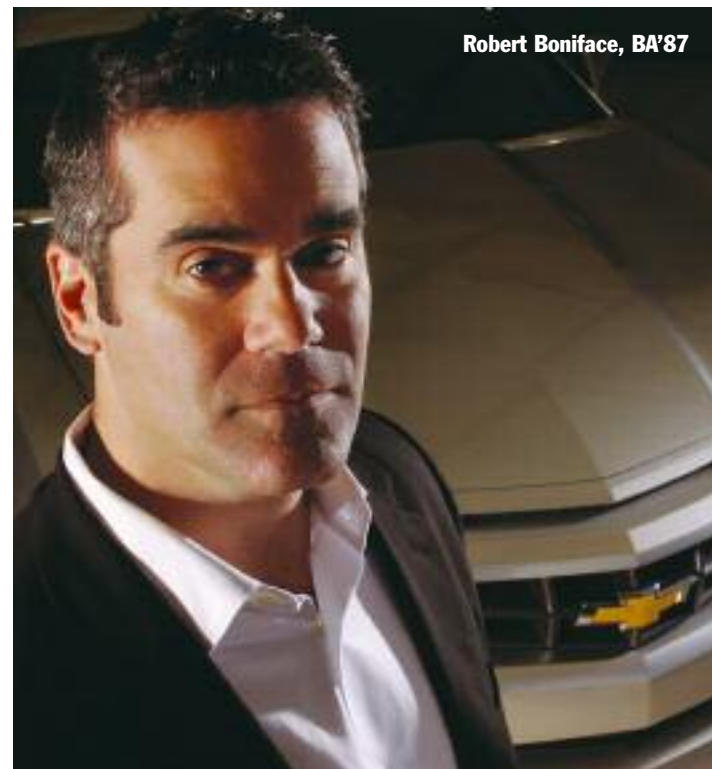
Karen Thomas Fesmire knows something about multi-tasking. When *Vanderbilt Magazine* caught up with her at her Memphis, Tenn., home to ask about her plans as president of the Alumni Association, she was happy to share her thoughts—as soon as she got off her *other* phone line, on which she was in the midst of a planning meeting about Reunion Weekend.

“I’m sort of a professional volunteer—schools, church, charities,” says Fesmire, whose eventual presidency of the Alumni Association was a foregone conclusion. After being named to the Alumni Board, during one meeting Fesmire spoke up and asked, “Are we just here to listen and be made to feel good about ourselves, or are we actually supposed to be *doing* something?”

Fesmire arrived at Vanderbilt in 1976 from the small town of Coshocton, Ohio. She majored in business administration and married Dr. William Fesmire, BA’80, a Memphis pediatrician. They are parents of Maggie, a Vanderbilt sophomore, and 9-year-old Witt. The Fesmires are big fans of Vanderbilt sports.

As president of the Alumni Association, Fesmire has ambitious plans. “I want to give students the tools to help them become engaged as alumni,” she says. “Alumni aren’t just people who come back at Homecoming or give Vanderbilt money—they’re invested in the life of the university.”

“Karen Kobanowich, BS’82, joined three other NASA astronauts aboard Aquarius, the underwater laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.”



Robert Boniface, BA’87

TOM PIDGEON

Cool Is Back

Why did all the coolest kids always drive Camaros? Red Camaros. You could see them coming from down the street. And you knew that whoever was on the inside was going to a great party you weren’t invited to ... with the hottest date in town.

In 2002 the last Camaro rolled off the assembly line in Canada. But if you’ve always dreamed of owning this American icon, relax. In 2009 the Camaro will be back on the market and better than ever, thanks to Robert Boniface, director of the General Motors Advanced Design Studio.

Boniface came to Vanderbilt with a career goal of car design in mind. He started out at the School of Engineering but quickly realized he wasn’t “particularly gifted at math.” But his degree in psychology has definitely come in handy.

“A car is a very emotional purchase,” Boniface says. “A car says something about you. And when it comes right down to it, you don’t buy a Corvette or a Mini Cooper because of crashworthiness or fuel economy. You buy it because you like it.”

Chances are, aficionados will like the new Camaro, which won Best in Show at the most recent Detroit Auto Show. And if you’ve always had a secret itch to drive what the cool kids drove, chances are, you’ll like it too.

