

A C O R N | Chronicle

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Paul M. Gherman

On the cover:
Photo by Daniel DuBois of a botanical print, *Pitayo Cinchona lanceifolia*, an Andean tree, acquired by Special Collections from J. León Helguera, professor of history, emeritus. See story p. 3.

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Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.

The Heard Library system acquires about 60,000 new books each year. We continue to add electronic databases and journals at a very significant pace, and we now have access to well over 20,000 electronic books. However, these materials, vital as they are, do not distinguish Vanderbilt's library from those at other research institutions across the United States.

What makes academic research libraries distinct from each other are the unique materials they own. As a member of the Association of Research Libraries, Vanderbilt is expected to acquire rare and significant materials that are the source material of new scholarship. Historically, our library's unique strengths have been in our French collections, the Jesse E. Wills Fugitive and Agrarian collection in Special Collections, and our Latin American holdings, with special emphasis on Mesoamerica, Brazil, and Colombia. In past issues of the ACORN CHRONICLE, we have reported on other unique collections, like the archives of STAR (Self-Taught Artists Resources), featured in our last issue. While this latter type of material is not necessarily old, it is unique and represents a valuable asset for future researchers.

As you can imagine, when we learn that these kinds of materials are available, we have a limited window of opportunity to purchase them. I have been greatly aided in our quest to acquire such items by the funding provided by members of the Heard Library Society. HLS members contribute a minimum of \$1,000 annually, and, unless these monies are designated for a particular fund, they accrue in a special account that is spent at my direction. In recent years, these funds have enabled

us to acquire important rare material that would not be possible with our regular budget. Recently, with Heard Society funding, we have acquired the collection of Professor Emeritus Walter Sullivan, a student and long-time friend of many of the Fugitives and Agrarians (see story on page 6). The collection includes important and unique items, including correspondence with many of the members of Vanderbilt's best-known literary group. These materials will add significantly to our already outstanding collection of Fugitive and Agrarian materials.

Our other recent acquisition is from Professor Emeritus J. León Helguera, who has spent his career assembling one of the finest collections on Colombia in the world. We have reported several times over the past few years about his generous donations of materials from his collection. Recently, he has been working at the Library Annex to inventory his collection of broadsides, newspapers, and other ephemera. In December 2002, we reached an agreement with Professor Helguera to purchase with HLS funding this wonderfully rich collection over the next few years (see next page). When combined with our already extensive holdings, this addition makes Vanderbilt's collection of Colombiana one of the largest in the world.

The support of library donors is essential to fulfilling the library's mission of providing scholarly materials for use by the Vanderbilt community and scholars throughout the world. I thank all of the library's Friends, and most especially the members of the Heard Library Society, for enabling us to continue to build on our library's strengths.

— PAUL M. GHERMAN

Shape the Future. . . With the Heard Library Society

Elaine Goleski, who celebrates her 25th anniversary as a library staff member in May, has been a member of the Heard Library Society since 1996. Though she will leave her position as library development officer on May 31, she and her husband, Howard Smith, will continue their membership in HLS.

"Howard and I believe the HLS is a wonderful way to ensure that the library has the funding to acquire unique and significant materials as they come on the market. Using payroll deduction, I was able to make a gift at this level by spreading out my contribution over twelve months.



S h a p e
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launched in April. For more information, contact the Library Development Office, 615-322-4782.

