

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
Get ready to **fall in love** with baseball all over again. See **page 8** for a season preview.

vanderbilt hustler

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CHRIS HONIBALL / THE VANDERBILT HUSTLER

PUSHED AROUND THE COURT

Jarnell Stokes took whatever he wanted inside, the Commodores struggled from the outside and **Tennessee** secured a season sweep with a **60-48** win

By **STEVE SCHINDLER**
Sports reporter

Two weeks after Vanderbilt fell just a Kevin Bright tip-in short of a big comeback in a one-point loss at Knoxville, the Commodores weren't able to dig themselves out of the hole Jarnell Stokes and the Tennessee offense put them in the first half.

Stokes finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds for his sixth consecutive double-double in a 60-48 Tennessee win on Wednesday night in Nashville, while the Commodores lost for the fifth time in their last six outings and dropped to 3-8 in SEC play.

Vanderbilt went with a small lineup for most of the game as head coach Kevin Stallings started Rod Odom and Sheldon Jeter in his frontcourt. It appeared to work initially, as Vanderbilt took an early 16-15 lead behind three 3-pointers. Unfortunately, seven first-half turnovers came back to haunt Kevin Stallings' team, as the Volunteers capitalized to the tune of 11 points off those turnovers before the break.

Tennessee guard Trae Golden was a major factor in the first half, scoring 11 of his 12 points in the first 20 minutes. Vanderbilt's defense improved in the second half, pressing the Tennessee guards as they brought the ball up the court, but the 40 points given up in the first half were simply too much for the offensively-challenged Commodores to match.

Vanderbilt did make some noise by cutting the lead to 46-38 with an 8-0 run early in the second half; however, the Volunteers never let Vanderbilt get any closer as Jordan McRae and Stokes took over. McRae recorded a double-double of

his own, finishing with 14 points and 11 rebounds.

Vanderbilt shot 37.7 percent from the field and 3 of 14 from behind the arc, failing to make a single 3-pointer in the second half. The Commodores were held under 50 points for the sixth time this season.

Kedren Johnson, with 11 points, was the only Vanderbilt player to score in double figures; however, Johnson turned the ball over five times. Perhaps more concerning for the young Commodores was Johnson's right shoulder, which he injured the shoulder for the third consecutive game and the fifth time this season. Johnson

"We just haven't really learned how to win yet."

KEVIN STALLINGS,
Vanderbilt men's basketball coach

exited at the 18:34 mark of the second half, returning with 10:01 left in the game looking hesitant to test the shoulder with long-distance shots.

Tennessee has its longest winning streak in the series in nine years with three straight wins over Vanderbilt, sweeping the season series for the first time since the 2008-2009 season.

"We just haven't really learned how to win yet," Stallings said. "We will only start to perform consistently and win consistently when we put together a complete game on both ends of the court."

Perhaps even more disappointing was the poor attendance at Memorial, particularly from the student population, as rows of benches in back half of the student section were completely empty despite the annual White Out Game being a tradition. Due in part to the poor attendance, Tennessee appeared relatively comfortable and relaxed in an atmosphere that rarely allows visitors such feelings.

Vanderbilt will welcome Texas A&M on Saturday at 5:30 p.m., before playing 4 of their next 5 games away from Nashville.

LOWLIGHTS FROM WEDNESDAY'S LOSS

- Jarnell Stokes' double-double: **17 points** on 7-of-14 shooting, **10 rebounds**, **5 blocks**, **2 assists**, **1 steal** and **2 turnovers** in **37 minutes**
- Rebounds: Tennessee 34, Vanderbilt 27
- Vanderbilt shot **21.4 percent** from the 3-point range, the worst performance from beyond the arc since a 56-33 loss on Jan. 12 against Arkansas. Going into the season, Vanderbilt had not shot this poorly from the 3-point range since **March 1, 2011** against the **Kentucky Wildcats**, when they shot **18 percent**.

Colon research, y'all

Vanderbilt University and General Electric Research, GE's technological research division, are currently working together to further understand the characteristics of colon cancer at a cellular level.

Funded by a five-year, \$3.75 million grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH), this research venture is focused on GE's newly developed cancer-mapping technology, which is able to identify 60 disease markers in a single sample of tissue, according to an article published in Business Wire. The identity of these disease markers is imperative to diagnosing the patients' condition as well as distinguishing the most effective treatment option.

"With GE's cancer-mapping technology, we're enabling cancer to be viewed in ways it couldn't previously be seen such as with the activation of different signaling pathways in specific cells," Michael Gerdes, a GE Global Research scientist, told Business Wire. "With unprecedented views we hope will come unprecedented insights that tell us more about how cancer forms, how it progresses and, most importantly, how to defeat it."

This research initiative is being supported to further the NIH-funded Single Cell Analysis Program, whose purpose is to "understand what makes individual cells unique and to pave the way for medical treatments that are based on disease mechanisms at the cellular level."

— Maria Ramos, news reporter

OBAMACATION

Obama talks about education in SOTU

President Barack Obama Tuesday night delivered the first State of the Union address of his second term to members of Congress. Putting an emphasis on education, he called on Congress to amend the Higher Education Act so that "affordability and value are included in determining which colleges receive certain types of federal aid."

"Through tax credits, grants and better loans, we have made college more affordable for millions of students and families over the last few years," Obama said. "But taxpayers cannot continue to subsidize the soaring cost of higher education. Colleges must do their part to keep costs down, and it's our job to make sure they do."

Obama also announced the release of "College Scorecard," a new tool now available on the White House website that allows students and parents to compare schools based on where students can get the most "bang for your educational buck."

The scorecard cites that the average net price to attend Vanderbilt University decreased by 5.3 percent from 2007 to 2009. It also puts Vanderbilt in the White House's "medium" value range.

— Tyler Bishop, news editor

The Dorner saga: a timeline

Sunday, Feb. 10: Authorities announce \$1 million reward for information leading to former Los Angeles Police Department officer Christopher Dorner's arrest.

Monday, Feb. 11: Riverside County prosecutors charge Dorner with murdering a police officer and the attempted murder of three other officers in a potential death penalty case. Authorities receive more than 700 tips since the reward was announced.

12:20 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12: Police are summoned after a man resembling Dorner steals a purple Nissan in the San Bernardino Mountains.

12:40 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12: California State Fish and Wildlife wardens are involved in a shootout with the suspect. Two San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies are wounded in a second exchange of gunfire and are transported to Loma Linda Medical Center.

4:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12: Police surround the cabin where the suspect is holed up. Gunfire erupts before a blaze engulfs the structure. Law enforcement officers wait for the fire to burn out.

4:50 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12: A San Bernardino County sheriff's spokeswoman confirms one of the two wounded deputies has died. The other is in surgery and expected to survive.

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12: A law enforcement official tells AP that a charred body has been found in the rubble of the burned cabin. The official doesn't confirm the identity, although authorities earlier said they believed the man in the cabin was Dorner.

— The Associated Press

campus

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Breakfast is like the step-child of meals — there isn't a big 'wow' or excitement factor. It's boring; there is always the same things."

BILL CLAYPOOL, EXECUTIVE CHEF, VANDERBILT DINING



VANDERBITS

IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

A discussion about Israeli and Palestinian negotiations



Washington Institute

By **TYLER BISHOP**
News editor

The discussion surrounding the conflict between Israel and Palestine is coming to Vanderbilt this Sunday, Feb. 17. The dialogue, hosted by Vanderbilt Hillel, will feature Director of The Washington Institute's Project on the Middle East Peace Process David Makovsky and Executive Director at the American Task Force on Palestine Ghaith al-Omari.

Makovsky and al-Omari, leading scholars on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, will facilitate civil discourse about negotiations and potential solutions to their differences. In addition to questions about the likelihood of peace, they will consider questions about potential common foundations on which negotiations can be built and the possibility of recognizing the national aspirations of the other.

The event is being co-sponsored by the Middle Eastern Students Association, Dores for Israel, Vanderbilt Student Government, Vanderbilt Programming Board, The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons, Vanderbilt College Democrats, Vanderbilt College Republicans, the Program in Jewish Studies, the Office of Religious Life and Vanderbilt Current Events and Critical Conversations.

Dean of The Ingram Commons and Associate Professor of History Frank Wcislo will moderate the discussion, which will begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday. Students can obtain free tickets at the Sarratt Student Center Box Office.

GREEK UPDATE

Administrators suspend, then resume fraternity pledge process

By **KYLE BLAINE**
Senior news reporter

Vanderbilt University administrators Monday night suspended new member education for Interfraternity Council chapters due to concerns about hazing during IFC fraternities' pledge activities.

According to Director of Greek Life Kristin Shorter, the Office of the Dean of Students was led to suspend new-member-education-related activities due to concerns and complaints placed to a variety of university offices and the hazing hotline, where students can anonymously report incidents of hazing at Vanderbilt.

Shorter said each IFC chapter had until Wednesday morning to present a revised plan for new member education, after which a lift on the suspension would be considered. According to officials in the Office of Greek life, the new member education plans were approved Wednesday evening, and the pledge process will resume Thursday afternoon.

Initiation for IFC fraternities is still scheduled for the last weekend in February. The new member education process was shortened from eight weeks to six by the Office of Greek Life after the 2011-12 academic year.

Shorter added that while suspensions of new member education activities for individual chapters occur regularly while chapters undergo investigation for hazing allegations, an IFC-wide suspension is less common.

Stay tuned to *InsideVandy.com* for the latest.

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From mind to fork: How Dining spices up the menu



CHRIS HONIBALL / THE VANDERBILT HUSTLER

By **MADDIE HUGHES**
News staff reporter

Whether it's a New Orleans-inspired gourmet dinner or a quick breakfast on the go, top-ranked Vanderbilt Campus Dining puts a lot of effort into getting the best food available into the mouths of students. The Hustler sat down with Executive Chef Bill Claypool to learn more about the process of creating new menu options and to find out what new items to look for on campus menus this semester.

According to Claypool, Vanderbilt Dining tries to change anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of the menu each semester in order to give students new options and allow the chefs to try out new recipes. In addition to Claypool, there are three chefs who manage the three main areas of dining at Vanderbilt. Both Commons and Rand have their own chefs, and a third chef oversees specialty dining, including the grab-and-go options, McTyeire International House's dining room and dining options at the McGugin Center.

"All the chefs at Vanderbilt are very talented," Claypool said. "They have been in the business for a while and worked at restaurants and hotels before coming to Vanderbilt. We also know that Vanderbilt students are fairly well traveled and are interested in restaurant-quality, trendy food."

In coming up with a menu that the students will enjoy eating and the chefs will enjoy preparing, the chefs look at magazines and cookbooks and attend seminars to deter-

mine the up-and-coming trends in food.

Each year the chefs attend the National Restaurant Association Food Show, where they spend the mornings learning from others in the restaurant business and later go out on the town to sample the fare and observe the techniques of chefs of successful restaurants.

According to Claypool, it is important that the chefs are constantly searching for ideas for the menu because it takes longer than students may think for the items they see on their plate at Rand or The Commons to make it out of the recipe book. Currently, the chefs are planning their menus for fall semester, while also forming menus for small mid-semester change-ups and large events such as S.S. Rand and The Commons Ball.