—Cindy Thomsen

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“ Tony Bates, BS’91, has launched *MoozikooRadio.com* to promote independent music. ”



John Lunn,
BE'92

NEIL BRAKE

Tradition in a Bottle

When John Lunn was studying chemical engineering at Vanderbilt, he never dreamed he'd be using his education to make moonshine.

As master distiller for George Dickel Whisky, Lunn oversees production of the Tennessee sipping whisky in Cascade Hollow in the hills near Normandy, Tenn. Moonshine is one of the early stages in the distillation process, before the whisky (the traditional Scottish spelling) is mellowed, diluted and aged.

At 36, Lunn is one of the youngest master distillers in a business that honors longevity and tradition. He says his Vanderbilt education prepared him well for his current career: "Distillation is very much a chemical engineering process."

It's also an old-fashioned art. Lunn and his staff eyeball and taste-test their product at each stage of development, without the aid of computers.

"I get the biggest kick from the fact that our 27 employees make all the George Dickel Whisky in the world," he says.

His greatest challenge is keeping the product the same as it was when Dickel, a German immigrant, founded the company in 1870. "In a world where everything changes, that's not easy," Lunn says.

He invites alumni to tour the distillery Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

—Joanne Beckham



Lucy Dalglish,
JD'95

PAMELA LEPOLD

The First Freedom

When she was in school in Grand Forks, N.D., Lucy Dalglish was editor of her sixth-grade newspaper. She came out against the war in Vietnam, against women's liberation, and against her father's tendency to restrict her television viewing. That last column resulted in Lucy's being grounded, despite her telling her father, "I have the First Amendment. I have the right to say what I want." Parental rights prevailed back then, but Dalglish has never stopped promoting the rights of journalists.

After working as a journalist in St. Paul, Minn., and receiving a master of studies in law degree at Yale, she came to Vanderbilt to complete her law education. One attraction was the just-created Freedom Forum First Amendment Center where she worked part time.

"It was very exciting just to be there and hang out with [center founder] John Seigenthaler and to see who was coming through that place," she said, remembering her days in Nashville.

Today Dalglish is executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. Since its inception in 1970, the committee has been involved in virtually every press-freedom case that has come before the Supreme Court. She spends a lot of time explaining just what First Amendment law is all about and why America needs a free and independent press. It's an argument she's been honing since the sixth grade.

—Cindy Thomsen

“Nicole Duciaume, BA'00, has traveled to Kenya, Bolivia, Mozambique and Uganda as a support officer with the Christian Children's Fund.”

Why Your Parents Move to Florida

BY TERRI WITEK, BS'83, MA'84, PHD'88

Other imports thrive: roller coasters, Spanish moss,
 Cooled air and a pair of teenaged armadillos
 Who fled a traveling tent show in the Thirties
 (heirs dot the berm like overturned helmets).
 There are still giddy miles of citrus
 To consider and, although at first they'll buck it,
 The sweet corn of March. That fewer clothes
 Are needed means robins arrive all at once
 Like a shipment of discount, flame-hued mittens.
 It will seem small-minded to be sad here, though they are.
 The graves fill up same as anywhere.
 But as long as they keep a dozy eyelid propped,
 The sky (so low in buttoned-up Illinois or Ohio)
 By some huge blue agreement forgets to drop.

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Terri Witek teaches English and poetry workshops at Stetson University in Deland, Fla., where she holds the Art and Melissa Sullivan Chair in Creative Writing.



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Tom Reardon, BA'06
Austin Bauman, BMus'06

NEIL BRAKE

Pedaling for Change

Following their graduation from Vanderbilt last May, Austin Bauman and Tom Reardon embarked on a 5,000-mile bike ride to raise money for the Rally Foundation, an organization that supports childhood cancer research.

In June the two started in Atlanta, riding east toward the Atlantic and turning north when they saw the blue of the ocean. They followed the Atlantic coast from Savannah, Ga., to Scarborough, Maine, and then rode west until they crossed the Mississippi River. In each city, they visited children affected by cancer, often staying with the children's friends and families. Each stop also brought a visit to the local pediatric oncology hospital or department.

"It was great to help take their minds off their sickness, because the kids in the hospitals just want to be treated like kids," Bauman says.

The pair cycled through mountain ranges, across rivers, and once rode 200 miles in a single day. They cycled through 19 states and visited more than 300 children.

They arrived back in Nashville Sept. 5 to a welcoming crowd at Vanderbilt. After three months and 5,000 miles of "pedaling for pennies," they raised more than \$116,000. "The whole idea is that everyone can give something, and we've really experienced that," Bauman says.

