

# OPINION

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# How to behave in the elevator



**JUSTIN POYTHRESS**  
Columnist

Possibly the most intriguing interactions occur on the elevator. It continually forces a close physical intimacy for an awkwardly brief span of time with people who share nothing in common besides not wanting to use the stairs. Let's say you are riding the elevator down with a casual acquaintance. You may wish to share a courtesy greeting, but once the elevator stops, one of you must decide to walk much faster than the other so you don't have to continue to share the strange proximity required by an elevator. This is just one example of the social unpleasantness some people experience via elevator, so I want to give some tips that will help make your ride more interesting, and maybe break the ice a little bit.

**1. Physical positioning:** Next time you step inside that metal box, try standing directly in front of the buttons, but refuse to swipe anybody else up. Or try walking into the elevator, but never turning around, facing the back wall, until you get to your floor. Bring a stool or lawn chair in with you to the elevator so you can be comfortable while riding. If you wish to expand on this, try dressing in a suit and manning the controls for tips. Or, one of my favorites, try standing just a little too close to a stranger, behind and to one side. You don't want to be closer than 6 inches, otherwise he or she will know it's a joke, but you should be close enough so that person begins seriously entertaining the idea that you might try to mug them.

**2. Use of the elevator:** There are some great methods here. Accidentally push one or two wrong floors that you somehow confused for your own. When getting onto an occupied elevator on the way down, hold the door open for a minute or two "waiting for a friend" until it starts beeping, then give up and just get in the elevator yourself. The best for last: Ride the elevator up or down only one floor. When you get in, just smile knowingly to the other passengers.

**3. Physical action:** When using these behaviors, I should add that it is paramount you do not say anything while doing it. For example: Try brushing your teeth, shaving or applying make up, ideally in pajamas. If someone enters with some food, grab a sample or take a small bite. Lastly, bring an extra shirt and pants, and as soon as someone else gets in, begin changing clothes ... slowly.

**4. Conversation:** There are two approaches for this style. The first applies if you are riding solo and meet with a stranger. Don't panic, just rely on one of these trusty ice-breakers to get the ball rolling: "So, I see you're riding the elevator," "Oh, you live here? Where's your room and when do you usually go to sleep?" or "Boy, elevator rides are really awkward." If, on the other hand, you're with a willing accomplice, pretend you are continuing a conversation mid-stream: "... and so that's why I had to roffie her" or "... but keep in mind, I'd only told him he had to stick four fireworks down his pants" and "... I told you not to use that much anthrax."

—Justin Poythress is a senior in Peabody College. He can be reached at [j.poythress@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:j.poythress@vanderbilt.edu).

## EDITORIAL

# Campus should weigh risks of eco-awareness

For the second year in a row, The Sustainable Endowment Institute has given Vanderbilt a C+ rating for its efforts in making the university more sustainable. It is a jarring statistic, and the green initiative on campus certainly has problems, but the movement is stronger on campus than many students might think.

Andrea George, director of the sustainability and environmental management office, attributed the poor rating to the lack of transparency in the university's endowment investments and shareholder engagement.

Should Vanderbilt do more to encourage faculty and staff to live a "green" lifestyle? More importantly, should Vanderbilt go to greater lengths to meet modern environmental benchmarks?

To what degree should Vanderbilt implement green technologies and policies in face of the drawbacks they pose? The campus cannot simply go green to suit public opinion. There needs to be a healthy blend of practical development and eco-awareness, with the hope the two can coincide. In response to the recent low evaluation, George said, "Vanderbilt's sustainability has been focused on making meaningful environmental

improvements that make sense for our university, not on what would makes us 'look good.'"

While furthering transparency could pose problems for the investment program, managing public perception toward the school's green initiatives remains essential. Admittedly, there are other advantages to green policies outside media exposure. George points out that "sustainable behaviors and investments have now become an important way to reduce not only our environmental impact but also Vanderbilt's long-term expenses."

And that's the key. In the current economic climate, pursuing cost effective methods of operation has become increasingly important. The Owen School of Management has reduced energy usage by 15 percent with the implementation of a new lighting system. Furthermore, if students individually reduced consumption of electricity and water, over an extended period of time the university could cut operational costs significantly. Unsurprisingly, Vanderbilt intends to participate in Earth Hour on March 28 and turn off lights on campus along with an estimated 1 billion individuals across the planet.

# Anti-immigration denies diversity

To the Editor:

On Monday night, the Vanderbilt community took a stand against prejudice. In response to an event publicized as an anti-immigration speech and hosted by Vanderbilt's Youth for Western Civilization, students, faculty, staff and members of the Nashville community came out in a peaceful protest against intolerance.


Regardless of the intentions of the event's sponsors, Bay Buchanan's speech rejected diversity and multiculturalism. Hiding within words of caution of Mexico's instability were feelings of intolerance and ignorance. Ignorance is just as harmful to building a united and strong community as intolerance. Vanderbilt University should firmly support the celebration of diversity on its campus. As the current economic crisis shows, the world is more interconnected today than ever. Globalization has opened our borders not only to an influx of people of different cultures, but also to a variety of products, ideas and religions.

To succeed in this multicultural world, we need to develop respect for and appreciation of different peoples, cultures and religions. In spite of our differences, we all make up "humankind."

By focusing on the bonds that unite us, instead of the barriers that separate us, we can strengthen our community and learn to appreciate our own culture.