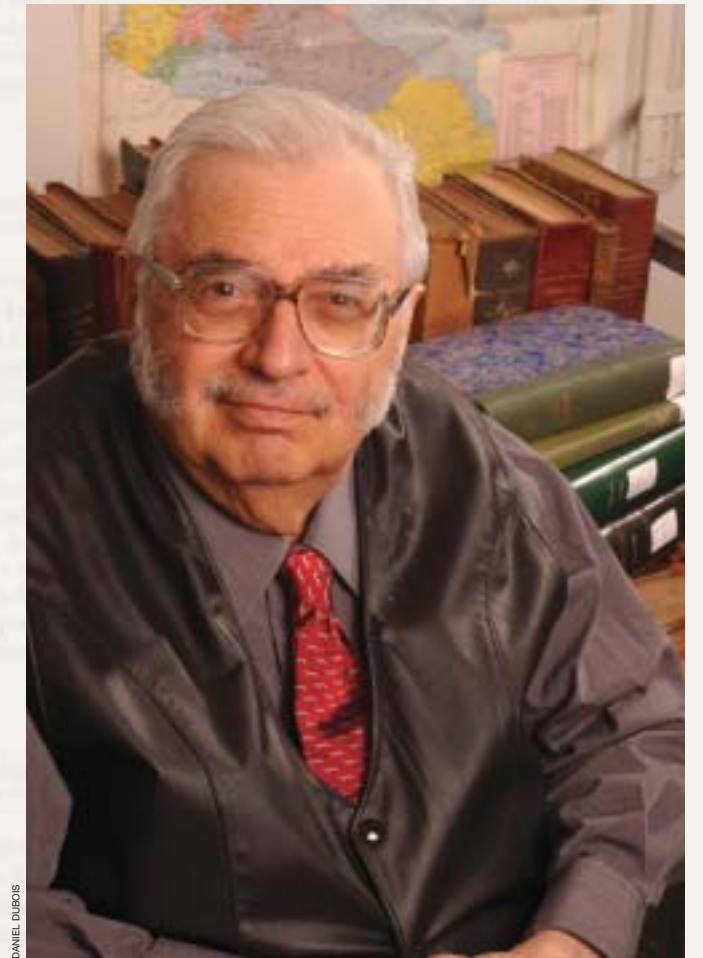
STORIES TO TELL

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE J. LEÓN HELGUERA COLLECTION OF COLOMBIANA MAKE IT ONE OF THE STRONGEST IN THE COUNTRY

BY ANGELA WIBKING

The great South American statesman and liberator Simón Bolívar once described Venezuela as a barracks, Ecuador as a convent, and

Colombia as a university. No one would agree with Bolívar's assessment of Colombia, in particular, more than J. León Helguera, professor of history, emeritus. Helguera has spent the better part of a lifetime collecting Colombian books, pamphlets, newspapers, and broadsides dating from 1831 to the 1980s. "Bogotá taxi drivers were experts on the civil and criminal codes, and the principal newspapers were models of Spanish grammatical correctness, reflecting the general populace's pride in their spoken and written language," Helguera recalls of the country and people he first encountered in 1953 when working on his dissertation.



DANIEL DUBOIS

While doing research, Helguera was also busy collecting rare Colombian books and papers that illuminate the political, economic, and social life of the country in ways even the most detailed history books cannot. Helguera has donated several thousand antiquarian books and serials to the Heard Library over the last several years and is currently putting the finishing touches on cataloging a massive addition to the Helguera collection of Colombiana. The addition, which includes 9,000 printed items, was purchased with funds from the Heard Library Society.

For the past four years, Helguera has spent several hours at least twice a week in a room on an upper floor of the Library Annex. There, Helguera sifts through piles of fragile documents,



re-reading and measuring each one, so the information can be entered into a computer. “You really spend almost the same amount of time on a single sheet of paper as on a book,” Helguera says. “This, for instance, is a letter written in Saint Petersburg in December 1834 by a Russian admiral; that is a screed against the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham and General Francisco de Paula Santander.” Explaining that the document may be apocryphal, Helguera

moves on to other pieces of paper, each with a story to tell.

There’s a 1902 broadside published by a man protesting his firing from a government position

“By looking at all these things, you eventually get a picture of what the life of the country was about.”

—J. León Helguera

and an 1862 proposal by a French company for a canal project in Panama that never came to fruition. There is a bullfighting handbill from 1965, theatre and opera guides from the 1890s, and an 1881 bulletin promoting the construction of a railroad line. Other documents reveal an 1862 list of candidates for election to a constitutional convention and the price of quinine, tapioca, vanilla, and other tropical products in 1882. “By looking at all these things, you eventually get a picture of what the life of the country was about,” says Helguera.

The stories of how Helguera acquired these documents are almost as interesting as the glimpses of the past each paper reveals. When he began collecting fifty years ago, the items that are recognized as invaluable today were collecting dust in corners of shops in Popayán, Tunja, Bogotá or in the attics of private homes and haciendas’ sheds in Cali. “It was a time when no other graduate students or scholars were working in the country and there was no real-