For more information about Rally Across America, visit www.rallyacrossamerica.org.

Vanderbilt University Alumni Association Board of Directors, 2006–2007

NEW MEMBERS

(For a complete roster of board members and club liaisons, visit www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/aassocbod.)

President: Karen Fesmire, BS'80
President-Elect/Vice President: Billy Ray Caldwell, BA'85
Immediate Past President: Sharon Munger, BA'68

NEW REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Region I: Nashville

Kasey Dread, BS'93, MEd'02
Clare Michels, BA'99, MBA'95
Theodore Morrison Jr., BS'92

Region II: Tennessee (excludes Nashville)

Lisa Uiberall-Noble, BA'93

Region III: Southeast (MS, AL, FL, GA, SC, NC)

Laurie Ann Burton, BS'93
John Douglas, BA'93
Jay Harris, BA'80, JD'84
Mark Riley, BA'77, JD'80

Region IV: Northeast (KY and VA northward)

Charles Myer III, BA'75
Cheryl Nichols, BA'81

Region V: West (all states west of the Mississippi River)

Doug Atnipp, BA'82
Tricia Morris, BS'86

Region VI: International

Landis Hicks, BE'66

NEW ALUMNI CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

Dallas—Larry Green, BA'91

Houston—Jeffrey Horner, BA'80

Los Angeles/Orange County—Laura Hardy, BA'86

San Francisco—Trish Cook, BA'83, MA'90

Washington, D.C.—Kimberly Nelson Hill, BA'97

NEW SCHOOL LIAISONS

Divinity School—Martha Ford, BA'84, MDiv'95

Peabody College—Olympia Ammon, BS'96

Law School—James Crumlin, BA'94, JD'97

School of Nursing—Kacy Smith Jones, MSN'05

NEW EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

Divinity President—MarLu Scott, MDiv'03

General Chair of Reunion—Tom Steele, BS'76

Nursing President—Elizabeth Farrar, BA'90

Owen Graduate School of Management—
Nancy Abbott, EMBA'91

Alumni Association News

Vanderbilt Chapters Bring VU to You

Vanderbilt Chapters offer exciting ways for Vanderbilt alumni, parents and friends to connect across the country and world-wide. With more than 30 chapters offering 300 volunteer-run events yearly, they are a great resource for networking and getting plugged into your local VU community.

Alumni and friends enjoy happy hours, viewing parties, events with Vanderbilt professors, wine tastings, family activities and more. For a list of chapters and their events, check out www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni.

Chapter highlights from 2006 included:

Chicago: The Tutankhamun exhibit and a lecture with Barbara Tsakirgis, associate professor of classics and art history, at The Field Museum

London: A summer garden tea for alumni, faculty and students

Louisville, Ky.: A tour, brunch and tasting on the Woodford Reserve Distillery veranda, followed by the Commonwealth Breeders' Cup at Keeneland thoroughbred racetrack

New York City: A discussion of "9/11: Five Years Later," from a historical perspective, with Thomas Schwartz, professor of history, including brunch and a walk to "Ground Zero"



Philadelphia:

A family event at Linvilla Orchards, including hayrides, a petting zoo, and a campfire dinner with hot apple cider on a 300-acre working farm

Washington, D.C.: An evening with John Geer, professor of political science, for a lively discussion of his new book, *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*, and the election season

Don't Miss Out

Many Vanderbilt Chapter activities are publicized through e-mail. To ensure that you receive invitations, be sure to update your e-mail address online at www.Dore2Dore.net, or e-mail us at alumni@vanderbilt.edu.

The Alumni
Association

VJournal *continued from page 9*

Center arrived at work one Monday morning to discover a pig's head on our patio. What first appeared to be an act of anti-Semitism turned out, apparently, to be done out of ignorance rather than malicious intent: Sigma Chi fraternity, whose house is across the street from the Schulman Center, had held a pig roast the previous weekend, and somebody got the bright idea that it would be a great prank to leave a pig's head outside the vegetarian restaurant, without any appreciation for how that might be perceived by Jews.

That event and the ensuing publicity showed me something I hadn't really considered before. Here was this fraternity right across the street from the Schulman Center. Every day, they walk in and out of their fraternity, we walk in and out of our building, and we aren't even the kind of neighbors who wave from across the street or greet one another as we're driving past.