This protest could not have come at a better time. This month, the Multicultural Leadership Council has been hosting Multicultural Awareness Month, the Vanderbilt Lambda Association has just concluded its PRIDE week and next week is Community Vanderbilt's Don't Hate, Appreciate Week. The multitude of diversity awareness events taking place at Vanderbilt allows us to have the unique opportunity to learn about each other. I would like to personally invite each member of our community to attend the upcoming events in March and April. Sharing these experiences with others will help us to learn not only about each other, but also about ourselves. Through greater appreciation for each other, we can come together to find solutions to our problems and ensure a more promising future.

**Chinmayee Tambe**  
Multicultural Leadership Council  
President



**THE RANT**

Thank you, Housing. You've successfully ruined my life for the third year in the row.

Dear white supremacists, please stop hating on multiculturalism.

Why has the Branscomb Munchie Mart stopped carrying the healthy pizzas?

If you haven't figured out that you're supposed to be quiet in the Baseball Glove Lounge by now, then you're just an a--hole. Turn off your music and don't loudly answer your phone.

I can't decide who added less to the immigration debate: the smug and possibly-racist Youth for Western Civilization or protesters with reactionary and obnoxiously uninformed signs that only tangentially addressed Buchanan's talking points.

Compiled by Thomas Shattuck

# Warped religion

**PHIL INGRAM**  
Guest Columnist

Religion has become so distorted in today's society that no one trusts it. And with good reason. When all the news pertaining to religion is about pastors copulating with altar boys, the church condemning contraceptives and thus possibly causing the spread of AIDS, and the religion-motivated fighting within Israel, it is hard to look at religion and believe it is a good thing. In fact, many have been turned off from religion forever because of the extremists they hear about on a daily basis.

Religion was never meant to be a destructive force. There are undoubtedly a few passages in the holy books of any major religion that one might purposefully misconstrue into support for military movements against other religions; however, these are few and mostly are much more easily interpreted as pertaining to a completely different subject altogether. I can guarantee the word "love" is mentioned in the Bible and Quran hundreds of times more than the words "hate," "fight" and "war" combined. War under the pretense of religion is a false justification. We must realize this and realize also that those who commit warlike acts are extremists no matter what religion they claim.

Moreover, those who claim contraceptives are the spawn of Satan are not only fools but also the reason few respect religion today. Christianity is based upon the Bible, and the Bible never mentions contraceptives or abortion. The ban against them is merely strict interpretation of the Bible by "erudite" church officials (my personal opinion is that since these officials have consecrated themselves to the church and a celibate lifestyle, they wish to make sex as problematic as possible for others). The Bible says nothing against condoms; the closest it comes to doing so is telling people to not murder (using a condom is like murdering a child before a child is conceived before a child knows that he or she is alive before a child is even close to being conceived, obviously).

One might also believe the command to "be fruitful and multiply" forbids condom use as well, but this interpretation is just as valid as saying it means to eat fruits until you are full and do arithmetic. Either way, any clear-thinking, unbiased person will have trouble digesting the support for this Catholic edict, and one can even see at the churches of self-respecting priests the usual lack of conviction in the preachers' eyes as they emotionlessly mumble the church's position on the subject.

However, the most terrible thing upon religion's shoulders that is no fault of the institution itself is the hypocrisy with which some "good religious people" lead their daily lives. Just because church (along with most other religiously-mandated gatherings) is only one day a week doesn't mean the other six should be filled with hate and sin. This involves not only the obviously horrible — the pastor who copulates with the altar boy — but also the people who go about their daily rituals with a smile on their face and hate in their heart. I highly doubt Jesus or Mohammed or any other prophet chatted with somebody and then called him or her a bitch the moment he or she was out of earshot. Religion is not a thing that comes once a week, but one that affects every single action every single day.

In the end, religion in itself is a great thing, but humans have warped it into a terrible atrocity that is rightfully despised. If you are not religious, please keep a more open mind the next time you consider any single religion as a whole, and if you are religious, clean up your act because no one has it all together. This request may be easier said than done, but it is a starting point. The world was not created in a single day.

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### OPINION POLICY

The Vanderbilt Hustler opinion page aims to stimulate discussion in the Vanderbilt community. In that spirit, columnists, guest columnists and authors of letters to the editor are expected to provide logical argument to back their views. Unreasonable arguments, arguments in bad faith or arguments in vain between columnists have no place in the Hustler and will not be published. The Hustler welcomes reader viewpoints and offers three methods of expression: letters to the editor, guest columns and feedback on InsideVandy.com.

Letters must be submitted either in person by the author to the Hustler office or via e-mail to [opinion.vanderbilt@gmail.com](mailto:opinion.vanderbilt@gmail.com). Letters via e-mail must come from

a Vanderbilt e-mail address where the identity of the sender is clear. With rare exception, all letters must be received by 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense submissions for length as well as clarity.

Lengthy letters that focus on an issue affecting students might be considered for a guest column at the editor's discretion.

All submissions become the property of the Hustler and must conform to the legal standards of Vanderbilt Student Communications, of which the Hustler is a division.

### CORRECTION POLICY

Accuracy is our profession. As the "Voice of Vanderbilt," we are committed to ensuring our work is fair and accurate. Errors of substance will be corrected. With very rare exception, these corrections will be listed on Page 2.

Bring corrections to the Hustler office in Sarratt 130 or e-mail us at [hustler.newseditor@gmail.com](mailto:hustler.newseditor@gmail.com). You may also report them by telephone to the news line at (615) 322-2424.

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