After writing up their recipes and ideas, the chefs give them to Claypool and Dining Director Camp Howard, who have the final say on the menus.

Next, Vanderbilt Dining must determine where they will source the food based on four criteria: price; quality; if it is local, sustainable, natural and/or organic and its availability. If an item is too expensive or will be unavailable during part of the semester, then that dish will either have to be removed or adjusted to include different ingredients that are more easily accessible or affordable.

Menus then must undergo nutritional analysis and be approved by a registered dietician. All items must also be analyzed from the perspective of students with dietary limitations.

"It is a creative, enjoyable process," Claypool said.

Claypool recently challenged his chefs to come up with new breakfast items for Rand and the Commons. "Breakfast is like the stepchild of meals — there isn't a big 'wow' or excitement factor," Claypool said. "It's boring; there is always the same things."

So far the chefs have taken the challenge to heart. Already the Commons is serving new breakfast pizzas on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, which, according to Dining, have been successful among students. Rand brunch has also already seen some changes to its offerings. "We are trying to get more students to go to brunch earlier on the weekends, so we're opening a juice bar from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays," said Claypool.

Students who have been in to Rand during these times know that currently Dining is giving away these smoothies free of charge. However, it is unclear what the pricing of these smoothies will look like in the future.

"Right now it is all in the beta stage as we tweak the drinks and work out the processes. We haven't yet determined how we will do them moving forward, [but] they have been very popular," Claypool said.

In addition to the juice bar, Rand Brunch has also opened up a breakfast sandwich and burrito station in the former brunch-plate location. And as an extra treat to look forward to, Claypool says they are hoping to bring a crepe station to brunch in the near future.

NEW MENU ITEMS

- Commons Breakfast Pizza
- Rand Breakfast Sandwiches and Burritos
- Upcoming: Rand Crepe Station

A Mardi Gras disaster: Four things you WON'T miss

By **CHELSEA MIHELICH**
News staff reporter

After a weekend of "Hurricanes" and "Hand Grenades" on the streets of New Orleans, many members of the student body finally made it back to the hallowed halls of Vanderbilt in one piece — but just barely. A lesson learned by many students last weekend is that surviving Mardi Gras is a hard job. From navigating Bourbon Street and not getting separated from everyone you know in Pat O's to dealing with the obvious difficulties that come with drinking from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep, the place is not for the weak at heart — and that's the way it is every year. Here are a few reasons why staying at school might not be so bad:

1. The case of the stolen iPhone(s)

You're lucky if you survived the whole weekend without your phone being stolen. Out of pockets and purses, off of tables and chairs — the thieves of NOLA went just about everywhere. Thousands of dollars worth of smart phones were lost to Mardi Gras this year, and now that you are sober and back in your dorm,

you have probably already ordered another and forgotten the whole thing. If you were fortunate enough to come back with your phone intact, give yourself a pat on the back — it's safe once again to leave your possessions unattended. (Unless you are one of the freshmen who had your laptops stolen out of your room Tuesday.)

2. F&M's goes up in flames.

Luckily, everyone survived a Tulane bar being burned to the ground. Friday night started out pretty normal for F&M's — a staple bar for any of your friends who go to Tulane. But by 2 a.m., the hundreds of college students packed inside were evacuated and later watched as flames blazed through the building. Fortunately, everyone made it out safely this weekend.

3. That sounded a lot like gunshots ...

The most terrifying and newsworthy part of Mardi Gras this year was the shooting on Bourbon Street — the one packed with thousands of revelers of all ages and home to hundreds of bars open all night long. This year, Bourbon Street was also host to a gunman on Saturday night. Yet even a shooting did not stop the



PROVIDED BY AUTHOR

festivities. The bars went on lockdown for a few minutes and opened again not long thereafter. Fortunately, again, all four victims survived the shooting.

4. Mississippi and the tornado

Finally, when students thought they could all recover from the long weekend of partying on the streets, many had to make their way back home through a tornado serious enough to devastate the small town of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.



Five facts about Lent you were too embarrassed to ask

By **LAUREN BROOKS**
News reporter

With the close of Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent, many may have questions about what Lent really is. The Hustler turned to Father John Baker of University Catholic before the Ash Wednesday service and asked him to explain a little bit about Lent.

I When does it start, and when does it end?

It starts on Ash Wednesday (this year it was on Feb. 13) and ends on Easter Sunday (this year it's on March 31).

II How long does it last?

About 40 days, or six weeks. It seems like more, but Sundays are exempt. Sundays are a celebration of Easter, which means no fasting.

III What are the 'rules'?

The Church asks that its followers abstain from meat on Fridays and, traditionally, to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Some also choose to give up or abstain from something.

IV Who participates in Lent?

Catholics and Orthodox Christians, though not in the same way. Also, Anglican, Episcopal and even other churches are picking it up more, even Baptist or Lutheran.

V What is the purpose of Lent?

It is the reiteration of Jesus' words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel." It is a season of repentance, to listen seriously to Jesus' teachings. It is a time to decide to change a little bit, and try to begin again.

'Record-shattering' Early Decision class

By TYLER BISHOP
News editor

Last week, Early Decision II letters were mailed to high school seniors who will join students admitted through Early Decision I to comprise part of the Class of 2017 at Vanderbilt University. The achievements of this incoming Early Decision class are the greatest in the history of Vanderbilt, continuing the long trend of rapidly improving admissions statistics.

Vanderbilt admissions counselor Carolyn Pippen referred to the past week as "big" for recruiting at Vanderbilt, referencing both Vanderbilt football head coach James Franklin's record-breaking class of athletes and the newest Early Decision class on the Undergraduate Admissions Blog.

"We in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, however, know that the real signing day happens today," Pippen wrote. "Earlier this morning, we mailed decision letters to each of our Early Decision II applicants, thereby solidifying



JENNY MANDEVILLE / VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

the ED portion of our (also record-shattering) Class of 2017."

Undergraduate Admissions stresses that every application they review represents a future student that will contribute to the Vanderbilt community.

"Each application showed new levels of academic achievement and leadership that ensure the next first-year class will accomplish outstanding things at Vanderbilt and beyond," Pippen said.

EARLY DECISION CLASS STATISTICS: IMPROVEMENTS BY THE NUMBERS

Class of 2016

- Middle 50% SAT: 1380-1520
- Middle 50% ACT: 31-33
- Percent of students in the top 10 percent of their graduating class: 90.05%
- Average rank in class: 4.31%
- Early Decision admittance rate: 24.01%

Class of 2017

- Middle 50% SAT: 1400-1540
- Middle 50% ACT: 32-34
- Percent of students in the top 10 percent of their graduating class: 93.43%
- Average rank in class: 4.26%
- Early Decision admittance rate: 21.18%

Professor spotlight: Heatherington on polarization



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

By CHARLOTTE GILL
News reporter

Vanderbilt Political Science Professor Marc Hetherington gets calls from CNN and The New York Times for his input on polarization and gridlock in Congress. The Hustler called Hetherington to find out why he is so interested in our country's polarization.

Washington is very much what's happening in (my research) ... I try to make it much less abstract."

Hetherington said he gets his motivation from a longstanding passion for politics and a desire to apply lofty theories to the real world.

"I grew up in an intensely political family," Hetherington said. "My dad was a longtime political operative in Pennsylvania politics during the Watergate scandal, and I was always interested in how people feel about government."

In today's political climate, the issue of polarization is often not well received. Hetherington, however, has hope for the future of American polarization.

"As (these feelings of polarization) are a function of things that are deep down in our psyches and worldviews, we aren't just going to be able to just change the rules of the game," Hetherington said.

"But there are two ways that things might change. One, issues that divide us will evolve into something else. If we start to disagree on less divisive issues, then there will be less hostility across party lines. Two, young people today who haven't personally experienced the ugliness of politics are now moving into leadership positions."

Hetherington regularly teaches Introduction to American Politics and occasionally teaches Political Parties and Electoral Behavior and Public Opinion. However, Hetherington said he does not get swept up by the hype of academia.

"I work on research the way I teach — I try to connect theory to the real world," he said.

Hetherington has written "Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism" and co-authored "Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics" with Jonathan Weiler. He has also published a number of scholarly articles.

Hetherington is currently working on a new book with University of Illinois Professor Tom Rudolph called "Trust in Government" to examine the causes and consequences of political trust.

"How much people trust government has a big impact on what they want (from) government ... applying to recent politics from the fiscal stimulus to healthcare," he said. "What's going on in



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opinion

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The State of the Union address was a speech of contradictions: Obama polarized in a speech that advocated compromise, spoke boldly from a position of relative weakness and seemed most in control of the room when he begged Congress to vote on his gun control plans."

MICHAEL ZOROB

TWITTER ROUNDUP

Tweets or it didn't happen. Check out what's happening this week on Twitter!

The State of the Union Address

The Onion — @TheOnion

"The state of the nation is strong and it will only get stronger." — Man down-playing insurmountable problems

CBS News — @CBSNews

Not surprisingly, House Republicans pan State of the Union

Nicholas Thompson — @nxthompson

"they deserve a vote. They deserve a vote." By far the most moving moment so far.

The New Yorker — @NewYorker

@RickHertzberg: "Incredible that a President of the US has to beg for his proposals to at least be voted on."

Seth Davis — @SethDavisHoops

Yes, I'm checking out the State of the Union, in hopes that Obama will suggest something to help declining scoring in college basketball.

The New Yorker — @NewYorker

@AlexKoppelman: "let's set party interests aside, I'm impressed he can still say that with a straight face."

Rembert Browne — @rembert

The State of the Union is people going to see Mumford at Barclays tonight instead of The State of the Union

The Fix — @TheFix

This State of the Union already needs more Biden.

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OPINION POLICY

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

The views expressed in lead editorials reflect the majority of opinion among The Hustler's editorial board and are not necessarily representative of any individual member.

Letters must be submitted either in person by the author to the Hustler office or via email to opinion@insidevandy.com. Letters via email must come from a Vanderbilt email address where the identity of the sender is clear. With rare exception, all letters must be received by 1 p.m. on Sunday or Wednesday. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense submissions for length as well as clarity.

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

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

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STATE of the STATE of the UNION

On Tuesday night, **President Obama** delivered his annual **State of the Union** address. Our columnists weigh in on it below.

Barack Obama as pragmatist



BENJAMIN RIES

is a senior in the College of Arts and Science and president of the Vanderbilt College Democrats. He can be reached at benjamin.a.ries@vanderbilt.edu.

A message of "hope and change" carried Barack Obama to the presidency in 2008, but the realities of bitter partisanship and a crippled economy on the verge of another Great Depression stifled the optimism that brought record numbers of young voters to the polls. The election of an African American to high office signified a significant step in the direction of progress for this country, but the vast achievements under the direction of the Obama administration have never coalesced under a readily identifiable doctrine.

To many conservatives, Ronald Reagan stands for an era of fiscal conservatism, small government and strong foreign policy (qualities I find far more applicable to the tenure of Dwight D. Eisenhower). To liberals, Franklin D. Roosevelt represents the smart growth of government to provide services to Americans suffering through an endless economic depression and military support to nations fighting against tyranny.