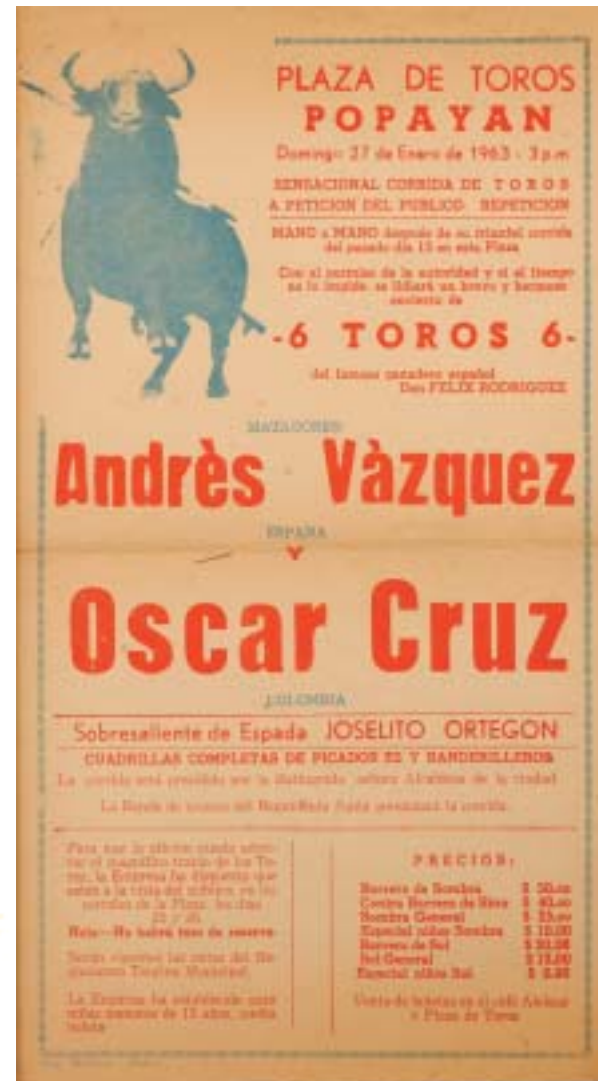
ly organized antiquarian book trade,” Helguera recalls. “The hunt for rare imprints then was such a pleasure—as its memory still is.” Once, Helguera hiked up the steep streets of Bogotá with D. Senén del Camino, his beloved Colombian antiquarian book dealer, in search of a tailor. They weren’t interested in having a suit made, however. “The tailor had been using old broadsides from the 19th century to make pattern models,” explains Helguera. “The broadsides were large and handy for his cutting and he almost wouldn’t part with them even for a generous sum.” The tailor’s markings can still be seen on some of these broadsides, which are included in Helguera’s collection.

The importance of the J. León Helguera Collection to Vanderbilt’s Latin American holdings cannot be overstated. “It will be the rock around which we base our research niche in Latin American studies,” says Kathy Smith, associate University archivist. “I see many a PhD dissertation coming out of this.” Paula Covington, Latin American bibliographer at the Heard Library, agrees. “The Latin American holdings are one of the strengths in our collections, and the Colombian collection is one of the strongest in the country. Harvard and Cornell have bought in that area, but their Colombian collections don’t have the depth or range of ours in many areas. Thanks to Professor Helguera, we have many unique newspapers and broadsides. I don’t know of any other collection in the U.S. that has these.” Researchers are already finding these rare newspapers invaluable. “I’ve actually had a couple of questions recently from people looking into the death of the pirate Jean Lafitte,” Covington reports. “He was said to have died off the coast of Colombia, and we have some newspapers from Professor Helguera’s collection that verify it.”

While Helguera is justly proud of his efforts to acquire and preserve these precious bits and pieces of printed history, he is also quick to share the cred-

it for his vast collection. “Over the years, many people, in different ways, helped in the collection’s growth,” he says. Helguera purchased many of the items in Colombia, as well as in Caracas, Lima, and Buenos Aires, and also acquired items from sellers and bookshops in London, Vienna, Seville, Madrid, and New York City. Sometimes items were acquired through exchanges and even discards; still others were gifts. “My friendship with members of the Arboleda and Mosquera families in Popayán and Cali, together with the bountiful kindness of the Bogotá Restrepos, must also be credited with bringing further depth, quality and size to the collection,” Helguera adds. “Perhaps, too, my love for Colombia brought such treasures to me.”

Thanks to one man’s passion for books and a country, these treasures will enrich Vanderbilt students and scholars for generations to come.



“I’ve actually had a couple of questions recently from people looking into the death of the pirate Jean Lafitte...He was said to have died off the coast of Colombia...”

—Paula Covington

All illustrations are from the collection of 9,000 printed items recently added to the J. León Helguera Collection. The addition, which includes many unique newspapers and broadsides, makes Vanderbilt’s holdings in Colombiana one of the strongest in the United States.

BORN BIBLIOPHILE

There may not be a human gene specific to bibliophiles, but the love of books is certainly in J. León Helguera’s blood. Helguera was born in New York City, and one of his earliest memories is of accompanying his maternal grandmother as she searched the shelves of secondhand bookshops in that great city for rare volumes of Austrian and German prose and poetry. When he was 14 years old, he discovered that a love of books was not confined to his mother’s side of the family. “I came to live for some years in Mexico, and I became aware that my uncles and great-aunts and great-uncles, too, possessed sizable libraries,” he recalls. “My paternal grandmother’s siblings also had extensive religious tracts, periodicals, and works of Spanish literature.”

Helguera’s interest in antique books was well established by the time he graduated from high school, served a stint with the U.S. Army, and returned to Mexico to earn his BA from Mexico City College in 1948. After graduation, Helguera returned to the U.S. and tried his hand briefly at antiquarian bookselling. Acceptance into the graduate history program at University of North Carolina brought him to Chapel Hill in 1949. The move also marked the real beginning of his love affair with Colombia. “I had an uncle from Bogotá, but it wasn’t until I entered graduate school that I really focused on that country,” Helguera says.

After earning his MA, Helguera decided to pursue his doctorate and chose Colombian military figure General T.C. de Mosquera as the topic of his dissertation. Packing up his wife Byrd and their two young children, Helguera headed to Colombia in 1953 for a year of research. He recalls the way the country looked back then. “Bogotá sits on a relatively flat plain set against mountains, which were still forested 50 years ago. There was a lot of game near the city—even a few of the very small local deer—and the swamps were full of fish.”

After obtaining his PhD and teaching at North Carolina State University, Helguera joined the history faculty at Vanderbilt in 1962. Byrd S. Helguera also began her career at Vanderbilt and was associate director of the Medical Center Library until her retirement.

Over the years, Helguera has published extensively on Latin American topics and received many academic honors and fellowships relating to his field of expertise. Even in his retirement he continues to speak and write on Colombia and other topics. He was interviewed by National Public Radio in November 2000 on the 25th anniversary of Generalissimo Francisco Franco’s death, regarding that figure’s place in Spanish history, and in 2001 Helguera’s paper on 19th century traditional Colombian history was presented at the 48th Annual South-eastern Council on Latin American Studies in Veracruz, Mexico.

Although his active collecting has slowed now, Helguera still seems to relish the thrill of the chase—even when it ends in frustration. “I still wake up at 2 AM sometimes, enraged at the things that got away from me,” he confesses.

—Angela Wibking



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When Walter Sullivan refers to former poet laureate Robert Penn Warren as “Red,” and remarks with a laugh that he was “the world’s worst typist but he didn’t give a damn,” it’s easy to see why his survey classes on British and American fiction routinely drew full houses of 150 to 175 students. For most of his adult life, Walter Sullivan, professor of English, emeritus, has been on a first-name basis with giants of 20th-century literature, and his students reaped the benefits of not only his critical insights but also his intimate personal observations.

“Students used to come to see me and say, ‘Well, do you think I ought to try to be a writer? And I knew exactly what I ought to say to that. I said, ‘Not if you can help it.’”

Following service in the Marine Corps during World War II and graduation from Vanderbilt in 1947, Sullivan earned an MFA in creative writing at the University of Iowa. He returned to Vanderbilt in 1949 and remained a member of the faculty for fifty-one years. Balancing a literary career with his teaching load, he published three novels, a dozen short stories, half a dozen nonfiction books, and numerous articles of literary criticism. In 1980, his short story “Elizabeth” won an O. Henry Award.

Now retired in Nashville with wife Jane Harrison Sullivan (BA’45, MA’50), he’s still busy—writing his autobiography, planning to write another short story or two with an eye toward collecting his short fiction, and serving as chancellor of the Fellowship of Southern Writers, a group that promotes southern literature through annual awards for outstanding writing.

