

The absentee ballot

STAFF EDITORIAL

As the hectic coverage of the "rapidly" approaching midterm elections cycle picks up, we here at the Davidsonian find ourselves focusing on some issues that hit closer to home. Specifically the policy disenfranchising students spending time abroad, barring them from participating in any campus elections. While this may seem like a trivial issue to some, many of these elections are pivotal to the direction of campus life, as well as the cohesive spirit of the student. Some of these important elections include (but are not limited to) groups such as the Student Government Association, the Union Board, and the United Community Action board. We feel that on such important, formative issues every student, whether at home or abroad, should have the opportunity to have their voice heard.

It is our understanding that this policy is enacted specifically because Davidson students studying abroad are not considered to be current residents of Davidson College. While we understand and appreciate the described logic behind this policy, we do not agree with it. We believe this policy pays too much deference to technicality to the detriment of equity, contrary to the spirit of fair play that is so instrumental to our experience here at Davidson. One example of this inequity is that seniors still have a vested interest in the health, spirit and future of the college even after matriculation. On that token, is it not fair to say that students studying abroad don't have just as vested, valid, and possibly even more direct an interest in the future of Davidson? Are students any less students when they choose to further themselves abroad as the college suggests that we do?

We think students should have access to write-in votes, similar to United States citizens who retain the right to vote even while abroad. Logistically speaking, implementing an equivalent of "mail-in" votes for students studying abroad should present little to no difficulty. Most of the voting for SGA representation, for example, is already conducted electronically, via e-mails and websites that enable students to complete their voting quickly and effortlessly. It doesn't seem it would be so difficult to simply extend that courtesy e-mail to students living abroad. They still have Davidson College e-mail addresses, after all.

The Davidsonian

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Reading beyond the headlines

LESLIE WONG

Guest Contributor

This past week, I attended a lecture in Hance Auditorium. It was Christopher R. Browning's "Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: Writing the History of Nazi Slave Labor" lecture, one that I had to attend for my Genocide in the 20th Century class. It was, and probably will remain, one of the most interesting and illuminating lectures I have ever been to in my life. Browning spoke passionately about the Nazi slave labor camp at Starachowice, Poland, educating his audience on a World War II subject that I, personally, and possibly even others, had never heard of before.

When Browning first said the words, "Nazi slave labor camp," I had no idea what he meant. As I sat and listened, I learned that there were multiple slave labor camps that were directly involved in the war effort, that after the spring of 1943, it was safer in those camps if you were Jewish. Not every camp worker survived, but their chances of survival increased simply due to the fact that they were at a labor camp and not an extermination camp.

In high school, we briefly touched upon the atrocities of World War II, the Holocaust, and its after-effects. Yet I don't remember learning a single thing about labor camps. We focused on Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party, the Allies' response to Germany's aggression, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the Treaty of Versailles. A world war lasting six long years was given maybe a week or two of discussion to cover the four topics it was reduced to.

Why can't there be more time spent on a topic that deserves it? A quick response is that there's just too much history to cover in a high school class, that there just isn't enough time. And although that's true, I also feel like there's another underlying reason: we are just too obsessed with the bigger picture without being remotely interested in the details.

I know I'm guilty of it. The New York Times is my homepage, and I'll quickly skim over the news headlines

and walk away with the feeling that I actually am aware of what's going on in the world. But here's the problem: I'm only skimming, and I'm only reading the headlines. When did I lose my desire for the details?

"I think society today gets caught up with news headlines and the big world issues, but only a few people really know what causes them."

This may just be me, but somehow I don't think it is. I think society today gets caught up with news headlines and the big world issues, but only a few people really know what causes them. Maybe we're just too busy with our own lives and can't afford the time to even think about the things that don't directly affect us. My dad constantly tells me, "Don't sweat the small stuff." Maybe I've internalized that saying a bit too much. Maybe I have begun to believe that the small things really don't count as long as the bigger picture is okay. Or maybe, just maybe, after listening to Browning's lecture, after it gave me an entirely new look at World War II, I have begun to believe that the small stuff does count because it affects how we see the bigger picture.

