

Dore Ways

A forum for exchanging ideas

From the Editor

Did You See Us?

IF YOU WERE ON CAMPUS THE SECOND FRIDAY IN OCTOBER TO ATTEND Reunion, chances were good that you ran into someone from the *Vanderbilt Magazine* editorial staff. It's a big campus, I know—330 acres. And we occupied a small percentage of the grounds—a table under the hospitality tent. But we were interested in finding readers, and once we found them we wanted to hear their thoughts about the magazine.

That's part of what drove us to, for the first time ever, set up a *Vanderbilt Magazine* presence at Reunion. But we had a secondary agenda, one not directly connected to hearing from our readers. And in the interest of full disclosure, here it is. We owned a beautiful piece of art that was created for the "Greetings from Vanderbilt" feature that appeared in the summer issue. GayNelle Doll, our associate editor, and I had been debating what to do with the art; it just seemed too good to use only once. We settled on T-shirts and on using the T-shirts as the carrot to encourage Reunion revelers to take a break from the celebration, fill out a survey, and perhaps sit down and tell us what they think about *Vanderbilt Magazine*.

I won't pretend that our survey was by any stretch scientific. Our methodology was loose ("tell us what you think"—well, maybe a little more rigorous than that), and our respondents were self-selected. What do I mean by that? First, they were committed enough to Vanderbilt to have returned to campus for Reunion. Second, they wanted a T-shirt. I'm sure that any reader who makes his or her living in marketing will agree wholeheartedly that our approach bore little resemblance to the scientific collection of data.

Scientific or not, however, we had a chance we rarely get: to talk face to face with readers about what we do. Many of the comments were gratifying. Readers—at least those at Reunion who wanted a T-shirt—seemed to have noticed and to have appreciated the effort that went into the magazine's redesign four years ago. It was exciting to hear story ideas from so many readers. The suggestions were varied, and I'm sure many will find a place in our editorial lineup. A story on food allergies was one suggestion. "Joe B. Wyatt: Where is he now?" was another. One wild-eyed optimist suggested a story on Vanderbilt's winning football season. That suggestion, we thought, deserved a couple of T-shirts.

But the issue you hold in your hands was developed before Reunion. So you won't find a story on food allergies. Nor will you find one on Joe B. Wyatt. I'm sad to say that you won't find a story about our winning football season, either. That's for next year. But we're listening to your suggestions, and you'll see some of them in the future. And for those T-shirtless readers who want to be heard, write me. Or write GayNelle. We want to hear your thoughts about *Vanderbilt Magazine*. Who knows? You may find a T-shirt in the return mail. No promises, though.

KEN SCHEXNAYDER

From the Reader

Library Allegations

THERE ARE TWO REASONS WHY TRADITIONAL libraries are dying: the American Library Association and librarians themselves [in reference to the feature article "The Infinite Library," Summer 2005 issue, p. 38].

In the '60s the ALA promoted the oversupply of recycled liberal-arts graduates who became librarians. These graduates soon learned there were too many librarians and too few openings. The graduates also noticed that the ALA promoted alternative politics and lifestyles. Success was not Darwinian, as the best-connected rather than the fittest saw their careers advance.

Librarians who waited for the field to open up were further deceived by ALA propaganda, which downplayed the closing of schools of library science all over the United States. Now middle-aged librarians must retrain to make a realistic adjustment to the job market.

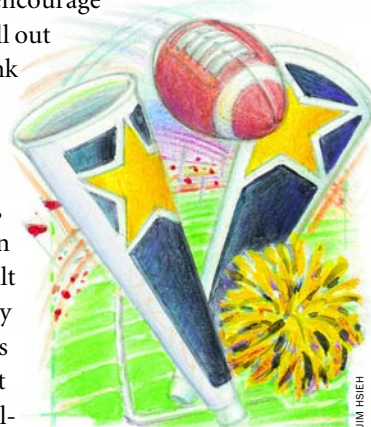
JOE ROBERTS, M.C.P.

Psychologist and former librarian

Fair and Balanced?

IN THE SUMMER 2004 ISSUE, MR. CARL Conner first suggested that *Vanderbilt Magazine* is not politically fair and balanced. In response to my protestations [which ran in the following issue], he asserted in the Summer 2005 issue that this does not involve freedom of speech issues, but rather "is a matter of the goals and objectives of your magazine, which reflects the goals and objectives of Vanderbilt University." Finally, he suggests that I have called for a "far-left political bias" to be maintained by the magazine.

