

# PERSPECTIVES

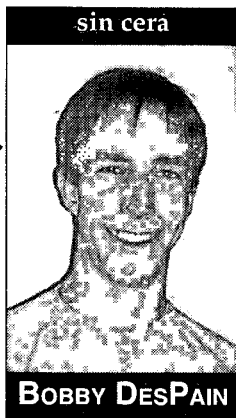
## Staff editorial

Recently, many people around campus have been inquiring as to how they themselves can write for the Davidsonian. In the interest of all those who are willing to write, we would like to take this opportunity to inform our readers of certain guidelines we follow. Each section of the paper necessitates the application of particular criteria. Conflicts of interest most frequently concern the News section, which strives to feature non-biased, informative articles regarding campus and community events. We maintain a principle of not allowing anyone to write about an organization of which they are a part. Granted, this can prove difficult in a school where many students (and accordingly writers) are involved in a variety of activities and organizations. We also do not allow athletes to report on their team's games in Sports, or Arts and Living writers to, for example, review a play in which they perform.

For obvious reasons, our standards regarding the Perspectives section are very different. The articles in this section are opinion pieces and in no way represent the views of The Davidsonian, save for the staff editorial. The intent and purpose of Perspectives is to serve as a forum for Davidson affiliates. As such, we do not actively direct content unless the section is short on submissions. We generally accept anything—as long as it is within good taste. The realms of good taste of largely discretionary, meaning that we publish articles that occasionally we deem acceptable, if debatable (as you may have guessed, The Yowl demands a rather liberal interpretation of respectability). Space constraints mandate a first-come, first-serve basis, with the exception of time-sensitive submissions. We hope for articles that have well-formed, argued and logical opinions. Although articles dealing with non-Davidson topics are certainly welcome, we encourage pieces dealing with issues affecting Davidson students. As always, any reader is welcome to submit a letter to the editor in response to a previously published article.

We hope that all students who have never written anything for us before will be inspired to start contributing, and thank our current writers for the long hours and hard work they already put into this publication.

## Saluting fallen soldiers with M.O.H.



sin cera  
BOBBY DESPAIN

As the United States recognized the ninth anniversary of the Islamic attacks on September 11, the White House announced that it would be awarding two Medals of Honor in the upcoming weeks.

Staff Sgt. Robert J. Miller joined the Army in 2003 and became a famed Green Beret in 2005. As a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Group Airborne Miller conducted two tours of duty in Afghanistan. He distinguished himself immediately and earned two Army Commendation Medals with Valor on his first tour. On January 25, 2008 in the Kunar province, a region covered with American blood, Miller and his team were conducting a combat reconnaissance patrol with the Afghan National Security Force when the enemy mounted an attack from a fortified structure. A quickly called in air strike silenced the enemy, but when the patrol moved in to confirm the kill, the enemy reengaged and intensified their attack. The team captain was hit by the first bullets and immobilized. As the team moved in to carry the captain to safety, Miller took point and single-handedly laid down enough cover fire for the captain to be rescued. Miller took several rounds to the chest, but continued to use his SAW and toss grenades at the enemy. These actions, although ultimately resulting in Miller's death, allowed the rest of the team to take cover, return fire, and eliminate the threat.

Speaking during the memorial ceremony for Staff Sgt. Miller, his task force commander stated Miller "willingly bore the burden of the soldier. He was the epitome of the special forces soldier. He was a warrior among warriors." The nation's highest military award does not do justice for men like Miller. We are forever in his debt as we are of Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta.

The United States Congress has awarded six Medals of Honor in Islamic war against the United States. Miller

will be the seventh and like the others it will be awarded posthumously. Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta will be the first to receive his medal in person from the President.