My goal now is to fight that indifference, to pay more attention to the details, even to go looking for them. The bigger picture gives the overall impression, but it wouldn't exist if the details weren't there. Details are the structure on which the bigger picture is built, and therefore, arguably, even more important. Browning's elaboration on the Nazi slave labor camps made me painfully aware of my apathy for the details. This isn't how it should be. After all, "it's the little things in life." And those "little things" are exactly what I'm going to pay closer attention to from now on.

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September's perspective: gender

HOPE CAIN

Guest Contributor

In the classic romantic comedy of the late '80s, Billy Crystal states this simple barrier to male and female friendships: "What I'm saying is - and this is not a come on in any way shape or form, is that men and women can never be friends because the sex part always gets in the way."

While this social stereotype may fail at other institutions, it seems well enforced at Davidson. The only two acceptable times for girls and guys to mingle here are group projects or in the drunken search for sex or something like it. We may have matured enough to refuse the temptation to cheat on tests but when it comes to interacting with the opposite sex we are still stuck in the awkward middle school stage when girls and guys are things we talk about, not to. All it takes is one glance around Commons to see the division.

"Maybe if we stop cutting each other down and respect each other... we just might start to realize that we don't actually have cooties after all."

A mixed gender lunch is something reserved for the dark side, not the more savvy light side. Girls pack together as if on a trip to the restroom. Sandra is going to need a few girls to support her on her walk to the dessert line after the comments she heard Bob make about Suzie last Tuesday: "She shouldn't be eating dessert, she better turn to the right and go for that salad instead". Think it stops with the dessert line? Wrong. Even in your walk for that overripe orange, you will have to dodge certain tables, lest they rate you and your protective posse on the day you chose to don sweatpants. If you slack a few days in a row you will drop a spot in those brackets you never knew existed. Karen's got the idea down "let's walk around the drink machines, behind the salad bar, and then maybe we'll make it to the dessert line before they notice us". No worries girls, if you've got a good chest or ass and have found a way to show either off today, fixed your hair, and

put on some makeup, some guy may point you out to his buddies and throw out a compliment about how they would bang you.

Girls are not the only victims of Commons slander. Going on four years at Davidson, one girl vocalized one stereotype about the male population at Davidson: "There are just no guys that are good enough for me here". Yes, admittedly we as girls have all thought this at some point or another. In our opinion it is difficult to find guys here that are not of the disrespectful, drunkard, spoiled, money-maker wanna be, momma's boy, typical-just-looking-for-sex-and-sex-only breed. Our typical lunch-time conversations revolve around how good guys have it here, how good we are, and question how they look past our perfection. Obviously we are all smart, pretty, and none of us are fake. So what if we are uptight? At least we aren't easy. We have standards too.

So to the men: just because girls don't want to sleep with you after a few dances at the court does not mean there is something wrong with them. As Meg Ryan's character explains in When Harry Met Sally, "I just didn't want to sleep with you and you had to write it off as a character flaw instead of dealing with the possibility that it might have something to do with you". They may have reasons to be afraid of going back to a drunken boy's room, possibly the horror stories their friends have told them about sexual assault that happened to them in similar situations. (Oh yes, it really does happen here).

Now to the women: guys here are supposed to be the cream of the crop. They got into Davidson, so they are just as smart as you. The 50-50 ratio does not make that big of a difference. Obviously they appreciate you enough to go to a school where they will probably get much less sex, so...throw some of the appreciation back their way. As sad as this realization may be, grad school may not have as good of a selection so appreciate it while you have got it.

Maybe if we stop cutting each other down and respect each other enough to share a meal together every now and then, we just might start to realize that we don't actually have cooties after all.

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