Last night, President Obama spoke about the economy, the environment, the war in Afghanistan, gun laws, education and more. What I found most remarkable, at least until the emotional final few minutes as the president pleaded for votes on laws aimed at reducing gun violence, was how consistently he eschewed absolutes for nuance. President Obama's State of the Union address solidified what I have always suspected: that years from now, Obama will be remembered not as the embodiment of some kind of golden age but for his tough pragmatism.

Many of the president's major accomplishments enjoy widespread support, but many of his finest and longest-lasting achievements occurred as the results of compromise and careful deliberation. His flagship bill, the Affordable Care Act, provides necessary reforms that unite our health care system with personal respon-

sibility and drastically reduce costs, but the subject matter is so murky that many of his supporters had a hard time rallying around it. Race to the Top — an unsung and magnanimous success — brought about advances in the caustic and politically splintered arena of school reform. The withdrawal of American soldiers from Iraq ended our role in a draining, unpopular conflict devoid by its nature of any clear sign of victory. Our exit from Afghanistan will likely follow the same pattern, drawing begrudging acclaim from a nation happy to see its brave soldiers out of harm's way but still weary of the endless fighting and uncertainty of the country's future.

But the president has lived up to his word — in his first State of the Union address, he referred to the impossibility of living up to chants of "hope and change" and said, "But when I ran for president, I promised I wouldn't just do what was popular — I would do what was necessary." The competing interests of a globalized world require intellectual agility, not dogma.

The messages of President Obama's latest State of the Union speech followed logically from his speech at the inauguration in January, which I had the good fortune to attend. More so than in his first term, the president is pushing forward with his center-left values. But his proposals on how to reach his goals remain achievable.

For one example of many, the president insisted that "in the wealthiest nation on Earth, no one who works full-time should have to live in poverty" and proposed to "raise the federal minimum wage to \$9 an hour." The president quickly tied a proposal reminiscent of Lyndon B. Johnson into the platforms of Republican leadership, urging for the minimum wage to be permanently tied to the cost of living and pointing out Mitt Romney's support for the idea.

The president made remarkable efforts to point to bipartisan support for his pragmatic solutions, advocating for spending cuts alongside revenue increases and mentioning John McCain's support for market-based approaches to combating climate change. He also advocated for more obvious actions that still need to be taken, like Congress renewing the Violence Against Women Act (which already passed in the Democrat-controlled Senate) and closing tax loopholes that unfairly benefit the wealthy.

The contrast between the primary representatives of the two major parties could not be clearer. When the president told the unequivocally inspiring story of the 102-year-old woman Desiline Victor, who waited six hours to exercise her right to vote, Republican Majority Leader John Boehner refused to join the standing ovation. Afterwards, he dismissed the speech as a "wish list." Far worse was the Republican response delivered by Senator Marco Rubio, who claimed that Obama's "favorite attack of all" is to say "that those who don't agree with him — they only care about rich people." At no point did the president say anything like this, and these kinds of mischaracterizations ran throughout Rubio's speech.

I don't mean to characterize or generalize about any political party or group of people based only on the few people who spoke Tuesday night, and I recognize that Rubio had little time to prepare his response. But the two speeches say volumes about the directions represented by the two parties. Rubio, a rising star in his party, fell flat with a simplistic response that too often embraced the worst qualities of partisan bickering. Our country instead needs maturity and pragmatism, and President Obama delivered.

— Benjamin Ries

Nothing new under the sun — or in Washington



MICHAEL ZOROB

is a freshman in the College of Arts and Science. He can be reached at michael.j.zorob@vanderbilt.edu.

In his State of the Union address, President Obama unveiled an ambitious program for the next four years. From climate change and gun control to stimulus and taxes to voting rights and education to cybersecurity and Afghanistan, Obama touched on literally everything. In its audacity, breadth and content, Obama's State of the Union echoed his first inauguration speech four years ago. There was even the same appeal to "put the nation's interest before party."

One notable difference between the two speeches, however, is the plausibility that any of Obama's proposals become law. In 2009, Obama enjoyed comfortable majorities in both the House and Senate. Today, the House is controlled by Republicans and the Republican filibuster in the Senate seems insurmountable. Though Obama repeatedly ended his proposals by proclaiming "we can do that," even he seemed unconvinced.

Obama spoke the most about the economy but said the least. He mentioned a few interesting, concrete proposals, like "technology hubs" and a free-trade agreement with the European Union. Mostly, though, he gave the same vague, hackneyed overtures to re-equipping schools,

renovating infrastructure and reforming the tax code that we've heard for a while. That being said, Obama probably would have repeated less in his proposals for this term had Republicans not made it their objective to stymie him at every turn in the last one.

While Obama is right that investment in infrastructure, education and research are all essential, claiming as he did that none of his proposals will "add a dime" to the deficit undermines his credibility. Americans understand that money for neat-sounding ideas like universal preschool has to come from somewhere, either from current taxpayers (new taxes), future taxpayers (deficits) or reductions in other programs (Obama said little about these).

And to say that only "modest" changes to Medicare and Social Security are needed is a profound understatement — the unfunded liabilities of entitlements over the next 75 years were recently estimated to total \$87 trillion. The president not only glossed over the very real debt problem (which is for the long haul and stems from entitlements) but also missed an opportunity to stake out an issue where Democrats could compromise in exchange for Republican reciprocation elsewhere.

Where the president's usual rhetorical genius shined was towards the end of the speech. When he talked about safeguarding the right to vote, for example, through the vivid illustration of a 102-year-old woman who waited six hours in line to vote, the room erupted in its longest standing ovation. His eulogy to the victims of gun violence was chilling.

In some ways, the State of the Union address was a speech of contradictions: Obama polarized in a speech that advocated compromise, spoke boldly from a position of relative weakness and seemed most in control of the room when he begged Congress to vote on his gun control plans.

Obama concluded by detailing the bonds that unite all of us as citizens of the United States. Here more than ever was contradiction apparent: These noble words marked the end of his regal speech and the return to the harsh realities of American politics — four more years of manufactured crises, gridlock and fractured government. The State of the Union may be strong, but Obama's second term will be as messy as his first.

— Michael Zorob

Tax, borrow, spend and repeat



ABBY SUTTON

is a junior in the College of Arts and Science and president of the Vanderbilt College Republicans. She can be reached at abigail.m.sutton@vanderbilt.edu.

So the countdown begins. We get to hear three more State of the Union speeches from the Obama administration, which means three more speeches full of promises that he won't keep. Obama's speech on Tuesday night was full of recycled rhetoric and plans for big government.

One of the big issues on everyone's mind is the budget and government spending. Obama seems to have forgotten that the national debt has increased by 57 percent under his administration — and he doesn't plan to stop spending! Obama wants to tax and spend, tax and spend, tax and spend. That's his solution to the problem: spending our way to economic prosperity. History has showed time and time again that this does not work.

Obama talks about fairness and believes that the wealthy should pay their "fair" share. Is 40 percent of their income already not enough? That's almost half! Think about if you had to give almost half of your paycheck to the government. That's ridiculous! Obama keeps footing the bill to the wealthy, and the more he spends, the more he taxes. As Margaret Thatcher famously said, "eventually you run out of other people's money."

Redistribution of wealth does not work. And Obama wants to ask for even more taxes to cover the 29 new government programs he has proposed.

But where is the fairness that Obama keeps talking about? The president said in his speech that those who work hard should prosper and vowed to not rest until everyone can find a good job. But since that statement in 2009, he's taken 57 days of vacation time on the taxpayers' dime. A vacation to Hawaii for the president and his family costs Americans \$4 million. But I'm sure he'll come up with new ways to boost the economy on his next round of golf.

The president also calls for a "smarter" government. What is smart about a government that spends money it does not have? Obama has missed more budget deadlines than any other president since the 1920s. Obama told us in his speech on Tuesday that we must pay our bills on time. Is he not going to be held to the same standard?

Obama seeks to demonize the Republicans and anyone who disagrees with him by saying that they only care about the rich. However, his policies are hurting small businesses and the middle class. Only a free enterprise economy can help the middle class

and create jobs. We need to allow our small business owners to take risks and hire new employees. Liberal and conservative presidents from the past such as John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan have understood that a free enterprise system works, but Obama believes it to be the problem.

Using his old rhetoric, Obama continued to talk about helping to build a prosperous middle class. In case he hasn't noticed, the middle class has been hit hard by his policies. Under his administration, gas prices have increased by 96 percent, median household income has dropped over \$4,000, and the average cost of family health care premiums has risen 24 percent.

I think Senator Marco Rubio summed it up nicely: "More government isn't going to help you get ahead. It's going to hold you back. More government isn't going to create more opportunities. It's going to limit them. And more government isn't going to inspire new ideas, new businesses and new private-sector jobs. It's going to create uncertainty." Supporting more government is not the answer. And that's all Obama wants to do.

— Abby Sutton

Peace in our time

Guest columnists engaging in constructive dialogue about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process

PRO-PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE

Building trust in Israel

MOHAMED AL-HENDY is a senior in the College of Arts and Science and the president of the Muslim Student Association. He can be reached at mohamed.al-hendy@vanderbilt.edu.

It may not be Palestinian, but the Palestinian struggle is one that I and many Muslims have agonized over throughout our lives. And as an Arab, the struggle resonates even further with me for obvious reasons. For at least 65 years, Palestinians have lived lives filled with uncertainty and violence, with no end in sight. The economy of Gaza in particular, but also the West Bank, has been in terrible for shape for many years; nearly 80 percent of Palestinians rely on humanitarian aid to meet their living expenses. Simply put, the status quo cannot be allowed to go on forever, even if stubborn politicians on both sides find it more important to look out for themselves than for the mutual interests of the people they represent. The sooner peace takes place, the better, and here is where it begins.

First, clear borders must be established between the two countries, borders which will not be infringed upon by either side. A return to the 1967 Green Line borders between the two states would be ideal, but given the number of Israeli settlements that have taken place within what has traditionally been considered Palestinian territory, this may not be completely possible. To remedy this, land swaps should be agreed upon between both sides. A plan that has often been mentioned is swapping the Triangle area of Israel — a concentration of Israeli-Arab towns and villages in Israel adjacent to the Green Line — for the West Bank settlements in what would theoretically become Palestine. Recognition of borders establishes mutual respect for each country's territory, a respect that has been missing for most of the recent history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Second, Israel cannot annex all of Jerusalem as the capital of its country. Palestinians, as well as Muslims all over the world, have always regarded the city as a holy city and would never willingly give up their claim to it entirely. Two options exist: Either the city be divided into West and East Jerusalem, with Israel claiming the former and Palestine the latter; or the city be declared an open city or corpus separatum, having its own legal and political status administered by the United Nations. Whichever option is selected is entirely up to the negotiators, but pragmatically it would probably be far easier and safer to have Jerusalem be an open, international city rather than one divided between the two countries.

Finally, Israel must be willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of Palestine's elections and work with those politicians that the people of Palestine elect, even if they are Hamas leaders. Granted, it is entirely fair for Israel to take precautions for the safety of its people and retaliate (within reason) against Hamas should it attempt to attack the country illegally. But it is not fair to punish Palestine economically for democratically electing leaders that Israel is not in favor of working with, as was the case in the aftermath of the 2006 elections when Israel withheld tax revenue collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, bringing great hardship to the Palestinian people. Understandably, there is plenty of bad blood between Hamas and the Israeli government and plenty of reason for both sides to distrust each other. But for the peace process to work, the true, elected representatives of the Palestinian people must be allowed to broker a lasting peace.

