

# Dore Ways

A forum for exchanging ideas

## From the Editor

### *The Walk-on*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Andrew W. M. Beierle

## From the Reader

### **Stretching a Point**

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

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

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

Men and women.

CHIP HEARTFIELD, BA'78  
*Bethesda, Md.*

### **One Article, Two Views**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Family Ties

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

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

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

## Cover Criteria

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



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

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

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

## Encouraging Words

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

FRANCES BAUCOM  
*Hermitage, Tenn.*

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

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

## Spring Feedback

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

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

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

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

DR. JOHN G. HUFF, MD'77  
*Nashville*

**Letters are always welcome** in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style and clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, *Vanderbilt Magazine*, VU Station B #357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or e-mail [vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu).