

The Classes

“**Andy Baker Darlington, BA’62, has been named National Educator of the Year** by the Christian Educators Association International.”

Please note: Class Notes only appear in the print edition of this publication.

extraVUganza
Homecoming+friends Reunion+Alumni

A Record Reunion/Homecoming

Record attendance and giving highlighted Reunion/Homecoming Weekend last November. Attendance totaled 5,465—a 50-percent increase over 2003. The weekend included educational events, class parties, a Brad Paisley concert and Vanderbilt pep rally, tailgating, the Vanderbilt-Florida game, and “Dynamite Blast,” a family-friendly party.

Giving by all reuniting classes totaled \$41.4 million. If you missed out, it’s not too late to catch up. Update your information online with Dore2Dore at www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/onlineserv.htm and join your class’s discussion group.

Mark your calendar now for Reunion/Homecoming 2005, set for Oct. 14–15.

PHOTOS BY NEIL BRAKE, DANIEL DUBOIS AND PEYTON HOGUE

“ Donald Quinton Cochran Jr., BA’80, JD’92, has been awarded for his successful prosecution of Bobby Frank Cherry for the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. ”



Nora Wingfield Tyson,
BA’79

CASEY L. JAMES/U.S. NAVY

Front and Center

When Nora Wingfield Tyson speaks, more than 1,200 sailors and Marines listen. As commander of the USS *Bataan*, a Wasp-class naval amphibious assault ship, she and her crew have made two trips to Kuwait to transport personnel, equipment, and Harrier jets that use the *Bataan*'s 844-foot deck as a runway for the Iraq War.

The Memphis, Tenn., native and Vanderbilt English major finds it rewarding to help those serving under her to grow into the demands of military life, take responsibility, and learn to make good decisions. “The majority realize they are a part of something bigger than themselves and give everything to preserve the freedoms we hold dear,” says Captain Tyson. “I’m entrusted with the care of these folks, and the decisions I make affect their lives.”

In civilian life, Tyson, an avid golfer, lives in Williamsburg, Va., with her husband, Wayne.

“I’ve been well prepared,” says the 24-year U.S. Navy veteran. “Even so, you have to reflect on what you’ve learned and count on your gut to guide you. For me, it’s paramount that when I look in the mirror, I can honestly say, ‘I did the right thing.’”



Barbara Brooks,
EMBA’85

GREG EMENS

Horsing Around

It’s spring, and the verdant pastures and rolling hills of Painted Springs Farm glisten with life. But Barbara Brooks has eyes only for the colts cavorting with their mothers on the Middle Tennessee farm she owns with her husband, Kix Brooks, half of the country-music duo Brooks & Dunn.

“For my 40th birthday, Kix gave me a painted thoroughbred mare,” says Barbara. “We got another horse for him with the idea of breeding them.” But at an auction she saw a cutting horse work, and the dream of riding competitively and a passion for building a business around breeding, training and selling horses were born. “I’m a firm believer in the saying that the outside of a horse is the best thing for the inside of a man,” she jokes.

It’s a conviction that draws her most days to the stables where she works beside her staff of nine, caring for and training horses. While she finds satisfaction in the growing success of the stock bred at Painted Springs, her deepest pleasure is a simple one, she says. “When I look at what we’ve accomplished here and see my little buddies out in the field, nothing makes me happier.”

“**Leanne West, BA’91, has been named among the “Top 40 Under 40”** in the state of Georgia by Georgia Trend magazine.”



Keith Alberstadt,
BA’95

NEIL BRAKE

Enter Laughing

Laughter is Keith Alberstadt’s business. “When I was 16, a friend dared me to go to open-mike night at a comedy club,” says Alberstadt, an emerging stand-up comic. “I’ve been hooked ever since.”

On the road four days a week doing gigs around the country, he finds his material in life’s little ironies. “My mom keeps sending me newspaper clips about my high-school friends who are getting married,” he says. “So I send her nursing home brochures.”

On his days off, Alberstadt, who was an interdisciplinary communications major at Vanderbilt, works on his routines. When he thinks he has a nascent joke, he tries it on another comic for feedback. He believes the work is paying off. XM Satellite Radio has broadcast some of his material, and he was a regional finalist for NBC television’s “Last Comic Standing” competition in 2004.

“Comedy is like golf,” he says. “You can watch it on TV and go to the driving range, but you’ll never be good unless you play and play.” Fundamentally, Alberstadt says, his work is about good material, engaging the audience and honing his craft.

“Making people laugh is a rush,” he says. “I’m hooked on that rush.”

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“ **Ingrid Schuster Tighe, BA’98, an Army captain and Signal Corps officer** *serving in Baghdad, Iraq, has worked with the first group of Iraqi women to join the country’s military.* ”

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