Obviously, there are many more issues that will need to be addressed and resolved between Israel and Palestine during peace negotiations. The issue of what to do about the West Bank wall, how to ensure violence does not restart shortly after peace is agreed, and whether or not Palestine will be allowed to build its own army are all questions that will not be easily resolved. But just like the big three issues already mentioned here, even these still can be resolved. It will require much forgiving, much trust and plenty of faith in the other party's genuine intention to both move from being adversaries to being (at least) hospitable neighbors and to strengthen cooperation into the future. How willing and compromising both sides are, ultimately, will determine whether these issues ever get resolved or not.

—Mohamed Al-Hendy

PRO-ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

Building trust in Palestine

JEREMY BLOOMSTONE is a junior in the College of Arts and Science and vice president of Israel Advocacy at Vanderbilt Hillel. He can be reached at jeremy.o.bloomstone@vanderbilt.edu.

My support for Israel as a Jewish and modern democratic state has never wavered, nor will it. But my understanding of the character of Israel and its actions and rhetoric towards its neighbors, especially the Palestinians, is always changing. Israel continues to push for negotiations to reach a structured and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the hope that its foundational values will also extend to the rest of the Arab world. It is a willingness of both Palestinian and Israeli leadership to sit down across from one another without preconditions or predetermined judgments and engage in honest negotiations that can result in an agreement that reflects mutual compromise and respect for each peoples' claims, interests and identities. These discussions and negotiations focus on several core final status issues that ultimately will frame any agreement and will protect and preserve the territorial, political and demographic character of the two states implicated in this two-state solution.

Israeli settlements inside the West Bank have smudged the territorial integrity of and shifted the dimensions of contiguity for a Palestinian state. Many of these "settlements" are no longer just outposts, but developed communities and towns that cannot simply be expected to pack up and leave. A solution to the settlement issue will require land swaps that compensate the Palestinian people with land from inside pre-1967 Israel in exchange for continued Israeli sovereignty over communities like Ma'aleh Adumim and the Gush Etzion bloc, which were outside pre-1967 Israel. Such exchanges will protect the contiguous borders of both the Israeli and Palestinian states.

Yet there are other settlements that are now protected by Israeli security forces that cannot and should not be maintained when Palestinian leadership would be granted full sovereignty over the West Bank, and this must be a major concession made by the Israeli government. In exchange for this concession, trust needs to be built between Israeli leaders and the Palestinian leadership that the security concerns of each state will be respected and that cooperation over matters of security will be necessary to preserve any peace agreement.

Increasingly, the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank headed by Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas no longer truly represents the voice of the Palestinians, nor does it espouse the democratic institutions and values that are promoted by the international community. It is for this reason that legitimate, free and fair elections need to be held in the West Bank, and if the result is that Hamas (a political party that is also officially recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States) wins, this result must be honored and legitimized. But the process of legitimization is a two-way street, and Hamas must recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and be willing to negotiate with Israeli leadership to reach a structured resolution to the conflict.

Additionally, Hamas in its new role needs to allocate funding both from internal revenue services that Israel has monitored and controlled and from foreign aid to build the state infrastructure of Palestine. Hamas or whichever organization is elected to represent the Palestinians will need to demonstrate not only that it is a legitimate partner to negotiate a peace agreement, but that it will also continue to maintain that agreement and build a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish one.

One area where Palestinian and Israeli leadership will need to continue to work together is Jerusalem, which is the capital of Israel, but which also may end up being the capital of Palestine. The dynamics of controlling the city are immensely complex, especially given that both the U.S. Democratic and Republican party platforms reflect a desire to maintain all of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel. East Jerusalem is the desired capital for the Palestinian state, yet whether or not this can be realized politically will be strongly contested, and the result will force compromise on both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership.

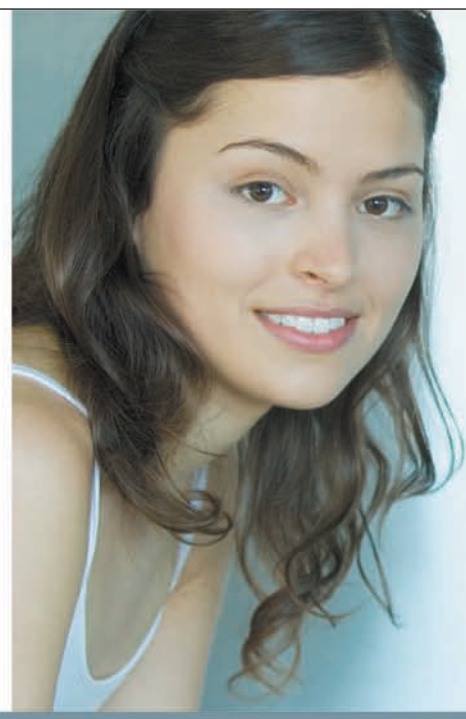
Amidst the matrix of issues that shape and drive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these are just a few of the areas that will be discussed at the negotiating table for a peace agreement. There are many other issues that will influence the character of the diplomatic relationship between Israel and Palestine, relating to the resettlement of Palestinian refugees or the willingness of Palestinians to cooperate with Israeli security forces. Yet at the core of these negotiations lies a truth that this conflict cannot go on forever — and that honest and open discussion and negotiations are the only way to bring about a lasting peace in a region that has been in turmoil for far too long.

—Jeremy Bloomstone

Starting the conversation together on campus

We both feel that on college campuses throughout the country, students are hardening their views and perpetuating the standoff in negotiations and discussions that are so desperately needed to reach a mutual agreement to end this conflict. This is the same mentality that has caused the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to drag on for so long in the first place. Throughout the history of the conflict, layers upon layers of hate for the other side have built up, and the negative feelings of hurt and distrust have lead many to believe that a solution may never be achieved in our lifetime. However, if we as students engage in critical and constructive dialogue to analyze the issues and find common ground, we can start a movement to turn these decades of hate and distrust into bonds of faith and hope. It won't be easy, and it'll take plenty of time, but it starts here — on college campuses — with individuals willing to recognize that we are mutually responsible for where the debate currently is and that we have the power to shape a more positive outcome that endures into the future.

—Mohamed Al-Hendy and Jeremy Bloomstone



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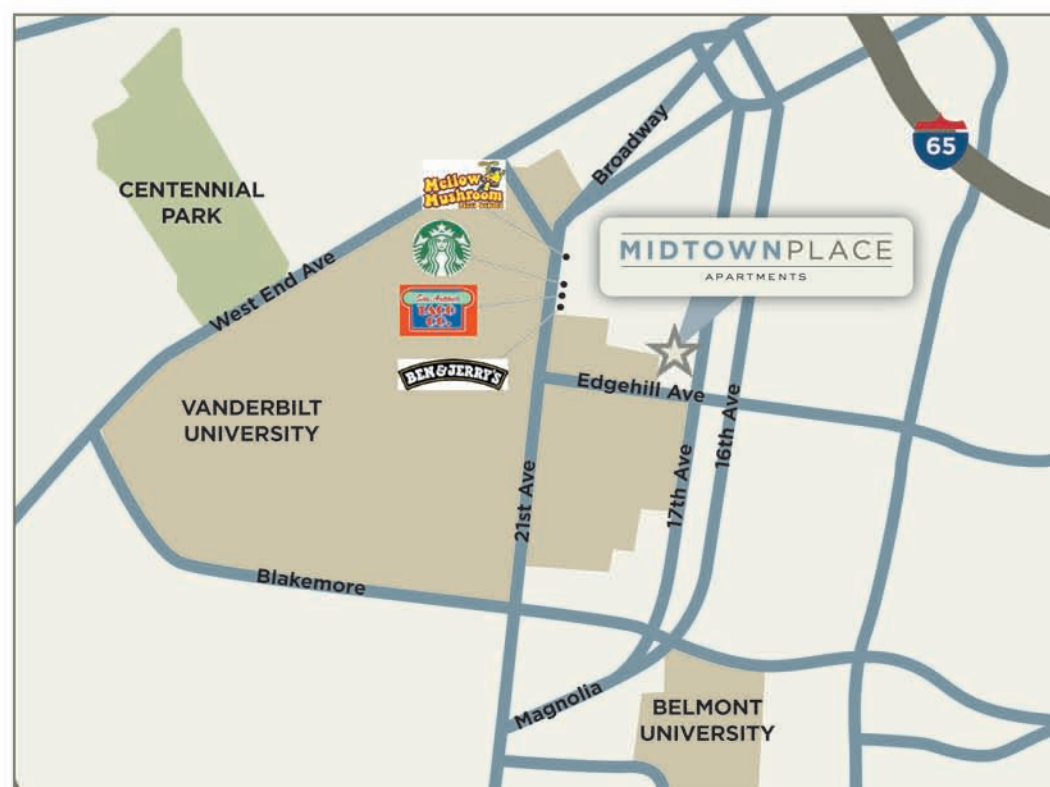
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Life

CELEBSTATUS

On Wednesday, Feb. 13, Conor Kennedy was arrested at the White House, along with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Darryl Hannah, according to <http://perezhilton.com>. Along with 44 other activists, the three were arrested for civil disobedience while protesting the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.



GO DO THIS!

A GUIDE TO YOUR WEEKEND

IN THEATERS

'Beautiful Creatures'

Opens Thursday, Feb. 14
The first part in a new Warner Bros. series and based on the novel of the same name, "Beautiful Creatures" is about a mysterious girl who moves to a rural Southern town and meets a boy longing to escape it. Together, they uncover dark secrets about each other, their families, their history and their town. The movie stars Emma Thompson, Emmy Rossum and Viola Davis, as well as a whole host of newcomers.

'Safe Haven'

Opens Thursday, Feb. 14
A typical Nicholas Sparks movie, "Safe Haven" follows a young woman as she moves to North Carolina, where her growing relationship with a widower forces her to confront her past. Julianne Hough and Josh Duhamel star in this Valentine's Day romance.

'A Good Day to Die Hard'

Opens Thursday, Feb. 14
John McClane travels to Russia to bail his estranged son out of prison — only to get caught in the crossfire of a terrorist plot. Of course. Bruce Willis and Jai Courtney — of "Spartacus" fame — star in this highly anticipated continuation of the "Die Hard" franchise.

'Escape From Planet Earth'

Opens Friday, Feb. 15
"Escape From Planet Earth" is an animated film about a blue-headed astronaut and his crew's escape from a dangerous alien planet. The film boasts big names like Brendan Fraser, Sarah Jessica Parker and Jessica Alba.

IN CONCERT

Valentine's Day with Smokey Robinson

Schermerhorn Symphony Center
Thursday, Feb. 14 and Friday, Feb. 15
Celebrate Valentine's Day with Motown Legend Smokey Robinson at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. The legend will be backed by the Grammy Award-winning Nashville Symphony as he performs some of his classic hits. The shows start at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at <http://nashvillesymphony.org>

Kid Rock

Bridgestone Arena
Friday, Feb. 15
Kid Rock's newest album "Rebel Soul" came out to great reviews. This Friday he comes to Bridgestone Arena to show Nashville he's still got it. Special guests are Buckcherry and Hellbound Glory. The show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Fun.