Given a situation in which you're not communicating with your neighbors, eventually something unfortunate happens—whether it's a miscommunication, whether it's mischievous, whether it's malicious, a problem will inevitably arise, and when it does, you don't have a relationship you can fall back on to help resolve problems.

Before I came to Vanderbilt, I was director of the Freeman Center for Jewish Life at Duke University. While I was at Duke, there was an anti-Israel conference that a student group brought to campus, not something the university endorsed. That could have been a terrible experience for the Jewish students on

campus, and it was, in fact, a very difficult one. But we had put a lot of time into developing relationships across all faiths, and when it became clear that the conference was coming to campus, I was able to pick up the phone with various groups on campus representing different viewpoints, people with whom I was on a first-name basis, to say, "Let's talk about this." It made a huge difference in the way the campus experienced it.

Part of Hillel's goal at Vanderbilt is to have activities and dialogues with Christians and Muslims and whatever denominations are on campus. The idea that Hillel might be involved in bringing a Christian conservative or a staunch Republican speaker or group to campus, for example, can be uncomfortable for liberal Jewish students, but we try to provide programs that touch all our Jewish students. Some Christian groups on campus use the Schulman Center for their weekly meetings, and we try to open up our experience to different faiths. And it's not just interfaith; it's also intercultural. It's Latino, it's gay, it's any kind of group on campus.

Although the number of Jewish undergraduate students has grown dramatically at Vanderbilt, our graduate student population is only now beginning to see significant growth. This may be because Jewish students who didn't consider Vanderbilt when they were choosing an undergraduate school are unlikely to consider Vanderbilt when they're looking at graduate schools, and based on the growth of this year's graduate student population, this does appear to be happening. My hope is that,

as we move forward, the people who thought about Vanderbilt for undergraduate school will also consider it for graduate school.

In a short time Vanderbilt has put itself on the map in the eyes of the national Jewish community, and now Jews all over the country are looking at Vanderbilt as an option. It's an exciting time to be here.

Over the last year I've met many people in the Jewish community who have told me, "I love Vanderbilt, and it always made me sad when friends and family around the country would call me and say, 'We're looking at Vanderbilt. Is it a good place to send our kids?'" These people have told me how unhappy it made them to have to answer no. Now these same people tell me how gratifying it is to be able to recommend Vanderbilt to others. The excitement on their faces and the comfort it gives them are gratifying to me, too. ▼

Vanderbilt Holdings *continued from page 23*

Other German woodcut artists represented in the collection include Erich Heckel, the Expressionist, whose print of a young girl was reproduced in the first issue of the magazine *Genius* in 1920, and Gerhard Marcks, the Bauhaus artist. Of contemporary living artists, the most arresting work is by former East German Christiane Baumgartner, whose series of prints, *1 Sekunde*, represents one second of video shot during a road trip on the Autobahn translated into 25 individual wood engravings.

Taking the woodcut medium one step further in the direction of film, during February and March the Fine Arts Gallery will exhibit the work of American renaissance man Jay Bolotin, a writer, composer, performer, stage and set designer, choreographer and visual artist whose latest work is an animated film made entirely of woodcut prints. In a collaborative programming effort, the Fine Arts Gallery will exhibit the prints, while Sarratt Gallery and Cinema on campus will screen the film and exhibit studies and precursors to the completed portfolio.

All of which proves that even with the oldest print medium known, there are always new paths on which to collaborate and explore. ▼

Sports *continued from page 18*

freshmen who were all very experienced bowlers," says Williamson, "but Michelle had never bowled on a team. Anytime you do anything that's team oriented, it's a different atmosphere. This year I'm expecting a lot more from them because they've experienced those things. It should no longer be new to them."

The players now count on the coach and each other to keep things in perspective and in focus. There are times, Peloquin says, when in the middle of a game, "you think what might be happening on the lane is not actually what's happening. It's nice to have extra

sets of eyes behind you. It's not really an authoritative type of system. It's an exchange, and being able to talk it out helps a lot.

"I went to the Junior Gold Championships this summer, and they're completely individual," she says. "So that was the first event I had attended by myself since being here. The first shot of the tournament—I'm pretty sure I struck the first shot—I walked back thinking, 'Where are my high fives? Where is everybody?' You get used to that. It's so supportive. For the first time not to have it, I definitely missed it." ▼

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In Class continued from page 28
students will use *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, by Jeremy Butler, and *Television: The Critical View*, by Horace Newcomb, both of which deal in high-level theory, as their primary textbooks. At the same time, Sloop and his students will bounce those weighty theories off episodes from the first and second seasons of *Lost* and flex their critical thinking muscles with the myriad interconnected "products" like Web pages and books the series has spawned.