I reiterate what I wrote in my previous letter, that *Vanderbilt Magazine* should not attempt to be ideologically neutral, because there is no such thing. I never called for a "far-left political bias" to be maintained by *Vanderbilt Magazine*.



I simply object to the suggestion, even when couched within an appeal for fairness, that any public information entity should be compelled to provide content in support of any particular ideological point of view. I subscribe to the concept that educated people of good will can view, read, make up their own minds, and respond accordingly with constructive criticism to the editorial content proffered by any publication or entity. Publications are accountable for their offerings. But to suggest, as Mr. Connor has, that certain content should not be printed because it does not serve the goals and objectives of Vanderbilt University is, in my opinion, going too far.

Permit me to illustrate by quoting a letter from another alumni publication I receive, the *University of Chicago Magazine*. In the December 2004 issue, the *U of C Magazine* published an article highlighting the contributions of several lesser-known alumni to the war in Iraq (better-known Chicago alumni involved in the Iraq war include Paul Wolfowitz, Ahmad Chalabi and John Ashcroft). In the February

2005 issue, one antiwar alumnus responded to the December article: "I seriously question if the Magazine well serves the interests of the U of C by highlighting the importance of graduates in the conception and management of this tragic Iraq adventure."

I believe that this writer, who appears to use the same rationale as Mr. Connor, goes too far. He suggests that the *U of C Magazine* should not print certain content because it fails to serve the interests of the university itself. Is this not a freedom of speech issue? What could cause an alumni publication of a major university to consider *not* writing an article about the wartime contributions of its own alumni? Perhaps threats of the withholding of annual gifts by the antiwar alumni? This would be a travesty. The university and its students would suffer.

Fair and balanced? I believe in a fair day's pay and a balanced federal budget. But to suggest that an alumni magazine, or any magazine, could be "fair and balanced" suggests that this abstract concept can be operationally defined in print. I maintain that it cannot. There are thousands of publications, and each has its own editorial identity and its own goals and objectives. *Vanderbilt Magazine* exists to provide us with the gift of a self-congratulatory aura that keeps on giving, and keeps us giving. But I believe it has another role, too.

The original intent of the First Amendment was to neutralize political self-interest through the provision of rights ensuring a free marketplace for ideas. In my opinion, the goal of the University, as well as *Vanderbilt Magazine*, should be to serve as such a marketplace. I hope the magazine contin-

ues to print an ever-wider range of ideas. And I hope that Vanderbilt alums, like Mr. Connor, will continue to provide constructive criticism of the content of the magazine. The quality of our University is reflected in the quality of our discourse here.

PATRICK FEEHAN, BE'72
Columbia, Mo.

Chocolate Deficiency

YOUR ARTICLE ON THE TRUFFLES MADE by Katrina Markoff [Summer 2005 issue, "One Chocolate at a Time," p. 32] mentioned nothing about what cacao she uses, what percentage of chocolate she prefers for her truffles, and why she did not simply allow the chocolate flavor to identify itself as chocolate, without adding all the other superimposed spices.

After all, good chocolate is good, just by itself. Isn't it?

RAYMOND AND EMILY HOCHÉ-MONG,
BA'55
Montara, Calif.

Pain of a Ph.D.

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO AN ARTICLE BY Vanessa Valdes [Summer 2005 issue, "Laughter in Pain," p. 7].

Get a job, have a family, live a life. When Nora Chafin was dean of women, Vanderbilt women were taught to be ladies, not feminists and crybabies.

Also, hooray for the Tennessee Court of Appeals. History should not be rewritten.

MARY WILLETTS DAVIS, BA'50
Columbus, Ga.

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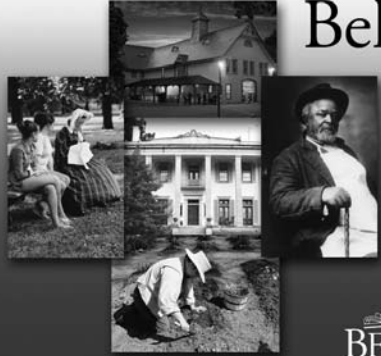
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From the Reader *continued from page 6*

Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns

I READ THE ARTICLES IN THE SUMMER 2005 issue of *Vanderbilt Magazine* and appreciated your efforts to compile such an interesting array of subjects and photos. I was especially interested in the “Green Spaces” section [of the “Greetings from Vanderbilt” article, p. 51].