Ryman Auditorium
Saturday, Feb. 16
Fun. comes to Nashville this Saturday. The indie-pop band enjoyed a highly successful year, with hits like "We Are Young" and "Some Nights" featured on popular shows like "Glee," "Gossip Girl" and "90210." Last weekend, they were nominated for six Grammys and won best new artist and song of the year for "We are Young." The show starts at 8 p.m. at the classic Ryman Auditorium.

ON CAMPUS

The Second City Improv Troupe

SLC Ballroom
Friday, Feb. 15
Chicago's legendary comedy theatre troupe The Second City come back to Vandy for two hilarious shows. The performance will feature some of the best sketches, improvisations and songs from the theatre's history. Showtimes are at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. For students, tickets are \$10 at Sarratt Box Office.

'The Good Person of Setzuan' by Bertolt Brecht

Neely Auditorium
Friday, Feb. 15 and Saturday, Feb. 16
Vanderbilt University Theatre presents "The Good Person of Setzuan" by Bertolt Brecht. The piece follows a generous poor woman and her heartless businessman cousin while delving into issues of materialism and morality. The show starts at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday in Neely Auditorium 106. Tickets are free for students with their Commadore Cards.

Asian American Student Association's Asian New Year Festival

SLC Ballroom and Langford Auditorium
Saturday, Feb. 16
On Saturday, the Asian American Student Association celebrates the Lunar New Year at its annual Asian New Year Festival. This year's theme is the Harry Potter wizarding world and the Basilisk egg to incorporate the year of the snake. Tickets for dinner, which is in the SLC Ballroom, and the show cost \$15. The show itself costs \$10 and starts at 7 p.m. in Langford Auditorium. Tickets are available on the wall, at Sarratt Box Office and at the door.

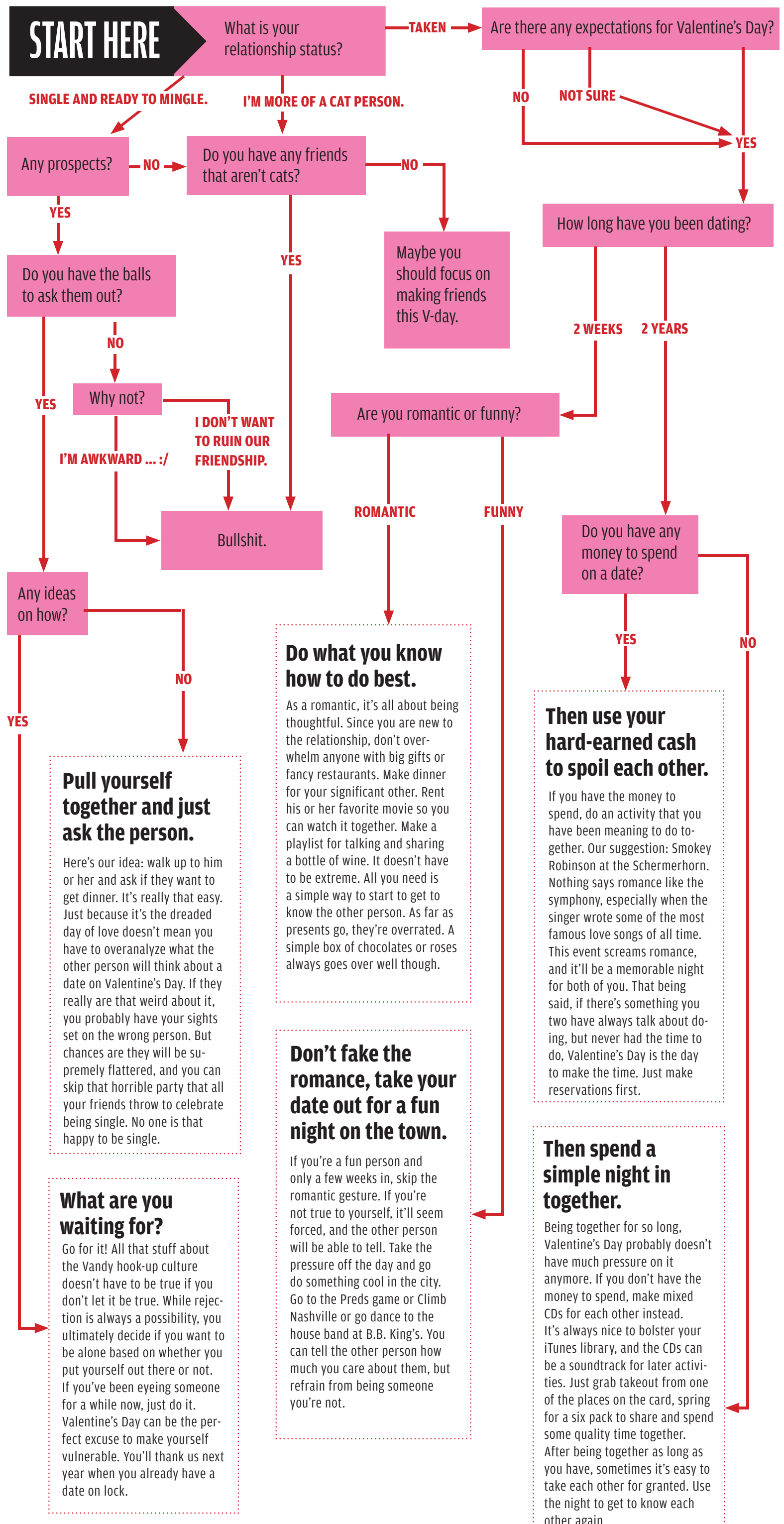
OFF CAMPUS

'Attitude'

Tennessee Performing Art Center's Polk Theater
Friday, Feb. 15 through Sunday, Feb. 17
The Nashville Ballet showcases its "Attitude" with a night of contemporary dance and live music from three of the country's top, cutting-edge choreographers. Among the works is "Ploughing the Dark," a duet inspired by the life of Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov and his wife Olga. Tickets are available at <http://nashvilleballet.com>.

A GUIDE TO YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY

Let's face it: Valentine's Day is stressful. We at The Hustler know that it can be a particularly hard day to navigate. So to lessen your load, we made you an easy-to-use flow chart that will give you the instructions you need to have the perfect night with a special someone. **By Kelly Halom**



FLOGGING MOLLY ON ROCKING VALENTINE'S DAY

Nathan Maxwell, bassist of Flogging Molly, weighs in on the annual Green 17 tour, the band's show in Nashville and celebration as a job. Offering an alternative to the typical Valentine's Day, the band will be playing at Marathon Music Works at 8 p.m.

The Vanderbilt Hustler: Flogging Molly's sound is often described as a fusion of Celtic rock and punk rock. That in mind, do you believe Flogging Molly contributed to the growing influence of folk on popular music?

Nathan Maxwell: Yeah, I'd like to think so. I mean, I'd like to believe that we've touched people and reached people and have helped bring accordions and fiddles and banjos into the punk rock world and the popular music world, even though we're not really a pop band. I guess I can't quantify how much influence it (the band) has, but I'd like to believe we've had some influence (on folk's omnipresence in today's popular music).

VH: Would you consider Flogging Molly an Irish band or an American one — or neither or both?

NM: The band formed in the U.S., and I don't think that we would sound anything like we do had we all been Irish and (based) in Ireland. I think that's what makes Flogging Molly special ... that we're not just this or just that. We're a genuine collection of seven individuals that surrounded a wonderful singer-songwriter front man Dave King who happens to be from Dublin and was definitely romanticizing about his homeland while in exile here in the U.S. It couldn't have happened if it wasn't for all of those ingredients. I definitely consider us a world band.

VH: Flogging Molly's songs — most notably in your latest album "Speed of Darkness" — tend to revolve around political strife and class struggle. Any thoughts on the band's songwriting process and what you guys stand for on the whole?

NM: As Flogging Molly, we stand for humanity. We stand for the proletariat, the masses. That's where we all come from — working-class backgrounds — and that's where we stand. And the majority of the people on the planet come from that same background. We all want better lives for ourselves, for our loved ones. We're passionately pacifists — we don't believe war is an answer to the problems of the world. So I think there's definitely a cohesive message to Flogging Molly, but at the same time, we're just expressing ourselves the best we can. It's not like we have one slant or one political stance, per se. We're observers and members of this global community, and we write what we know. We write what we see, what we live ... we write what effects us, and we perform that.

VH: So, you're not a band driven by a political agenda. You're a band driven by persons.

NM: Exactly. I mean, we're human beings. We're all



DAN MONICK

Flogging Molly, a seven-piece Celtic rock band, is known for its celebratory world-conscious sound.

critical thinkers, and at the same time we like to have a good time — we want to celebrate, we want to dance and sing and raise a glass and cheer to our friends. It's not all serious. You have to celebrate life. And we take that as serious as anything else in Flogging Molly. I definitely personally see that as our job when we get on stage — so I look at the job of celebration very seriously, and fortunately I really enjoy that.

VH: You're currently traveling on the annual Green 17 Tour. Mind giving us some background as to how that came about?

NM: We created it. Because of the Irish roots of this band ... and (because) most people in the U.S. love St. Patty's Day. We just kind of put two and two together pretty quickly and realized that this is a wonderful time of year for us to tour. And Dave's

been saying since the very beginning that when you're Flogging Molly, every day is St. Patrick's Day. So it made sense for us to brand our tour around St. Patrick's Day. This year, the St. Patrick's Day party starts in January, so we're gonna keep it going for a while.

VH: Speaking of the jubilation associated with live music, weren't you introduced to the band for which you now play after sneaking into one of their concerts as a young fan?

NM: Yeah, that's pretty close to the truth. The band wasn't called Flogging Molly at the time, and it was in the building stages. Dave and Bridget and George — the singer, fiddle player and drummer, respectively — were up on this little tiny stage in a bar playing this amazing, heartfelt music. That was

back in 1996. And because of the band meeting at a bar, meeting around live music ... we've always played live, and we've always enjoyed playing a second gig for free outside on a street corner or at a pub or in a park after our concert. It's just who we are. It's where we thrive. When it's all said and done, music is best live. And that's when Flogging Molly is at its best as well. I want to impress upon you and all the readers that I have as much fun, if not more, than anyone else who goes to these concerts, and I'm right there experiencing it with you guys.

VH: When you're in Nashville on Feb. 14, it'll be, as far as you're concerned, both Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day at the same time. Any thoughts?

NM: Valentine's Day is for lovers, and there's nothing wrong with love. What a perfect celebration.

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2013 BASEBALL PREVIEW: LACE 'EM UP

It's a long road to **Omaha**, but Vanderbilt's veteran leaders know the way, and their supporting cast features a precocious crop of youngsters good enough to play with anyone in the country. Do the Commodores **deserve their preseason top-5 ranking?**

WHO'S STARTING



Class: Junior
Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 205lbs
Hometown: Des Moines, Iowa
2012 Stats: .298 avg., .427 OBP, 56 hits, 31 runs, 3 HR, 27 RBI

Navin, who was recently named a preseason All-American by Baseball America, spent a season learning from Curt Casali and Drew Fann before earning a spot in the starting lineup in 2012. He picked off 20 potential base stealers last season while committing only nine errors, and he added some clutch hits, including two RBIs in a win against Georgia in the SEC Tournament. After several additional solid performances that week, he was named to the All-Tournament Team.