Sloop came up with the idea for the course last year while teaching Rhetoric of the Mass Media, a course that explores how everything from politics and economics to style and sports is distributed within contemporary culture via mass media. It's a course described by Sloop as "providing critical skills and ways of reading mass-mediated discourses that encourage reflection on the 'unnoticed' influence of mass media on the contours of everyday life." When a student used *Lost* specifically as his jumping-off point to do that, Sloop took notice.

"The student did a reading of gender roles in *Lost*, and the class really got into it," Sloop recalls. "*Lost* is one of those shows that people feel fanatical—and political—about, and I thought it would be the perfect show to use as a case study."

Sloop himself has been a fan of the show from the beginning.

"I was a *Survivor* fan and had been reading about *Lost* before its debut," he says. "I was intrigued because *Lost* sounded like a show where the viewers would already know the genre and automatically have an in-group community."

Sloop's instincts proved right as *Lost* became an instant hit with an especially devoted following that not only watches the show each week but dissects its plot and character developments and symbolic nuances via the Internet each day. Internet postings, in fact, are an integral part of the way Sloop's freshman writing class will interact with each other and stake their claims on their own academic "island" during the coming months.

Lost also works as a vehicle for an exploration of cultural studies because it operates on so many levels—something most television shows do not.

"Besides exciting the passion of its view-

ers, *Lost* works with a transnational group of characters who reflect all sorts of questions of age, race, gender and even size politics," says Sloop. "Other shows aren't so explicitly tied to these questions."

The question of gender and the media is one that has long interested Sloop. His book *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary U.S. Culture* was published by The University of Massachusetts Press in 2004. He is currently working on a project that investigates the relationship between gender, sexuality, citizenship and transportation technologies (such as DVD players in cars) as media. The first essay emerging from this work will be published in *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, a respected professional journal for which Sloop has been named editor-elect for volumes to be published between 2007 and 2009.

Sloop also is co-author with Kent A. Ono of *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration and California's Proposition 187*, published by Temple University Press in 2002.

"John's approach to rhetorical studies is unique," says Ono, director and professor of Asian American studies and professor of the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. "While deeply grounded within classical rhetorical studies, his approach acknowledges, indeed nuances, post-structural and cultural studies approaches to the discipline."

Yet, notes Ono, Sloop's work reaches a broader audience than most rhetorical studies scholarship.

"The topics he chooses—prisons, transgendered identity—are ones that bridge academic and theoretical knowledge with everyday life. That he is so successful at bridging more traditional rhetorical studies with upstart cultural studies is a testament to his overall social skills and ability to work with others."

Ono, whose own focus is rhetoric, cultural and media/film studies, also has written several articles with Sloop and has known him since graduate school. "We both made it through the rhetorical studies program at the University of Iowa and shared many a walk across the Iowa City campus to get coffee," Ono recalls. "John debated with me on a wide variety of topics ranging from popular music and college basketball to red-dirt tobacco farming."

Sloop's colleagues at Vanderbilt are also among his fans. During the busy presidential primary season in the spring of 2004, Sloop team-taught a course with English professor and author Cecelia Tichi and Bruce Barry, professor of management at the Vanderbilt Owen School and a professor in the sociology department, where he teaches a course on technology, media and culture.

"He is an astute critic of media and popular culture," says Barry, "one who brings rigorous intellectual force to bear, but also seems able to make it accessible to students and others who are not academic specialists in the fields of rhetoric and culture studies."

According to Barry, Sloop's approach in the classroom is energetic and passionate. "Students—many of whom, like the rest of us who know him well, just call him 'Sloop'—love him because he is deeply engaged in trying to get them to share his enthusiasm for the subject matter. He seems always willing to go that extra mile to connect with students and offer feedback on their work. I would add that he is well known and respected among many faculty at Vanderbilt in various fields because he is a sharp intellect who ranges widely as a thinker and critic."

Sloop's far-ranging interests, aside from television and its influences, include Marlon Brando, Thelonius Monk and Iowa Buckeye basketball, to name a few. His ability to relate so many topics—and refract them through the lens of mass media and cultural studies—is the key to his appeal as a teacher.

