

Dore Ways

A forum for exchanging ideas

From the Editor

Shall We Gather 'Round the Table?

COMMON WISDOM SADDLES UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS AND faculty with an uncommon love of meetings. I don't know if this is really true; I suspect meetings are a necessity of doing business, period. I do know that since I've been editing *Vanderbilt Magazine*, I've attended more than my share. But then I'm known for being meeting adverse, for taking only those meetings I can't get out of, and then only if I see value for the magazine.

That's why my editorial colleagues were so surprised when I mentioned plans to form an editorial advisory board for this magazine. "Doesn't that mean *meeting* with them?" one editor teased. "It might," I replied. But in my heart, I knew I was committing to giving up lots of time spent doing what I love—shaping story ideas, working with writers on their drafts, bugging the photographers, bugging the art director and designer—for what I hoped would be productive time with a group of people I didn't know.

Vanderbilt alumni have been a great resource to me as editor. I've found some of the best writers, photographers and artists I've ever worked with right here among our alumni. So I aimed high and took the plunge last fall, approaching nine alums and one parent of a Vanderbilt student—individuals who some warned might be unapproachable given their stature—and asked if they'd be willing to roll up their sleeves, come to Nashville twice a year, and work really hard on helping me realize my vision for *Vanderbilt Magazine*. In return, I'd provide the coffee.

Guess what? They all accepted. Though someone did say he preferred tea. We had our first meeting in March and, as I write this letter, are one week away from our second meeting. Who are these alumni? They are editors, writers, designers and communications professionals. They are former editors of the *Hustler*, Pulitzer Prize winners, and nationally and internationally recognized for their work (one is even in a band). They are Roy, Caneel, Terry, Sam, Frye, Janice, Marc, Sonny, Ed and Ken. They are alums and a parent, who care enough about the University to work with me on making your magazine even better.

What makes having this board too good to be true? The meetings are a joy to attend. Our board members are thoughtful, funny, insightful, irreverent—just the kind of people you'd like to lock yourself in a room with twice a year and talk magazines. What I didn't say is that they take *Vanderbilt Magazine*—your magazine—seriously. We've already given life to some of their ideas in the magazine. And in the next few issues, I'm sure even more of their recommendations will find their way into our editorial and design mix.

KEN SCHEXNAYDER

From the Reader

Children's Hospital

I READ WITH DELIGHT THE STORY ON Vanderbilt's commitment to pediatric care through the opening of your new Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital [Summer 2004 issue, "Magical Place, Healing Place," p. 30]. My son is a recent Vanderbilt graduate, and everything I have experienced at Vanderbilt has been first class. So, it was no surprise to me to see such a beautiful, well-planned hospital built by your university. I quickly learned to expect only the best from Vanderbilt. Congratulations on your magnificent new hospital, which indeed seems to be a "magical place."

I was disappointed, however, to see remarks in the article that misrepresented St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. You see, St. Jude is also close to my heart. My son is not only a recent alumnus of Vanderbilt University; he is a St. Jude success story. He was cured of leukemia at St. Jude.

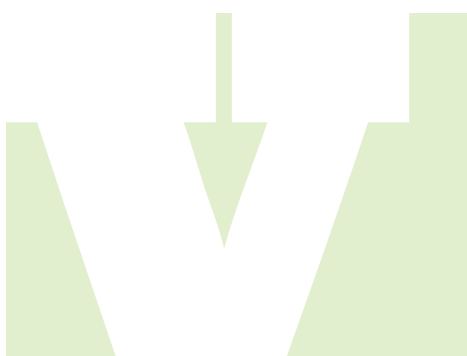
The article stated that St. Jude has 65 beds for treating cancer patients, compared to the 216 at VCH. Actually, St. Jude has only 58 beds. St. Jude helped to pioneer the concept of outpatient treatment of cancer patients as a standard practice. My son was one of more than 4,000 cancer patients followed by St. Jude at a given time. The benefits of a child being treated on an outpatient basis and living as normal a life as possible are immeasurable. My son, as well as all other St. Jude patients, are hospitalized when necessary. Thankfully, my son was only an inpatient for a small percentage of the two-and-a-half-year treatment protocol he underwent. I could only hope that St. Jude would never need any more beds and could continue to treat thousands of patients at a time in this manner.

St. Jude has a unique mission. It is a research center seeking to find cures for childhood cancer and other catastrophic diseases. Their goal is to share what they learn with hospitals across the country and around the world so that children everywhere can benefit from their research.