Class: Junior
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 160 pounds
Hometown: Nashville, Tenn.
2012 Stats: .261 avg., .392 OBP, 63 hits, 55 runs, 1 HR, 31 RBI

Last season, Kemp made the switch from left field to second base after a sluggish start to 2012. Rather than trying to teach him the fundamentals of the position, Corbin allowed Kemp follow his instincts. Not surprisingly, his instincts were pretty good. During his first two seasons as a Commodore, he has clearly been a fan favorite. The "Man of Steal" draws crowds with his aggressive base running and miraculous catches.



Class: Junior
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 215 pounds
Hometown: Carmel, Ind.
2012 Stats: .328 avg., .439 OBP, 75 hits, 37 runs, 3 HR, 35 RBI

Gregor has been recognized by nearly every preseason publication. He led the team in hitting as a freshman, earning him First Team Freshman All-American honors, and last season, he collected the most doubles. One of his best performances last year was in a comeback win against Alabama. Gregor had a season-high three hits and three runs scored; he also hit his first home run of the season. With Anthony Gomez no longer in the lineup, look for Gregor to be an even greater force on offense.



Class: Junior
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 210 pounds
Hometown: Arden, N.C.
2012 Stats: .171 avg., .292 OBP, 7 hits, 9 runs, 0 HR, 4 RBI

Last season, McKeithan was a work in progress. Waiting patiently behind Anthony Gomez, McKeithan worked to strengthen his arm and improve his fielding. His best outing last year came against Tennessee Tech, when he had a perfect 4-for-4 night, knocking in a run and scoring two himself. As of late, McKeithan has added more power to his swing, so look for him to be a bigger offensive threat as his playing time increases.



Class: Sophomore
Height: 6' 0"
Weight: 190 pounds
Hometown: Oviedo, Fla.
2012 Stats: .195 avg., .280 OBP, 36 hits, 29 runs, 2 HR, 26 RBI

Conde assumed the role of starting third baseman as a freshman with composure. Although occasionally inconsistent at the plate, he showed his potential on offense. He hit his first home run in a loss to San Diego and hit his second three days later in a victory over Siena. With experience, Conde's slumps will shorten and his power will increase. Also, expect him to cut down on his errors, which totaled 14 last season. So far, he has been a quick learner, so expect Conde to have a greater impact on the lineup soon.



Class: Senior
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 215
Hometown: Houston, Tex.
2012 Stats: .241 avg, .353 OBP, 7 HRs, 26 RBI, 45 hits, 28 runs

Harrell turned down a professional contract after being drafted in the 31st round by the Detroit Tigers. The centerfielder's stats dipped from 2011 to 2012, so the senior is looking forward to a chance for redemption. Corbin has described Harrell as possibly the best athlete on a very talented Vanderbilt baseball team. He can run, he defends well and he has great power, as evidenced by his grand slam against Kentucky last year.



Class: RS Senior
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 190
Hometown: Indianapolis, Ind.
2012 Stats: .215 avg, .246 OBP, 0 HRs, 15 RBI, 26 hits, 13 runs

Of the three outfielders, Lupo is the least experienced, tallying 121 at-bats last year and getting hits in only 26 of them. However, he is sure to see a lot more action this season as he enters 2013 as the team's starting left fielder following Tony Kemp's permanent transition to the infield. Lupo is very athletic, runs the bases well, has a good throwing arm and can play all three outfield positions.



Class: Sophomore
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 205 pounds
Hometown: Peapack & Gladstone, N.J.
2012 Stats: .159 avg., .269 OBP, 7 hits, 1 HR, 7 RBI, 9 runs

Yastrzemski had a busy offseason, having nearly signed a contract with the Seattle Mariners after being drafted in the 30th round of the MLB draft. He was offered fifth-round money by the Mariners, but a change of heart at the last second led to his return to the outfield for his final year at Vanderbilt. Coming off a solid 2012 season where he was named to the SEC All-Tournament Team, Yastrzemski looks forward to one last chance at a championship.

Class: Senior
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 185
Hometown: Andover, Mass.
2012 Stats: .286 avg, .383 OBP, 6 HRs, 41 RBI, 67 hits, 46 runs



2012 Stats: 5-6, 5.22 ERA, 79.1 IP, 79 SO, 39 BB



2012 Stats: 1-5, 4.52 ERA, 71.2 IP, 68 SO, 32 BB



2012 Stats: 2-4, 5.40 ERA, 53 IP, 34 SO, 18 BB

2013 VANDERBILT BASEBALL SCHEDULE

- Feb. 15-17 Long Beach State
- Feb. 19 Belmont
- Feb. 20 Central Arkansas
- Feb. 22-24 Monmouth (N.J.)
- Feb. 26 Arkansas State
- Feb. 27 Evansville
- March 1-3 UIC
- March 5 Eastern Illinois
- March 8-10 Oregon
- March 13 Buffalo
- March 15-17 Auburn
- March 20 MTSU
- March 22-24 Florida
- March 26 Epscomb
- March 29-31 Tennessee
- April 2 MTSU
- April 5-7 Ole Miss
- April 9 UT Martin
- April 12-14 Missouri
- April 16 Tennessee Tech
- April 19-21 Georgia
- April 23 Louisville
- April 26-28 Mississippi State
- May 3-5 South Carolina
- May 8 Presbyterian
- May 10-12 Kentucky
- May 14 Belmont
- May 16-18 Alabama

*home games are denoted by boldface type

PROJECTED PITCHING ROTATION

sports

THE BIG STAT

Number of SEC teams who have appeared in the finals of the College World Series in the last five years

6

Who will replace Anthony Gomez at shortstop?

Anthony Gomez is taking his cleats to South Beach. Someone new must take their talents to shortstop.

By **BEN WEINRIB**
Sports reporter

Last summer, three junior Commodore position players were taken in the MLB Draft. Anthony Gomez was taken by Miami in the 6th round, Mike Yastrzemski was taken in the 30th round by Seattle and Connor Harrell was drafted one round later by Detroit. Yastrzemski and Harrell opted to return for their senior years at Vanderbilt, but Gomez signed with the Marlins for \$186,000.

The decision wasn't all that surprising; only 12 picks in the first 10 rounds did not sign, and Gomez was somewhat familiar with the area, having played for the South Florida Bandits during high school summers. But the decision still leaves the Commodores with a gaping hole at shortstop.

Gomez led the Commodores in at-bats the past two seasons, and he led the team in hits and total bases his junior season. He may be most famous for his prominent role in one of the most memorable plays of the 2012 season: Against Florida in the SEC Tournament last year, he was the lead baserunner in Vanderbilt's triple steal, sliding into home to extend Vanderbilt's lead in the ninth inning.

Without Gomez, the Commodores have a few options at shortstop. In-house, Vanderbilt has junior Joel McKeithan, who played in 24 games last year, starting 14 of them, plus a

dark horse candidate in sophomore Vince Conde, who started last season at third base and could move over. The most intriguing player of the bunch may be highly-touted freshman Dansby Swanson.

Unfortunately, those in-house options didn't play so well last year. McKeithan didn't hit his weight, finishing with a .171 batting average, and Conde wasn't much better at .195. McKeithan has a big frame for a shortstop, but he hasn't hit for much power since arriving on campus. Swanson, on the other hand, barely registers at 6 feet tall, but he's a strong, hardworking defender with some pop at the plate despite hitting with little power.

From the sound of things right now, the shortstop position may be very fluid throughout the year with all three getting playing time.

"All of our players know that positions are rented," said head coach Tim Corbin. "Joel has experience in this program and continues to grow as a player. Dansby is a young kid with a lot of athletic ability and baseball awareness — he has a chance to be a special player one day."

Although no player has especially stuck out during preseason practices, one good development has been the relationship between the upperclassman and freshman.

"It's awesome," Swanson said. "(Joel's) been able to mentor me and give me a lot of advice about playing in this

league — just being a better player, a better person. I've really looked up to him this year; it's great to have a guy like him."

McKeithan sees the relationship as a microcosm of Vanderbilt's strategy to improve the team as a whole.

"Last year we learned a lot," he said. "What's good is we had a good core group last year that went through starting off slow and how we worked through that. And now we learned a lot as a core group, and I feel like we can really teach the younger guys that just came in how to work through that if it does happen and how to not let it happen."

Although coaches aren't specifically saying it, McKeithan seems likely to open the season with the starting job. According to new hitting coach Travis Jewett, the key to Swanson getting more playing time will be taking advantage of the opportunities he gets early on.

With many other positions solidified thanks to strong upperclassmen play, the shortstop situation will be especially interesting to watch. Will McKeithan capitalize on his chance to get consistent playing time? Or will the up-and-coming freshman Swanson become the next young star of this Vanderbilt team? While Friday's season-opener may begin to show Vanderbilt fans the answer that question, the safer bet is to settle in for an old-fashioned position battle.

NICOLE MANDEL / THE VANDERBILT HUSTLER

Kemp making second his first priority



Before last season, Tony Kemp hadn't played second base since middle school. In 2013, the Commodores' speedy leadoff man takes over the position full-time.

NICOLE MANDEL / THE VANDERBILT HUSTLER

By **JESSE GOLOMB**
Asst. sports editor

It's February in Nashville, which means it could be cold or snowy or sunny or humid.

On one particular afternoon, Tony Kemp was lucky. As Kemp took a seat on a bullpen bench and gazed out at Hawkins Field's newly-minted artificial surface, the sun shone down on his growing afro. It was one of the first days of practice for the 2013 Vanderbilt baseball team. As Kemp began to prepare himself for a time when both the weather and his job become a bit more predictable, his eyes fell on the area surrounding second base.

"The ball definitely gets on you a lot quicker out there," he said.

Kemp has become acquainted with sudden change. After roaming the outfield for the entirety of his high school baseball career and then coming to Vanderbilt to fulfill the same role, Kemp enters the 2013 campaign as the team's starting second baseman.

Last season, Kemp took over the job from incumbent starter Riley Reynolds when Reynolds went down with a foot injury. In 2011, Reynolds batted .331 and made just one error at second base. Kemp called his predecessor "one of the best defensive fielders Vanderbilt's ever had."

It's been difficult to fill those big shoes: when Kemp trotted out to take

over at second last season, it was the first time he had played the position since eighth grade.

"Second base in middle school, balls are probably coming at you 10 miles an hour," he said. "Now, they're coming at you at 60. And they got topspin. And movement."

It's unclear if head coach Tim Corbin knew the extent of Kemp's experience when he made his decision to move the junior Franklin native to the infield. When asked why he Kemp was a good fit for second base, the 11th year Vanderbilt coach answered, "He had some experience playing second base in high school. We thought his hands and arm were plenty good enough to play there."

When the need arose and Corbin asked Kemp to move to the infield, Kemp was surprised but more than happy to fill the void.

"(I was) a little shocked," Kemp said. "I said, 'Yeah, I have a little bit of experience in middle school.' Whatever it took to help the team win."

As Kemp transitioned to the infield, he underwent a disappointing, up-and-down 2012 season. After batting .329 and getting on base at a .434 clip during his first year as a Commodore, Kemp hit just .261 as a sophomore. Still, he held up his end of the bargain in the field, playing in 24 games at second base and making only three errors.

Along the way, Kemp solicited advice

from Reynolds, who told him stay relaxed.

"He said, 'You've played baseball your whole life. You know how the game is played. Just understand your role at second base and the little things that have to happen.'"

Those little things have been trouble at times.

"Ranging to the backhand is probably the hardest thing for me," Kemp said. "You're kind of blocking your vision when you're going up the middle for the ball. I could be better at that part of the game."

An outfielder never has to throw across his body. He never has to turn a double play. He can get by without knowing bunt coverages, or pitcher-fielding-plays, also known as PFPs.

"It's just different," Kemp said. "It's like, if you're playing football and you're playing cornerback, and then you go on offense and you're playing wide receiver."

An apt comparison. Every bouncing ball brings with it the possibility of surprise or embarrassment. Every play is a learning experience, threatening to become a teachable one.

"It's something new. It's a new challenge. I'm always up for new challenges and opportunities."

To Kemp, almost everything is new: the footwork, the fundamentals, the distance from the dugout.

One play at a time, Kemp has been forced to rediscover what it means to take the field.

Long Beach in the house

By **ALLISON MAST**
Sports reporter

To kick off the season, the baseball team will host the Long Beach State Dirtbags in a three-game series.

While the Vanderbilt program has experienced the majority of its success in the past 10 years, Long Beach State has been nearly a permanent fixture in the Top 25 rankings since before the entirety of its current roster was born. From 1989 to 2008, the Dirtbags missed the NCAA Tournament only three times and reached the College World Series four times. Over the years, the program has produced superstars such as Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim starting pitcher Jered Weaver, Tampa Bay Rays third baseman Evan Longoria and first baseman Jason Giambi, who was recently signed by the Cleveland Indians.

Although Long Beach has failed to make the tournament for the past few years, the current players expect to make a run into the postseason in head coach Troy Buckley's third season at the helm. They came up one game short of Cal State Fullerton in last year's race for the Big West title and have been picked by the conference's coaches to finish third this season, behind Fullerton and UC Irvine.

A roster boasting seven returning starters in the field has other plans. Those returnees combined for a .274 batting average, paced by Juan Avila, who tied for the team lead in hits on

his way to earning Honorable Mention All-Big West honors. Junior infielders Ino Patron and Jeff McNeil played in every game last year as sophomores, and outfielder Josh Guerra will look to build on a strong finish to his freshman year in which he collected 10 RBIs and hit .313 in conference play.

The returning fielders will backstop some talented pitchers. During the team's Dirt vs. Bags scrimmage series this fall, sophomore Nick Sabo threw five shutout innings and allowed only one hit. Juniors Shane Carle and Ryan Millison also threw five scoreless innings each, combining for 10 strikeouts.

The Commodores also have their fair share of experienced position players and ruthless pitchers. Their lineup will feature outfielders Connor Harrell and Mike Yastrzemski, who both turned down pro contracts last summer. A trio of junior preseason All-Americans will join the two seniors in second baseman Tony Kemp, first baseman Conrad Gregor and catcher Spencer Navin.

On the mound, Kevin Ziomek, T.J. Pecoraro and Tyler Beede will likely form the weekend rotation. Ziomek had a fantastic summer in the Cape Cod League, posting an impressive 6-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio and finishing the short season with a 1.27 ERA. Brian Miller, Jared Miller and Phillip Pfeifer have shown drastic improvement since arriving on campus last fall and will be expected to push the starters and bring depth to the bullpen.



VANDERBILT VS. LONG BEACH STATE

Hawkins Field
Nashville, Tenn.
Friday 4 p.m. CST
Saturday 2 p.m. CST
Sunday 1 p.m. CST



PHOTO PROVIDED BY HTTP://KETTLEERS.ORG 2012

Lefthander and weekend starter Kevin Ziomek winds up in the Cape Cod Baseball League last summer. Pitching for the Cotuit Kettleers, Ziomek went 3-0 with a 1.27 ERA.

Home cooking

Corbin using Cape Cod League to groom current talent

By **GEORGE BARCLAY**
Assistant sports editor

It's not hard to find evidence of Vanderbilt baseball coach Tim Corbin's New England roots. The left field wall at Hawkins Field is 35 feet high, just two feet shorter than Fenway Park's Green Monster. Likewise, Corbin has six players from Massachusetts on his roster, more than any other SEC team. One of those players is Mike Yastrzemski, the grandson of Boston Red Sox legend Carl Yastrzemski.

But most of all, Corbin's connection to New England has presented itself in his willingness to send his top players to the Cape Cod Baseball League, the Mecca of collegiate summer baseball.

"The Cape Cod League is very representative of the finest amateur baseball that can be played in the summer," Corbin said. "I have familiarity with the product and the organizations that host the kids. Our players seem to enjoy it, and they certainly get challenged by the level of play that exists."

The results have yielded success in recent years for Corbin's players and the Commodore program. In the summer of 2010, first baseman Aaron Westlake hit .292 with five home runs and 10 RBIs for the Chatham A's, earning a selection to the league's All-Star Game. That same summer, southpaw Grayson Garvin went 5-0 with a 0.73 ERA for the Bourne Braves, which got Garvin an All-Star selection as well as the CCBL's pitcher of the year award. Both Westlake and Garvin proved instrumental for the Commodores in the following season, helping to lead the team to its first trip to the College World Series.

The following summer of 2011 was also productive for shortstop Anthony Gomez. Gomez hit .292 with two home runs and 10 RBIs for the Orleans Firebirds. In his final season at Vanderbilt, Gomez batted .353 to help lead a young Commodore team to the regional round of the NCAA Tournament.

After the 2012 season, Corbin sent three more of his top players to Cape Cod. Left-hander Kevin Ziomek and outfielder-turned-second-baseman Tony Kemp played for the Cotuit Kettleers, while first baseman Conrad Gregor went to the Orleans Firebirds.

Following an up-and-down season in 2012 where he went 5-6 with a 5.22 ERA and 79 strikeouts, Ziomek came into his own in Cotuit under the tutelage of manager Mike Roberts.

"Mike Roberts is a great guy. I think he's pretty well respected up in the Cape," Ziomek said. "He's a little old school, but I think it's nice to play for a guy like that. He respects the game."

Ziomek went 3-0 with a 1.27 ERA in five starts for the Kettleers in 2012. With 36 strikeouts and just six walks, Ziomek was on track for an All-

Star selection before electing to sit out and rest his arm.

While Ziomek is well known for his fastball and breaking ball, the biggest adjustment he made was honing another off-speed pitch under Roberts' guidance.

"I think the biggest thing for me was picking up a new changeup grip from Coach Roberts," Ziomek said. "He's big on the changeup. He works on that with all of his pitchers and being able to pick something up like that is huge."

A teammate of Ziomek's both at Vanderbilt and in Cotuit, Kemp hit .343 with three home runs and 29 RBIs in 35 games.

Besides improving his already compact swing, Kemp used his time at Cape Cod to help make the transition from playing the outfield to second base.

"I played (second base) up there in the Cape for Cotuit this summer," Kemp said. "I'm just getting more comfortable in seeing how much range you have to your left and your right."

Heading into his junior season, Kemp sees a more level-headed approach at the plate as the key to the start of the 2013 campaign.

"I think just being more relaxed at the plate and not pressing too much is important," he said. "The guys in the lineup are going to do their jobs just like how I'm going to do my job."

Slated to be the Commodores' cleanup hitter this season, first baseman Conrad Gregor was a standout for the Orleans Firebirds, batting .329 with eight home runs and 21 RBIs in 44 games.

While the rigorous schedule of the Cape Cod League is an adjustment for many players, Gregor relished the opportunity and used the extra practice to become a more well-rounded player.

"I think with the competition and the pitching there along with the coaching staff, I progressed for the time I got there," Gregor said. "Just playing every day, it's almost like you get a taste of what it's like to play professional baseball with playing and getting at-bats every day. The knowledge I gained every day allowed me to make vast strides in my game."

Entering the 2013 season, the Commodores have their best shot to return to Omaha since the departure of Sonny Gray, Grayson Garvin, Aaron Westlake and Jason Esposito at the end of the 2011 season. Holding a mix of young talent and seasoned veterans, Vanderbilt has the nation's top-ranked recruiting class in addition to a trio of players who benefitted from the Cape Cod League. And as long as the formula keeps working, Corbin sees no need to change it.

"Yes, we enjoy sending our players there — it gives me the opportunity to follow them closely because of my contacts and see them as well," Corbin said. "We use Grayson's experience, as well as many others, as an example of the strides and development that can take place during that time."

"The Cape Cod League is very representative of the finest amateur baseball that can be played in the summer. I have familiarity with the product and the organizations that host the kids. Our players seem to enjoy it and they certainly get challenged by the level of play that exists."

TIM CORBIN,
Vanderbilt head baseball coach and New England native

Q&A with first-year pitching coach Scott Brown

The Hustler caught up with new arrival **Scott Brown**, who came to Nashville last fall from St. John's to **tutor the Commodores' young arms** after former pitching coach Derek Johnson left for a job with the Chicago Cubs

By **ANTHONY TRIPODORO**
Assistant sports editor

The Vanderbilt Hustler: You had a lot of success up at SUNY Cortland and at St. John's University. What do you think was the most important thing you learned as a coach in your time there?

Scott Brown: At SUNY Cortland, as a young coach who just graduated from college, the thing that I learned right away — and I have to thank Coach Joe Brown for this — is how to separate yourself from your players at that age. There's a fine line you have to walk. You're in a relationship with them, and you care about them, but you need to be separate from them. I also learned in my years at Cortland what it takes to make a lot out of a little. You don't have much resources at the Division III level, so you're doing everything from coaching to fundraising to training to field maintenance.

VH: What made you leave to come to Vanderbilt?

SB: The opportunity to come to Vanderbilt presented itself, and I had met Coach Corbin a few years ago. I had a conversation with him one day at a recruiting event, and I've always admired the way that he carried himself. That really was our only conversation, but I've had numerous talks about him through colleagues and people who are acquaintances of both of us. When this came up, it seemed like it was the right situation for my family and for myself as a professional and, most importantly, I really enjoyed the culture that Coach Corbin presents here for our coaches and our players on a day-to-day basis and for everybody involved in the program. I thought that there would be no better environment for me to continue to grow as a professional and to raise my family.

VH: How have you and your family found the transition to Nashville and Vanderbilt?

SB: It's been really good. I read an article that said that moving is one of the three most stressful things you do in life. I just didn't believe it until I went through it. It has been a change, and I have two young infant twin girls and a 4-year-old boy

who have made it more difficult than it might have been, but we're doing well. My son is enrolled in a school here and is really excited about it. He likes Nashville, the twins are sleeping at night, and we're getting settled. My wife really enjoys the city here, so it's been great. It's different than St. John's, but Nashville is very similar to where I grew up in Syracuse: a small city with a big university in the center with some small colleges right around it. The big difference is snow. It really presents you with the same feeling, so I feel very comfortable. I do miss St. John's and the coaches up there though, who have been a big part of my life over the past nine years. We had a lot of success and formed great relationships.

VH: What did you think of Vanderbilt's pitchers when you got here, and what have you tried to do with your players since then?