"With a class like Sloop's Rhetoric of the Mass Media, the most valuable lesson for me was learning to look at television, media and

pop culture as a larger reflection of our social values and philosophy," says Matt O'Brien, who graduated from Vanderbilt in 2001 with a degree in communications studies and computer science. O'Brien worked as a producer at *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* for four years before becoming a head writer on the newest entry into late-night talk television, *TalkShow with Spike Feresten*.

"He taught me to develop a much larger perspective and frame while observing media

Besides exciting the passion of its viewers, *Lost* works with a group of characters who reflect all sorts of questions of age, race, gender and even size politics.



or pop culture. That perspective is one of the most crucial skills used in writing something like topical comedy. The larger your perspective, the more funny common threads you can unearth as a result."

While most of Sloop's students won't go on to write for television, the professor sees communications studies as vital to any career. "Communication is the essence of humanity," Sloop says. "If our reality is in large part ideas that humans have created, we should ask ourselves how we get these ideas. It isn't through other

people but through mediated text—so we must deal with the media issue. I'm not worried about students remembering the text but in remembering the ways in which we as a culture look at that text. Frankly, I also worry about the health of democracy in a world with so many mediated sources that the striations of beliefs are becoming so great."

Thanks to John Sloop, Vanderbilt students are challenged to think about those sources and beliefs in ways they never before have. Or, as

O'Brien puts it, "You can watch *Lost* the couch-potato way, or you can watch it the Sloop way. The Sloop way adds a very tangible philosophical aspect to experiencing media that most people don't have the luxury of seeing." ▼

Angela Fox, a freelance writer specializing in the arts and travel, lives most of the year in Nashville, where she also is an actress. Her "Travels with Angela" segment is heard weekly on the nationally syndicated Lifetime Radio for Women.

S.P.O.V. continued from page 67

most important thing on my mind, she was adamant about the fact that I would need food while waiting until an evacuation plan was made.

Unfortunately, my friends and I had devoured the *baklava* by the next day, when I was to be evacuated with a friend the embassy allowed at the last minute. Packed on a ship bound for Cyprus, we simultaneously felt relief and disappointment. We were glad to be on the safety of the cruise ship, but we were saddened that our plans had been ruined and incensed

about the fate of the city we had grown to love. Traveling from Cyprus to Istanbul to London, we constantly judged each location vis-à-vis Beirut. For some reason we could not clearly define, no city could compare to Beirut's glamorous energy and excitement.

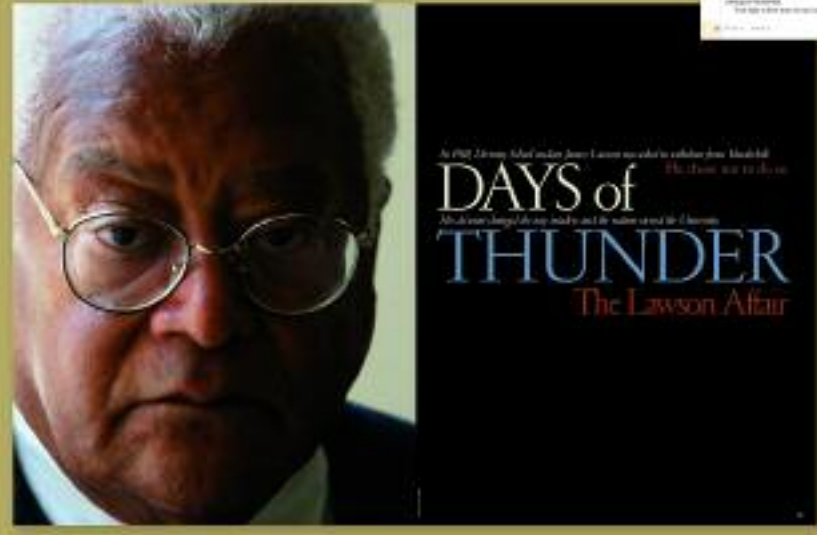
Looking back I'm still mystified why I was never scared of the events unfolding around me in Lebanon. Mostly, I felt excited to be in a war zone for the first time, angry at the Israelis and those who sanctioned their actions, and a curious attachment to the city and those with whom I experienced its cul-

ture, nightlife and its people. Only now can I begin to understand the feelings of my father, my relatives and the Lebanese, who have all gone through similar experiences, only on an immensely greater scale.