When Danny Thomas opened St. Jude in 1962, fewer than 4 percent of children with leukemia



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VANDERBILT MAGAZINE is published quarterly by Vanderbilt University from editorial and business offices at 110 21st Avenue South, Suite 1000, Nashville, TN 37203. Phone: 615/322-3988. Fax: 615/343-8547. E-mail: vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu. Please send address corrections to Gift Records Office, Vanderbilt University, VU Station B 357727, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703.

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survived. St. Jude has helped to bring those survival rates to better than 80 percent today. In addition, St. Jude treats families whether they have insurance or not; cost is not an issue.

I know firsthand what incredible institutions are to be found both at Vanderbilt and St. Jude, and I wish the staff and patients there nothing but success. I simply felt compelled to point out that there should be no comparison between the two—it's not apples to apples. The two institutions complement each other quite well.

GAY ROMANO
Kenner, La.

I WAS SO INTERESTED IN YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT the new children's hospital at Vanderbilt, as I was associated with Egleston Children's Hospital at Emory in Atlanta for 16 years as director of volunteer services. Egleston has now combined with Scottish Rite Hospital in Atlanta and has become known as Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. You started your article by reporting that "200 volunteers" were positioned around the hospital [on opening day, to transfer patients to the new facility], but then you never mentioned them again. You did a superior job of telling about the new hospital, the great medical services that it would provide to the community, and its accommodation for the parents. However, I felt you left out the impact that volunteers can have on the whole place. You mentioned the Junior League and what they had done in the past. I found that their continued support of our hospital was of such tremendous value through the day and evening volunteers they always made available to us. You did not mention Vanderbilt students who are volunteers. Where were they? Egleston was near Emory University, and we had so many young and eager students who were interested in health-care fields and also enjoyed working with children. The Junior League, Emory and [Georgia] Tech students, and other civic groups provided us with so many volunteers (old and young) who loved to work with children and parents. What a difference they can make—working in the school room to help patients keep up with their homework, reading and playing with patients in their rooms, organizing activities in the play areas, and being with parents as real friends.

Your new hospital looks great, but I wish you had featured a picture of one of your volunteers, as they give such a special and unique touch to a children's hospital. Hopefully, you will devote another article about the new Vanderbilt Children's Hospital at some future time and feature the benefit of volunteers in this setting.

FRAN WARD BONDURANT, BA'45
Atlanta

Fair and Balanced

[THIS IS] A BRIEF NOTE TO LET YOU KNOW that I'm in 100-percent agreement with the letters from Carl Conner and Jonathan Smith [Sum-

mer 2004 issue, "From the Reader," pp. 7–8]. Your leaning to the "left" is very obvious. You need to be more objective and balanced.

JAMES DEMAIN, BA'54
Mendham, N.J.

Another Perspective

LETTER WRITER CARL CONNER [SUMMER 2004 issue, "From the Reader," p. 7] misses the point when he criticizes Al Franken's remark, included in a previous edition of *Vanderbilt Magazine*, that President Bush "lied about why we're sending young men and women into battle." In writing "[t]o act on the best intelligence available is not lying, even if the intelligence is found to be incorrect," Conner puts the cart before the horse. Setting aside the veracity of the intelligence reports, the president lied when he said he was, in fact, acting on those reports. Before 9/11, Bush's foreign-policy team stated publicly that Iraq's weapons capacity was well contained. All of a sudden, after 9/11, Iraq was no longer well contained. What happened? The traumatizing events of 9/11 forced the president to take some action to save his political skin. This was a war in search of supporting intelligence, not intelligence supporting a war.

BEN BRATMAN, JD'93
Pittsburgh

THIS STARTED AS A LETTER REACTING TO THE letters printed in the Summer 2004 issue noting how the radical conservatives in this country have been able to take control—by simply attacking any and everybody they dislike as a "liberal." They understand that those stupid liberals have a knee-jerk reaction to complaints; they try to accommodate other points of view, which gives the conservatives just the opening they need and seals the doom of any reasonable discourse.

But my thoughts roamed back to my days at Vanderbilt—40 years ago—and how refreshing my instructors were as compared to most people I knew growing up in Nashville. They were intellectually curious, willing to question the status quo, dogma, prejudice or beliefs, and tried to incite intellectual curiosity in their students. Guest lecturers were likewise chosen to stimulate thought and discussion.

Often it worked, but many times it failed. I remember fellow students bitterly denouncing

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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 ken.schexnayder@vanderbilt.edu.

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one professor's lectures where he questioned the nature of religion. I remember the furor when Allen Ginsberg used the word "vagina" in a poetry recitation. I remember classmates denouncing the civil rights leader by calling him "Martin Luther Nigger." But I also remember many discussions regarding issues like these with fellow students that often ended in an "agreement to disagree" and promises to continue the discussion.