SB: I really haven't tried to change too much. Coach Johnson is a tremendous coach in my mind, and I never came in here trying to fill his shoes. I try to fill my own shoes, but I do believe in a lot of the same things he does, so it's been an easy transition from that standpoint. I throw in my personality onto things and a little bit of a different structure, but for the most part, when it comes to coaching pitchers, things are about the same. I tell my guys all the time that you are your own best pitching coach. If you want to play professional baseball someday, you are going to have a different pitching coach every year, so it is your job to take what you can from that pitching coach and make yourself a better pitcher. We're here to provide support and provide you that security blanket and give you good routine and structure. Then, it's yours. It's your job to go run out on that mound. We've hit the ground running doing that in the last couple of weeks.

VH: Which pitchers do you think will have a big impact this season?

SB: I think that anybody on this staff can have an impact. They all have value, good arms, work ethic and mental makeup. It's a work-in-progress to improve each and every day as a pitcher. Preparing a pitching staff — to me — involves preparing each



STEVE GREEN / VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

New pitching coach Scott Brown (right) is introduced by head coach Tim Corbin at the Vanderbilt baseball banquet on Saturday night in the Student Life Center. Brown previously spent nine seasons as the pitching coach at St. John's.

and every guy to have some impact in some fashion in every single game. They need to be ready when they're called upon.

VH: Is there a pitcher not on our radars who we should be looking out for this season, and if so, who?

SB: I would say Phil Pfeifer. Based on his stats last season, he could surprise people, because he's pitched better than that this preseason. If you look at his track record, he's a winner. He won four state championships, and he was a big part of that. He may be one of the guys that isn't talked about as much as some others on the staff, but we're hoping for big things out of him this year.

VH: What is this team's and, specifically, this pitching staff's key to victory this season?

SB: I think it's the same with every pitching staff: You got to throw strikes. You're not reinventing the wheel here with this game of baseball. It's been around too long. When your pitchers are throwing strikes and working at a good pace, it keeps everyone on their toes. Your fielders will catch the ball for you, and the team plays at a much higher level when you do that. So, our goal here is to pitch to contact and get ahead in the counts. With the arms these guys have and what they're capable of, I think we'll be fine.



This guy led the Vanderbilt bullpen in appearances and saves in 2012.

This guy is a stuffed beaver.

Together, they helped key Vanderbilt's strong finish last season and will be back for 2013.

BOSLEY JARRETT / THE VANDERBILT HUSTLER

Brian Miller and Chance the Rally Beaver provide late-game heroics

By **ALLISON MAST**
Sports reporter

Since Tim Corbin came to Nashville in 2003, the Vanderbilt baseball team has been known for producing some of the best pitchers in the country. Both David Price and Mike Minor have been successful in the big leagues, and Sonny Gray is currently in Arizona for spring training with the Oakland Athletics. Sophomore Brian Miller has the talent to join the ranks of the Vanderbilt elite, but his delivery sets him apart from the others.

As he winds up, his right arm bends back in a way that makes fans question whether or not it contains bones. As the ball leaves his glove, it darts around before reaching the bewildered batter. According to Miller, he developed the unique delivery out of necessity and not for flair.

"In high school, the over-the-top, more general approach wasn't really working for me, so I had to drop down, and it just felt natural for me," Miller

said. "I threw a breaking pitch down there anyways, so it just fit into what I was trying to do."

While Miller was pitching during the summer, he sustained an injury to his hip. His rehabilitation stretched into the fall, causing him to miss the Black & Gold series. His sidearm delivery would not be affected by the injury, and he confirmed that he is ready for the season.

"It's 100 percent," Miller said. "It feels better than before. The doctors did a good job."

Miller embraces his unique pitch, but during last year's run to an NCAA Tournament berth, he also gained notoriety on the team as the proud founder of the unofficial team mascot: Chance the Rally Beaver. With the 2012 season off to a slow start, Miller brought Chance to the dugout during the Kentucky series. The results were undeniable, and Chance has become an integral part of the team and an inhabitant of the clubhouse.

Chance even comes with an origin story, courtesy of Miller, that walks the line of urban legend: "We were kind of going through a tough spot last

season, and we found an abandoned beaver on the side of the road. So, naturally, our team, being such a caring team, jumped out and rescued the beaver. I personally took it upon myself to nurse him back, and so ever since then, we've had him out at our games. It's just provided the spark we need to finish those late-inning rallies. We will get him down there towards the end of the game."

The games speak for themselves. There was the 3-2 win over Louisville on May 8, when Conrad Gregor stole home on a wild pitch to score the winning run in the bottom of the eighth inning to get the Commodores back to .500 on the season. Then the next weekend, there was Vanderbilt's dramatic series win over No. 4 LSU on the road, keyed by a game-tying home run off the bat of Mike Yastrzemski in the ninth inning and an RBI single from Tony Kemp in the 10th to clinch a dramatic 5-4 victory in the Sunday rubber match. And that was all before the Commodores went 3-0 against top-5 rivals South Carolina and Florida to advance to the finals of the SEC tournament and secure their postseason bid once and for all.

Along the way, Chance joined Twitter (@VU_RallyBeaver, if you're not one of his 542 followers) and kept Vanderbilt fans up to date with the Commodores' path through the Raleigh Regional bracket, where they lost to NC State in the finals.

By turning the tide for the struggling Commodores last season, Chance helped them realize the potential of their high preseason rankings by making some early appearances. According to Miller, even he cannot control the actions of the buck-toothed wonder.

"It depends on how he's feeling, really," Miller said. "It's weird. He's more of a warm weather beaver, which is kind of strange. I think he will be out there early. We will definitely have to read the situation, though."

Nevertheless, both Miller and his stuffed companion are looking forward to the opening series.

"We're very excited," Miller said. "All of this anticipation, all of this work, and finally we get to go out and play another opponent. We're kind of sick of playing ourselves all of the time. Chance is excited to start working his magic on the opponents instead."

Valentine's Day

Thursday, February 14

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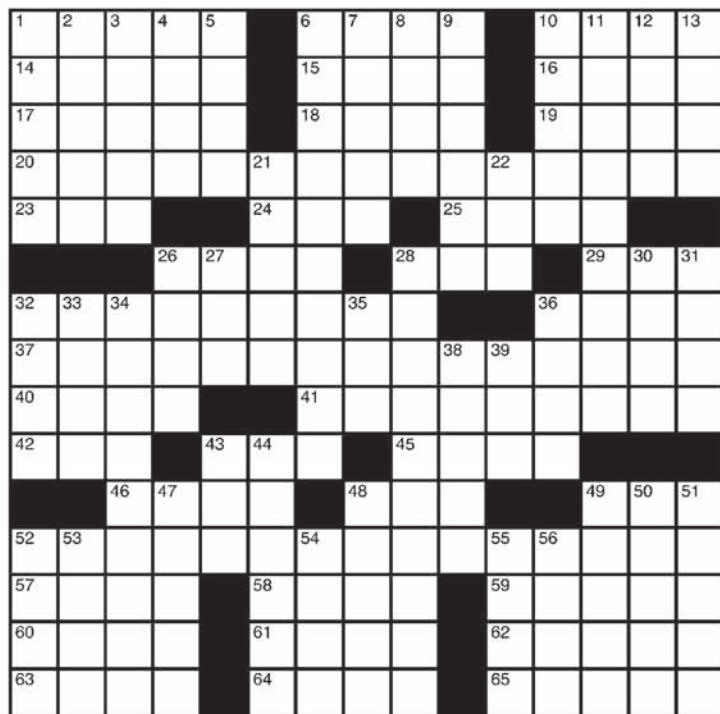
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backpage

TODAY'S CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Geometry subject
 - Vend
 - "Don't let anyone else hear this"
 - Cowboy, at times
 - Palm product
 - Classic cream-filled snack
 - For the birds?
 - Agile deer
 - Actor Ken
 - Stout
 - Seaside raptor
 - Have to thank for, with "to"
 - Horn sound
 - Belgrade native
 - Lawn option
 - Nova Scotia hrs.
 - Relative via remarriage
 - Shell out
 - Stout
 - Gremlin and Pacer
 - Able to come back
 - Cole Porter's "Clown"
 - Bond, for one
 - "Heavens to Betsy!"
 - Place to tie up
 - "... we having fun yet?"
 - Intractable beast
 - Stout
 - Dead set against
 - Ram, e.g.
 - Significant
 - Sax immortal
 - Politico Bayh
 - Blue hue
 - Reaction to being cut off
 - Not a good mark
 - Hem again
- DOWN**
- Talk and talk
 - Casanova
 - For the bees
 - Tide type
 - Cubemaster
 - Rubik
 - Milkshake choice
 - Gradually vanish
 - Cobb of "12 Angry Men"
 - Not get the better of
 - Flickr image
 - Ring insert
 - Knife in "West Side Story"
 - Shape (up)
 - Tire-shaped
 - New England
 - Dead set against
 - Nos. for beachgoers
 - Chemical suffix
 - Cryptozoologist's quarry
 - Name meaning "young warrior" in Old Norse
 - Short communication
 - Work on a deck
 - Large volume
 - Yosemite attraction
 - Not a good mark
 - Crossword component
 - Rival of Rory
 - Greeting in Rio
 - When doubled, a breath freshener
 - Specialized undergrad course
 - Permanently
 - Liam Neeson voiced him in "The Chronicles of Narnia" films
 - Like many a prime rib serving
 - One in a Lincoln quartet?
 - Scatter
 - Reason for stitches
 - "Do ..."
 - Late-inning achievement
 - Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
 - Flabbergast



By Dave Eckert 2/14/13

Answers to Monday's puzzle

D	O	F	F	G	A	P	S	W	A	N	E	S
E	R	O	O	O	W	E	N	A	L	A	M	O
L	I	A	R	F	A	L	A	R	I	P	U	P
H	O	M	E	M	O	R	T	G	A	G	E	
I	N	S	T	O	R	E		T	A	N	N	E
		A	M	I	S	E	E	M	A	E	R	
M	I	G	S	T	E	L	L	M	E	M	O	R
A	M	A	T	I	O	I	L	S	E	M	I	S
C	O	M	E	M	O	N	D	A	Y	T	I	E
Y	U	M	M	U	S	E	S	H	E			
S	T	A	T	U	S	S	H	O	R	T	E	N
		I	N	T	E	R	N	A	L	M	E	M
G	O	T	T	I	N	E	A	P	A	R	C	S
E	X	A	L	T	D	A	R	E	I	S	E	E
M	O	S	E	Y	S	L	E	D	D	E	E	D

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TODAY'S SUDOKU

	6	9		4		2	5	
					7		9	
		1		5			3	
			2					
	8	5				9	6	
					4			
	2			6		1		
	7		4		1			
	1	6		2		5	4	

Answers to Monday's puzzle

2/14/13

3	4	6	2	9	1	7	8	5
7	5	1	3	6	8	4	9	2
9	2	8	7	4	5	3	1	6
4	8	5	1	3	6	9	2	7
1	3	7	9	5	2	6	4	8
6	9	2	4	8	7	5	3	1
2	6	3	5	1	9	8	7	4
5	1	4	8	7	3	2	6	9
8	7	9	6	2	4	1	5	3

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

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