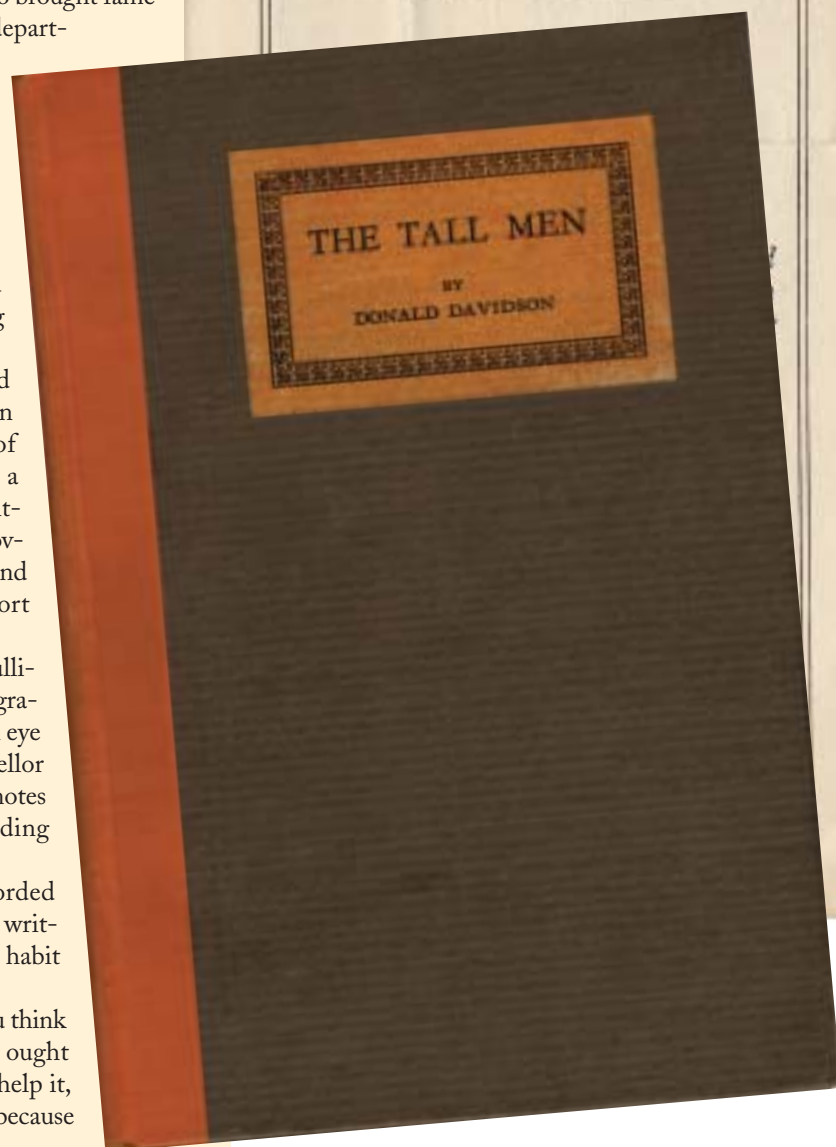
Looking back, Sullivan admits that writing has afforded him a very satisfying career. But though he taught fiction writing for many years at Vanderbilt, he has not been in the habit of recommending it as a career.

“Students used to come to see me and say, ‘Well, do you think I ought to try to be a writer? And I knew exactly what I ought to say to that. I said, ‘Not if you can help it. If you can’t help it, you’ll have to go ahead. But if you can help it, don’t do it because it’s got to be a kind of obsession with you.’”

It’s clear that in Walter Sullivan’s case he just couldn’t help it.

—PAUL KINGSBURY

Sullivan grew up in Nashville and came to Vanderbilt as an undergraduate in 1941 knowing he wanted to be a writer. Though Sullivan was a generation younger than the Fugitives and Agrarians who brought fame to the Vanderbilt English department in the 1920s and 1930s, they recognized in him a kindred spirit. Falling in with the major southern writers of the time cemented his ambition. “There’s no question it affected me as a writer,” he says. “You’d always be energized being around them.”

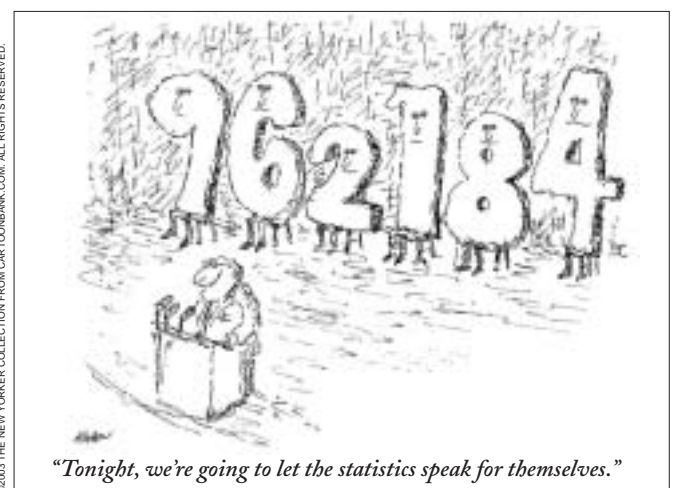


A copy of a 1928 radio address by Donald Davidson and an advance copy of his poetry collection The Tall Men now reside in Special Collections courtesy of Walter Sullivan.