I fear that the university professor and the very nature of higher education are under siege today, especially at places like Vanderbilt. I defend readers' rights to write and the magazine's right to print ravings about gun control or denouncement of Al Franken for expressing his opinion, but I also feel a university must defend its rights as an institution of learning, where minds should be opened, not closed, and everyone who has an opinion is welcome to express it for open discussion. Instructors, especially, should be allowed—no, encouraged—to incite the thought process of their students.

I have enough faith in the intellectual integrity of Vanderbilt to believe there is not a problem. I hope my faith is justified.

JAMES E. HAYES, BA'67
Fallbrook, Calif.

UPON RECEIVING THE MOST RECENT ISSUE OF the magazine, I felt compelled to express some of my feelings previously left unsaid.

When I read the article "Pride and Prejudice" [Winter 2003 issue, p. 30], I was disappointed with the direction our University has turned. I take particular issue with these statements in the magazine: "Opinions expressed in *Vanderbilt Magazine* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Magazine or the University administration" and "Vanderbilt University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action."

I am distressed that every effort is being made to be "politically correct" rather than to show life as it actually exists. I am appalled at efforts to destroy the heritage of the South. Much as "intellectuals" would like to portray us as ignorant, bigoted red-necks, we consider ourselves to be decent citizens with just as much right to our heritage as the "more enlightened generation." I consider it an insult for the University to solicit funds on a regular basis to promote programs that I do not endorse.

The statement "all men are created equal" is a gross misrepresentation of the truth. All men should have the opportunity to obtain an education as a means to further their personal status, but the remainder should be self-responsibility. I consider myself to be a fairly well educated individual as well as a worthwhile citizen, having practiced medicine for many years. I came from a poverty-stricken background. Whether real or

imagined, I considered myself an outsider at Vanderbilt as an undergraduate as, due to financial status, I was a day student living at home. I was unable to participate in social activities due to lack of funds and having to work to help finance my education. Had I been created equal, someone else would have had to "foot the bill," and I could have functioned as a member of the "more enlightened group." I certainly believe in the right of everyone to have opinions different from my own, but I greatly resent being told what I have to believe and solicited for funds to finance that action.

The Old South is "Gone with the Wind," but it is history and my heritage of which I am proud. The University that provided my education is part of the Old South, and I resent "enlightenment" being force-fed in order to make Vanderbilt into a politically correct institution of worldwide status. I resent the changing of names of buildings with removal of any reference to heritage. Socialism and Communism by any other name are still the same.

CLOVIS H. PIERCE, BA'55, MD'58
Kinards, S.C.

Kind Words

PAUL KINGSBURY'S RECENT PROFILE OF Marshall Chapman was masterful [Summer 2004 issue, "The Girl Can't Help It," p. 50]. He captured her spirit, energy and profile about as well as it could be done. He rates a Music City "standing ovation" for his stellar performance. Thank you.

TANDY C. RICE, MLAS'97
Nashville

I JUST COULDN'T LET THE SUMMER ISSUE, which arrived today, pass without saying that *Vanderbilt Magazine* looks great! The graphics

are super! As a former newspaper publisher (the *Brussels Times*) and reporter, I stand in awe of the quality of the publication. You have much to be proud of within its 88 pages; national magazines with far greater budgets must reek with envy!

D. BRUCE SHINE, JD'64
Kingsport, Tenn.

I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU GUYS THAT I THOUGHT the summer issue was quite good, with several interesting articles. I try really hard to toss as much of my mail as I can as quickly as I can, but the magazine kept hooking me in. First it was the Children's Hospital article, then the students spending spring break with the homeless, and then the endowed chair profiles. (Could I feel any less accomplished?)

You have really produced a worthwhile magazine. Good job!

CARRIE K. GORDON, MSN'99
Belmont, Calif.

Correction

I GREATLY APPRECIATE RAY WADDLE'S STORY about the Zimmerman Judaica Collection in the Heard Library [Summer 2004 issue, *Vanderbilt Holdings*, "An Unlikely Home," p. 24]. There is a mistake, however, in the identification of one of the photographs on p. 25. The round portrait, identified as Franz Rosenzweig's father, is actually a photograph of Martin Buber, Rosenzweig's friend and collaborator on their German translation of the Hebrew Bible (a venture that Buber finished in 1961, many years after Rosenzweig's premature death in 1929).

KARL A. PLANK, MDIV'77, MA'80, PHD'83
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