On the night of October 25, 2007 Giunta, on his second Afghan tour, went above and beyond the call of duty. Giunta's squad was walking single file along a ridge when the air erupted with bullets and RPGs. The squad leader, Sgt. Brennan, was wounded eight times. Giunta was hit twice, but his body armor held strong. Giunta and two other soldiers pulled a fellow soldier to safety and tossed hand grenades to clear a path for two more. Giunta then went back to get Sgt. Brennan. He found two insurgents dragging Brennan away. Giunta chased them down the hill while emptying his magazine. His shots sent one straight to judgment and the other one, wounded, fleeing in the night. Giunta yelled for a medic and a chopper eventually took Brennan to a base for surgery. Brennan with his legs shredded, part of his side blown away, and his lower jaw a bloody pulp, did not survive. However, his family could take comfort in knowing he spent his last breaths surrounded by soldiers and doctors fighting to save him rather than brutalized by a barbaric enemy.

In the midst of 9/11 memories it is important to recognize the strength and bravery of the American spirit. It even burns brighter in the worst of conditions and places. In a world of lying politicians, adulterous athletes, and addicted actors, we can take comfort that some heroes do remain. These men and women in uniform do not get multi-million dollar paydays or the chance to complain about their dressing rooms. They get a sandbagged reinforced hole in the ground and an eighty-pound pack. On a daily basis they display qualities that have all but disappeared from most walks of life. In *War* by Sebastian Junger, Staff Sgt. Giunta says, "I didn't run through fire to do anything heroic or brave; I did what I believe anyone would have done." The rest of us can only hope that is the case.

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## September's perspective: gender

SUNNY LEE  
Perspectives Editor

I have to admit that when I initially volunteered to write this article, I hadn't really put a lot of thought into it. I guess I had figured that gender would be laughably easy to write something insightful about, and that I could belt it out between commercial breaks watching some *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. When I actually sat down to write it out, I realized I had a pretty serious problem—I had no idea what the hell exactly gender was.

I guess I assumed I knew all about it because it's one of those vague encompassing categoricals like "liberal" or "conservative". The kind that expresses a general concept that everyone feels vaguely familiar with, but, when it really comes down to it, no one is entirely sure what it means. When we use the word in everyday speech, we typically conflate it with "sex," the collection of biological factors which indicate being male or female. Along these lines, we also tend to picture gender as existing along a single bipolar dimension, with masculinity on one side and femininity on the other. Mostly we use biological bases to make the majority of our judgments about 'gender' (that person with bumps on their shirt is a girl), and then we flesh those initial judgments out using whatever culturally accepted cues we might be aware of (example - whether or not they like *The Notebook*).

While this is typically the way we think about gender on a day-to-day basis, I think it's a pretty shallow and oversimplified view and doesn't seem to take into account how complex the meaning of gender can be. Constructs of masculinity and femininity change over time, and our understanding of the causal chain

between biology, behavior and gender is still sketchy at best. Gender as we generally understand it is composed of a finite set of those basic elements, such as biological factors, sexual identity, constructs and gender roles. It's the mix of these factors, the combination through the experiences of individuals, that translates into even more subtle nuances, behaviors, and thoughts, which I would argue creates a more complex concept of gender. If we choose to look at gender this way, then it seems clear that gender identity is inextricably entwined with a person's overall identity as an individual, rather than just a piece that can be removed and seen out of context or simplified into a M/F choice.

Something that strikes me is that while we may acknowledge these ambiguities about gender and satirize stereotypes, we largely fail to apply what we purportedly know to our lives. It's easy to talk about the evils of socially institutionalized gender roles in a class about feminism when your grade may or may not depend on it - less so when you're drinking a few beers, watching Monday night football and some dude starts talking about cute girls.

So no, I didn't really have anything really insightful to write (sorry to all my reader). But writing this article did make me reflect on what I know (or thought I knew) about the word gender, something I've never really considered much before. I hope it prods you to check out the new Perspectives group (Contact Jamie, Sarah or Mac at [jahofmeister@davidson.edu](mailto:jahofmeister@davidson.edu), [saceline@davidson.edu](mailto:saceline@davidson.edu) and [magilliland@davidson.edu](mailto:magilliland@davidson.edu), respectively) and join in this month's discussion. Who knows, you might even be able to teach me something for next time.

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