Administrative Changes in Office of University Librarian

Several changes in reporting relationships have taken place within the Office of the University Librarian. Flo Wilson assumed the title of deputy University librarian with more defined responsibility for administrative operations and formalizing her status as the second-in-command. Roberta Winjum became assistant University librarian, with responsibilities for technical services, overseeing Order Services, Cataloging and Authorities, and Preservation. With this division of responsibilities, Resource Services ceases to exist as a unit, and the former units of Resource Services (Annex, Library Information Technology Services, and Technical Services) become part of the Office of the University Librarian.

John Haar’s key role in the administration of the Central Library was recognized by officially naming him director of the Central Library. He also retains his current duties as associate University librarian.



“Tonight, we’re going to let the statistics speak for themselves.”

ARL Questionnaire Shows Statistical Increases

According to statistics based on the annual Association of Research Libraries (ARL) statistical questionnaire for 2001/02, graphic materials at the Heard Library jumped to 221,539 from 13,959 in 2001. This huge increase is a result of the inventory of the photographic archives in Special Collections.

Other increases reported in the ARL questionnaire included: The number of current serials received (including e-journals that are received free because the print subscription also is purchased) is up 11 percent from 26,885 to 29,833; Interlibrary Loan shows a 4 percent increase in lending and an 8 percent increase in borrowing; and the total number of circulations for the Heard Library is up 5 percent, from 305,173 to 321,754.

ARL uses a total of 18 different statistical measures to rank 113 of the largest research libraries in the United States and Canada. Vanderbilt’s rankings generally fall in the middle of this group.

Streaming Audio Reserves Creates a “Community of Listeners”

The Wilson Music Library now offers a service that significantly alters the way students listen to sound recordings. The technology was first used last spring when students enrolled in the African Music course taught by Blair ethnomusicologist Gregory Barz were required to listen to assigned recordings that the music library had digitized on a streaming media server. Students accessed the recordings by using a course-specific password as well as agreeing to restrictions placed on the material by copyright law. The emergence of sound recording delivery via streaming audio was the first time that sound recordings owned by the music library were heard without the actual recording being on hand.

Since that first course, more than 700 individual selections for 14 courses have been digitized and streamed to students using the library’s electronic reserve (ERes) system. More than 1000 students have enrolled in courses that made use of this service. This technology has been particularly useful for students not enrolled at Blair, since they do not need to visit the library to listen to the recordings. Streaming audio reserves allow students to listen to required course assignments at hours that are convenient for them, at any time, day or night. In September 2002 alone, ERes listings for music courses were accessed more than 1,200 times.

Michael Alec Rose, associate professor of composition, who uses streaming audio reserves in his Beethoven and the Beatles class says, “Having streaming audio reserves is a lot like listening to George Harrison’s ‘Here Comes the Sun’: it feels right, it’s liberating, it’s fraught with joyful possibility—it makes more possible a community of listeners.”

For faculty, it also provides the flexibility of using more required recordings in the teaching of music courses.

“Streaming audio expands the walls of the music library, making resources available to students in ways that the traditional circulation of materials cannot,” says Barz. “Now there is much more creative engagement of the materials I present in class. I feel much more confident about presenting an unfinished or rough concept, idea, or issue knowing that the students have immediate, ready access to the sound materials that they can engage outside of class in ways that best facilitate and accommodate their individual learning styles.”

—DENNIS CLARK, DIRECTOR, WILSON MUSIC LIBRARY



Television News Archive Receives Grant

The Television News Archive received a grant of \$92,000 from the National Science Foundation in support of the efforts to convert the TVNA's videotape backfile into digital video. The grant, titled "A Pilot to Explore Technologies and Methodologies for Digitization," was awarded through NSF's Information Technology Research program.

Principal investigators for the one-year grant are Library Technology Officer Marshall Breeding and University Librarian Paul Gherman. The grant will fund a technician position and the purchase of equipment.

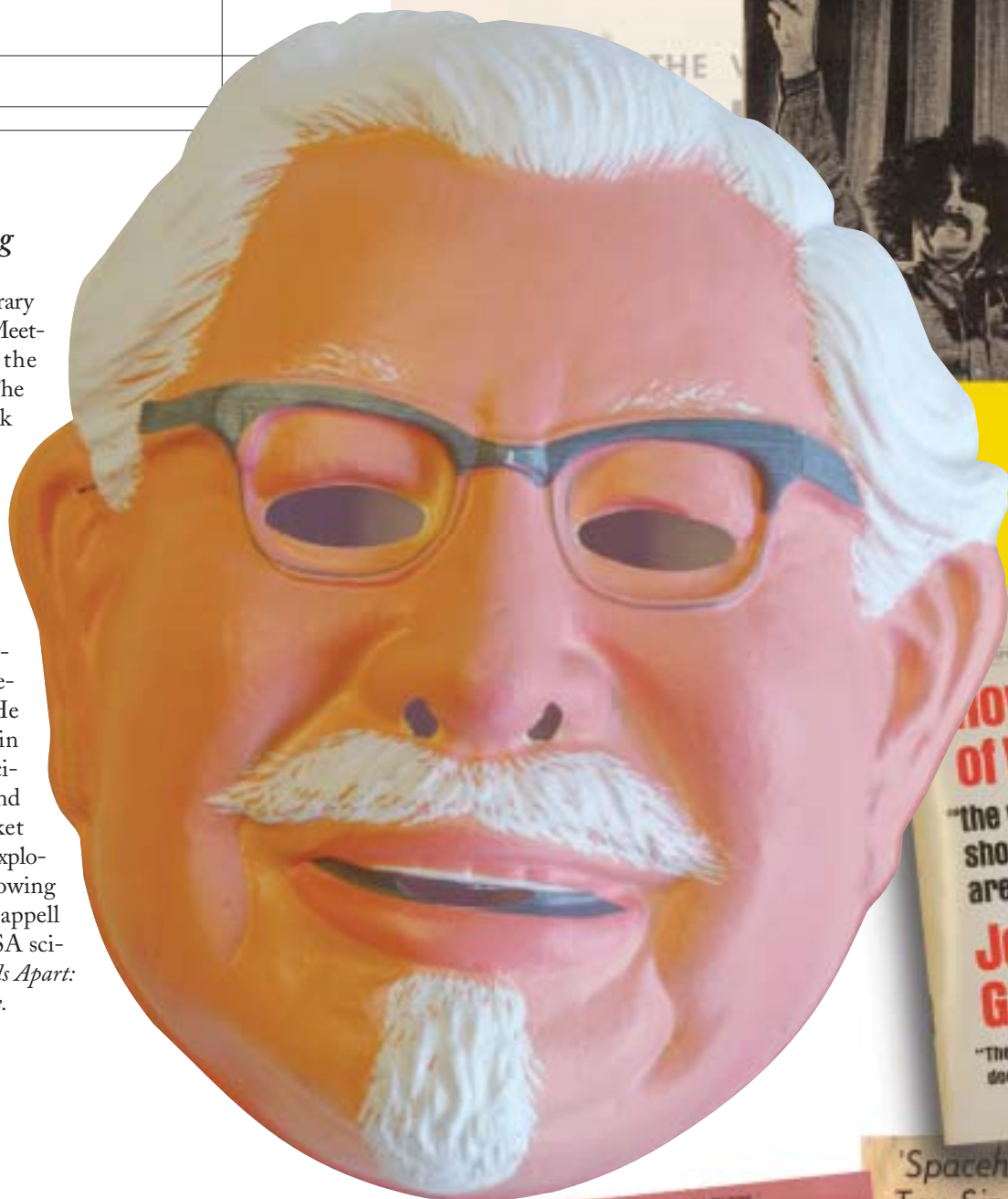
Illustration by Michèle McAvoy-Rubin and Sandi Harrison



Chappell Speaks at Friends Spring Meeting

The Friends of the Library met for their Spring Meeting on April 15 in the Wyatt Center Rotunda. The speaker for the event was Rick Chappell, research professor of physics and director, Office of Science and Research Communications at Vanderbilt. He was associate director for

science at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center for ten years, mission scientist for Spacelab 1, and alternate payload specialist for the 1992 space shuttle mission. He graduated from Vanderbilt with a degree in Physics in 1965 and received a PhD in space science from Rice University in 1968. His talk, "Grand Challenges for America: Encouraging New Rocket Boys and Girls," reflected on the role of discovery and exploration in American culture and his own experiences growing up in Alabama when the "space race" was at its height. Chappell shared video clips, images, and stories from his career as a NASA scientist and astronaut, and, afterward, signed copies of his book *Worlds Apart: How the Distance between Science and Journalism Threatens America's Future*.



Stevenson Library Opens 24 Hours for Student Convenience

The Stevenson Science and Engineering Library opened 24 hours a day, from noon on Sunday through 10 PM on Friday, during the spring semester. Stevenson Library graduate assistants staffed the library until 2 AM. The circulation desk closed at 2 AM, with a contract security guard on site until circulation reopened at 7 AM. From 2 AM to 7 AM, library patrons had access to all areas of the library, but were not allowed to check out materials, pay bills, purchase CDs, diskettes, transparencies, or print to the color printer. The library has added a VU card reader to the library's exterior access door.

This trial period was in response to comments in the LibQual+ survey that indicated that students found the libraries' hours of operation inadequate. The Science and Engineering Library was selected because of its central campus location and size. The library, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Life, and the Deans of the College of Arts and Science and the School of Engineering provided funds to allow for the trial.



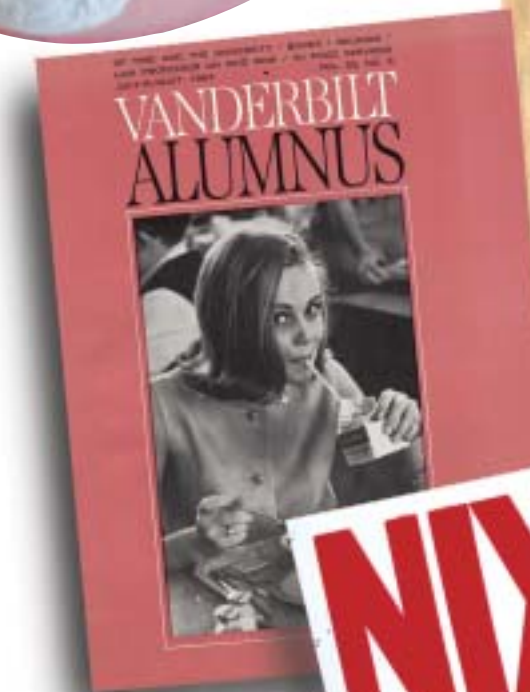
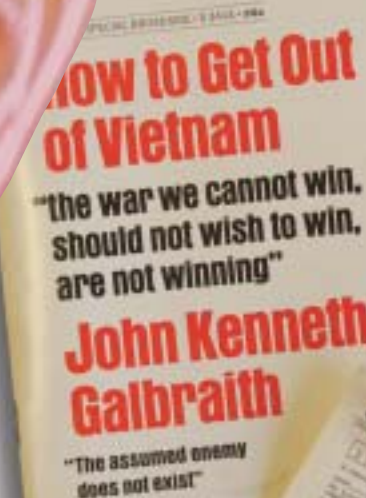
Ten new public workstations are now available in the Central Library lobby. Located near the lobby entrance, they stand where a bank of card catalog cabinets previously stood. These workstations, like other public workstations in the Heard Library, provide access to ACORN and library databases, including Central Library CD-ROM databases. They also offer access to the Internet.



VANDERBILT Class of '68 TIME CAPSULE

now in SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Special Collections recently purchased a time capsule from an antiques dealer in Nashville. Associate University Archivist Kathy Smith reports that the capsule is from the Vanderbilt class of 1968 and holds a wonderful assortment of items, including a burnt draft card, Vietnam War protest buttons and banners, a Kentucky colonel mask, and a ribbon from that year's Miss Commodore contest.



EPHEMERA



Two exhibits displayed this spring and summer in Special Collections illustrate the variety of material available in Special Collections. “Sight and Sound: Cover Design in Sheet Music” was on display January through May. Paul Wells, associate professor and director, Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, gave a talk on “Before Music Row: The Early History of the Music Business in Tennessee” on Sunday, June 1, in conjunction with the exhibit.

“Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: the Vanderbilt-Bridge Connection” will be on display June 15-Aug. 31. The exhibit highlights contract bridge material from the Harold Stirling Vanderbilt Collection, the Parkhurst and Jane Wood Bridge Book and Periodical Collection, and from members of the Harold Stirling Vanderbilt Bridge Center.

The Special Collections Gallery, on the second floor of the General Library Building is open to the public Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

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