Upon arriving home I heard a song by the legendary Lebanese singer Fairuz that somehow perfectly encapsulated my feelings: "To Beirut—Peace to Beirut with all my heart . . . / From the soul of her people she makes wine, / From their seat, she makes bread and jasmine. / So how did it come to taste of smoke and fire?" ▼



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Southern Journal continued from page 88

Even after the vogue for romanticized visions of the plantation South passed after World War II, the swamp retained its vilified status. Hollywood, particularly in B movies, perpetuated horrific versions of the Southern swamps. Hollywood bombarded the public with films about swamp monsters (*Curse of the Swamp Creature* is a typical example of the B-movie swamp craze, as is 1959's *Attack of the Giant Leeches*), lurid depictions of criminals escaping into hellish steamy swamps (*Swamp Women*, a Roger Corman effort, stands out in this genre, as do better-regarded films such as *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*), and images of riverboat captains wrestling alligators in forbidding swamp landscapes (1956's *Swamp Fire*, starring Johnny Weissmuller, best known for his portrayals of Tarzan, is a dubious but notable entry in this category).

The current climate of ecological awareness and its valuation of wetlands as natural and cultural resources developed slowly and hesitantly. The early Southern conservation movement was acutely tied to the preservation of elements of Southern culture threatened by wetland development. Sportsmen, hunters and fishermen, often politically conservative in other respects, banded together to protect the land that enabled their activities. Even now the environmental movement in the South is made up of what might seem strange bedfellows: more traditional ecologists, academics and conservationists as well as throngs of hunters and fishermen—a group that has claimed the tongue-in-cheek designation “Bubba environmentalists.”

Southern swamps are now, for the most part, protected; many have been designated as wildlife preserves, protected from drainage, deforestation and contamination. No longer sheltered from progress by impenetrability and myth, the swamps are now shielded by federal mandate.

The wetlands have become not only national parks but theme parks. Southern swamps have spawned a surprisingly vigorous industry, particularly in Louisiana. A Web search for “swamp tours” returns more than 5,200 results, an overwhelming majority of which are hosted by Louisiana businesses. The Louisiana concentration makes sense; after the Civil War, Louisiana was one of the only

Southern states in which a significant number of the residents turned to the swamps for their livelihood in the face of agricultural decline and poverty.

While official preserves market the swamps on the basis of their freedom from human adulteration and their pristine, natural beauty, the Louisiana swamp-tour industry balances ecological appeal with promises of “extreme” encounters with primordial wildlife, appeals to myth and superstition, and claims

My urge, as conservationist and cultural critic, is to resist such an apocalyptic view. Such a total concession of the natural world to the vagaries of the human will is a dangerous, limited and potentially irresponsible move. If the natural no longer exists, is entirely a product of human imagination, then what stands in the way of practical ecological catastrophe, pollution, deforestation, and a host of other potential and current disasters?

While the mainstream contemporary South

In the antebellum North, abolitionists applied disparaging images of swamps they often had never seen to describe the moral decadence of the entire South. Yet the qualities of alienation from societal order also held a profound appeal for American writers and thinkers outside the South, who elevated the swamps for the characteristics that led most people to shun them.

of cultural authenticity. Most swamp-tour companies combine the promise of easy access to unsullied nature in the confines of an artificial preserve with the kind of “extreme wildlife” showmanship mandatory for commercial success in the era of the “Crocodile Hunter.” Many companies augment the allure of the physical and factual swamp with veiled promises of swamp horrors to be viewed from the comfort and safety of Coast Guard-approved vessels. The specters of chaos that initially freighted the swamps with fear and menace have become faint evocations of movie monsters, the stuff of tongue-in-cheek entertainment and savvy marketing.

In an era when Southern identity must now be considered in terms of the urban, thriving, vital and increasingly multicultural New South, the swamps have become odd embodiments of a vanished identity, repositories of faded fears, forgotten cultural history and compromised purity. Must we then herald “the end of the swamp” as natural site and subversive space?

may regard swamps with nostalgia and idealization, cultures that continue to live in the swamps respond differently. For surviving swamp-identified cultures, natural and cultural degradation and destruction are inextricably linked. The swamps continue to signify differently for various cultures that experience them, and various views of the swamps have been influenced by technology and science as well as by ideology and culture.

The contemporary Southern swamp has taken on a new set of paradoxes and contradictions, superseding the old contradictions of water and land, purity and pollution. The swamps' physical survival is somewhat secure; their contemporary significance, though, remains an intriguing and complex question. ▼

Anthony Wilson, MA'98, PhD'02, is assistant professor of English at LaGrange College in LaGrange, Ga. This essay has been adapted from his book, Shadow and Shelter: The Swamp in Southern Culture (University Press of Mississippi, 2006).