Since leaving Vanderbilt in 1966, I have enjoyed returning to campus just to walk around and view the lawn, shrubs, flowers and trees. Several years ago I purchased a seedling from the Bicentennial Oak on campus and planted it in my front yard. Each year I have taken a photo of the tree to track its growth. It is a source of pleasure to know a small part of the Vandy campus lives in my front yard.

DR. BILL ELIAS,
BA’61, MD’65, HO’65
Roanoke, Va.



Dr. Bill Elias, in September, with his prized tree, grown from a seedling of the Bicentennial Oak on Vanderbilt’s campus.

Consider Us Lashed

FRIENDS, WE SPEND OUR WINTERS IN southern Arizona. To our knowledge, there is no town or city whose name is spelled “Tuscon” [Summer 2005 issue, “Scholarship Winner Globetrotts in Pursuit of Public Service,” p. 16]. The last time we checked, the

proper spelling is “Tucson.” A few lashes for your copy editor are in order.

CHARLES B. HOELZEL, PHD’60
Livingston, Texas

Magazine Appreciation

IN THE SPRING 2005 ISSUE OF *Vanderbilt Magazine*, you ran a photo of the Class of ’54 banner at the ’54 reunion [Homecoming and Reunion ad, p. 1]. I’m the fellow in the raincoat and sunglasses right behind the returning cheerleader in the black sweater. If I can have or purchase a copy of that shot, I’d appreciate it.

Thanks. You must be doing something right down there to keep the conservative contingent so upset all the time.

BOB SORRELLS, BA’56, MA’57
Rochester, Minn.

I JUST WANTED TO WRITE AND tell you how much I enjoyed the summer issue! Thank you for all you do to keep the alumni informed.

LISA NEAL, MED’94
Kennesaw, Ga.

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.

Sports *continued from page 18*

game. Throughout the SEC season, she made that big save in tight games to keep us in the match. Sometimes they were saves so big, she ignited our team and our play instantly improved.”

In the classroom Griffin is an economics major with a minor in financial economics. Her summer internships have given her good insight into the world after college. She ran her own painting business for a summer in Charlotte—a good experience, but one she doesn’t plan to repeat any time soon. The hard-

est part was having charge of her own employees. “They never do what you say. I’m sure that’s what our coaches are saying right now: “These soccer players don’t ever do what we say.”

The city of Nashville also turned out to be a good fit for Griffin. A self-taught guitarist, she enjoys country music and has a particular fondness for Reba McEntire and The Judds. “It’s been fun living in Nashville. Any night you go out, there’s music downtown. Every now and then somebody big will be playing. It’s a great environment if you like any music.”

One might even say it’s serendipitous.

S.P.O.V. *continued from page 67*

ing resources and our common humanity. We come together because we love people and want to help them. We leave with a deeper understanding of people’s lives, experiences and circumstances.

Just as the Nashville high-school students really only need information they lack about standardized tests, applications, scholarships, financial aid and shower shoes, Shawn and the rest of us really only need firsthand information about how other people live in order to respect our mutual humanity and desire to improve each other’s life experience.

Two years after the founding of Synergy, I can tell you confidently that it has been a wild ride. I’ve laughed until I’ve cried. I’ve cried until I’ve laughed. I speak for all the mentors and individuals who helped make Synergy possible when I say that I love these youth. I worry about them, I feel happy for them, I feel sad with them. I want society to pay more attention to them, and I intend to spend my life reforming the systems that will increase their opportunities and improve their lives.

I would like to continue relaying the stories of “my children” and their mentors, but I have to go now. James has been skipping school. I need to call him and make sure he is planning to attend tomorrow. Shanika’s baby is turning 6 months old Tuesday, and I promised I would bring one of the Harry Potter books for her to read to him. And my paper for Public Policy about reforming the U.S. public education system is due in less than 24 hours. ...

A.P.O.V. *continued from page 69*

hope. That they will tell her something true about the suffering she will face in her life. But most of all, I want them to instill in her a belief that a happy ending isn’t a cheap convention of a dime-store novel. It’s the moment of affirmation life is always seeking, the movement toward unity with God. And even if it’s only between the covers of a book, I want her to believe that a happy ending is, in fact, always possible.

Without that possibility, life wouldn’t be worth living.