Shadow and Shelter

Through slavery, Hollywood exploitation and suburban sprawl, the South's swamps endure. BY ANTHONY WILSON, MA'98, PHD'02

THE SWAMP occupies an intriguingly complex place in the Southern and national imaginations. As the South comes to look more and more like the rest of America, colonized by the relentless progress of strip malls and suburban sprawl, Southern wooded wetlands have come to embody the last part of the South that will always be beyond cultural dominion, however illusory that understanding may be.

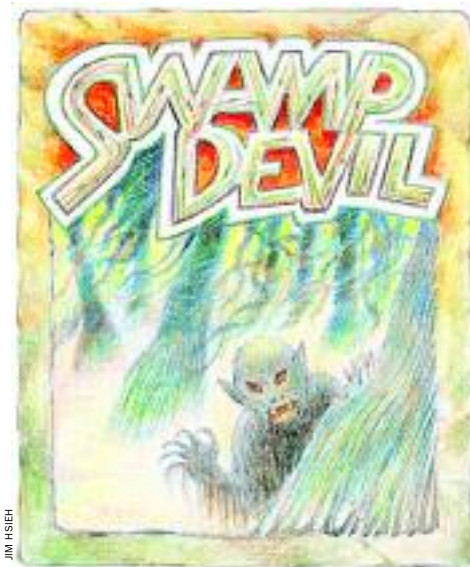
Traditionally, the term “swamp” has been used to define an area outside civilization whose geographic features—notably its treacherous mix of water and earth—render it resistant to colonization or agriculture. Swamps have represented a challenge to imposed order since well before the colonization of America. The swamps’ essential resistance to culturally viable classification was compounded by the nature of their earliest denizens. The presence of Native Americans in the swamps only underscored their wicked association for Europeans who viewed the Indian as the embodiment of savagery.

In the antebellum North, abolitionists applied disparaging images of swamps they often had never seen to describe the moral decadence of the entire South. Yet the qualities of alienation from societal order also held a profound appeal for American writers and thinkers outside the South, who elevated the swamps for the characteristics that led most people to shun them. Thoreau, for example, said that “[w]hen I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen,

most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow of nature.” Walt Whitman, too, extolled the charms of the Southern swamps before the Civil War in his poem “O Magnet South” (1860): “O the strange fascination of these half-known half-impassable / swamps, infested by reptiles, resounding with the bellow / of the alligator, the sad noise of the rattlesnake.”

While the swamp’s figurative significance came to define it for much of the nation, for the South its physical presence as obstacle to agriculture and shelter for the dispossessed keeps its significance grounded in tangible reality. The swamp carried both a promise of freedom for escaped slaves and a threat to social order for the plantation aristocracy.

Aside from the specter of the escaped slave, swamp dwellers of various kinds emerge repeatedly as ideological and practical threats. One of the most threatening aspects of the swamp, paradoxically, is its very bounty—the effortless “living off the land.” In his famous 1856 study, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, a collection of pieces written for the *New York Daily Times* between 1853 and 1854, Frederick Law Olmsted recounts a conversation with Mr. R., a South Louisiana plantation owner, about a nearby group of Acadians: “Mr. R. described them as lazy vagabonds, doing but little work, and spending much time in shooting, fishing, and play. ... Why did he so dislike to have these poor people living near him? Because, he said, they demoralized his negroes. The slaves seeing them living in apparent comfort, without much property and without steady labor, could not



JIM FISHER


help thinking that it was not necessary for men to work so hard as they themselves were obliged to; that if they were free they would not need to work.”

The 1939 release of *Gone with the Wind*, perhaps the most influential representation of the American South in the 20th century, and its legion of less-noted precursors and ubiquitous imitators, largely redefined the nation’s concept of the antebellum South. Edward D.C. Campbell, in his 1981 study, *The Celluloid South: Hollywood and the Southern Myth*, explains that in the late 1930s and early 1940s, “plantation stories were good business, attracting Academy Awards and, most importantly, customers.” As they recreated the myths underpinning an idealized plantation South, studios also proved adept at reviving the image of the Southern swamp as breeding ground for natural and supernatural horrors.

continued on page 87



These West African masks were donated to Vanderbilt by Lewis "Scotty" Greenwald, BA'67, JD'70. They are on display at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center.



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