

# SGA president calls for student involvement

I'm glad that we have all come back for this next semester to once again challenge ourselves with all of our brand-new nurture-away-from-school armor (beards and goatees). Along with the New Year's armor and the New Year's classes and the New Year's resolutions come New Year's elections!

This issue of the Davidsonian is coming out right after election sign-ups have ended, but there is still a good and very vital way to be involved with the student body elections (which are coming up next week), and that is by voting.

We are having elections for offices in the Union, the SGA, the Honor Council, important student councils, and the ATC, the group that decides how much money student organizations

should have. Go vote.

Now, elections are all about change, and change is usually good (and always inevitable).

FROM THE DESK OF  
THE SGA PRESIDENT  
Buster Burk

Yesterday we celebrated Dr. King, a man who took charge of making change, and he changed how we live today for so much the better. Last week

I discussed a potentially radical move with a buddy of mine, who really wanted to speak out about something on campus. We discussed the possible negative and positive effects of his actions, and why I bring this up with elections and Dr. King Day is because it's all about wanting change and having initiative.

The people who are going in front of you this week, campaigning and competing for these offices, are people who

are slaves and masters of change, slaves in the way that there is going to be an election whether they want one or not, and masters in that they are throwing themselves into the event of change. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a slave to white supremacy and racism, but made himself a master of his fate by doing nothing but doing.

Now I express this "doing" in a

**"If you think that none of the people represent you or don't stand for what you stand for, take the initiative to do something yourself."**

way that makes it sound easy, and in some respects it is, but it is also the hardest, for it is "to do"; it is "the do." Dr. King brought black Americans closer to equality and changed the world. I'm not trying to draw a parallel be-

tween what these student organizations do, and what Dr. King did, except in the respect that they were and are about change, initiative, and making the world better, more fun, more free.

Take the initiative to vote.

Read up on your candidates in the special issue of the Davidsonian coming out this week. If you think that none of the people represent you or don't

stand for what you stand for, take the initiative to do something yourself. Even if you do think they represent you, still take the initiative, saying "I'd do it better," and do it.

Get involved in a SGA committee

or a Union Board committee. Participate in Reach Out or Service Council programs, and work your way to the top. These positions up for replacement are incredible and lifechanging, and school-changing, and they are what you want them to be. And you are what you want to be.

So vote; respect yourself and the school.

I know I sound like a cheerleader, but I'm leaving this office now, and I only want things to be better, and I'm counting on you to make things better. I leave you with something that a friend of mine sent me about taking the initiative, and hopefully you will.

"Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win the glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, that to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat" (Teddy Roosevelt, 1899).

## Abolishing the Davidson stigma

Well, Martin Luther King, Junior Day came and went. How many of us will remember the seminars and the discussions that took place in the Union? More importantly, how many of us missed the seminars and the discussions that took place in the Union?

Davidson College canceled afternoon classes

on Monday, Jan. 19, so that students and faculty could attend the day's celebrations in the Union. We, the always knowledge-thirsty students, had

the chance to enlighten ourselves and appreciate a pivotal part of United States history. Where were we?

Maybe we were studying for that review tomorrow (probably not - since it's only the second week of classes), maybe we were trying to get ahead in class, or maybe we were using the extra free time to continue the recovery program from last weekend. What is a justifiable excuse for missing such an interesting and beneficial pro-

gram? Is it possible that many of us don't consider the Civil Rights Movement to be an important part

of our lives? Is it possible that we consider it to be something that happened before us, or as Erin Smith said, "something we can thank someone else for doing?" If we think discrimination and segregation is over and done with, we are sadly mistaken. One only needs to open his or her eyes and take a look at this campus.

Why can't Davidson attract more minorities? The small number of minorities on campus reflects an attitude of complacency and a willingness to let the Davidson stigma prevail. Could it be due to the fact that we appear to be a school for upper-middle class, J. Crew-clad, Caucasian students?

In the Union, I attended a seminar given by Dr. Sally McMillen entitled "Women in the Civil Rights Movement." Dr. McMillen asked the group (of about 50) if we think we are moving forward or backward in relation to the '50s and '60s. Many students felt that we are not moving backward, but instead, we are not moving at all. Maybe we take the Civil Rights Movement for granted, and we are simply reaping the benefits. I have to wonder if our generation would have the courage and the determination to lead a similar movement, could we be leaders like Dr. King and Rosa Parks?

Some might say that there's no need for such enthusiasm, because everything is just fine. Before I attended Dr. Russ Snapp's and Dr. Barbara Ballard's seminar entitled "RACE: Shaping Our Perceptions of Ourselves and Others," I might

have agreed with this complacent attitude. However, during the discussion portion of this seminar, more than a few Davidson students said that they felt uncomfortable being a minority on this campus.

Many African-American students said that they think of themselves as being African-American before they think of themselves as being simply American. Does it also follow that they think of themselves as African-American students at Davidson College, as opposed to thinking of themselves as Davidson College students? If we, as students, can't think of ourselves as being equal on this campus then how can we pretend that we don't have a problem with diversity and equality?

As students, we always hear about the need to ignore the color of people's skin and search for their character. Since elementary school, we have been taught about the good of equality and the evil of discrimination. Yet, in reality, we still have trouble applying these classroom lessons. The only way we will remember and utilize these lessons is through extra effort.

Bit by bit, each seminar, lecture, and celebration reminds us for an hour, a day, or a week that we still haven't fully matured in our views toward racism and equality. We are reminded that even Davidson College is not a perfect place, but if we engage ourselves in thinking about the problems of discrimination and racism, we may find that we grow more tolerant and more wise, and this will benefit everyone on campus.

## Blame it on the rain

It occurred to me just the other day that I am running desperately low on excuses. So many people around me seem prepared to move on with their lives after they graduate, whether it be law school, teaching, painting, banking, or consulting. Hell, a young woman living next door to me has already accepted

a great job in Memphis.

One of my roommates is going into the army. Another is going to grad school in Europe. And then there's my sorry self in a conference at the Career Services Office thinking, "Gee, I bet I could make a lot of money as a crack dealer."

Believe me, I have diligently tried to reason my strange incapacity to perceive any sort of a career calling. My attempts at rationalization, however, often end up with the "I guess I'm just not smart enough" response, but that sort of self-pity only leads me toward an unbearable state of depression — a condition that results when I approach a precipice otherwise known as the truth. I'd rather not go there.

And so here I am, like the little boy whose homework was eaten by a dog, racking my brain for a means to justify 1) my lack of direction and 2) the mere thought of wanting to be a crack dealer.

Well, I think I have found the answer. At first, it may be somewhat surprising, but I assure you it will all make sense by the time I am finished. I have decided that nobody could ever disagree that my problems are due to none other than El Niño. That's right, I am worthless because of El Niño and for no other reason at all. Like the fires in Malaysia, the ice storms in Maine, the typhoons in Siberia, and the gangrene epidemics in Peru, my unbearable state of immobility can be attributed to a seasonal warming of the world's ocean currents. Makes perfect sense

to me.

And so the next time my parents call, asking what I am going to do with my life, I will tell them that I shall remain undecided until the waters have cooled. When they laugh at me, I'll tell them that it's not nice to mock El Niño. I'll warn my parents that he could strike them at any time, for El Niño is capable of many magical, yet potentially dangerous things, among them being the uncanny ability to lure even the noblest of men to the undesirable occupation of crack dealer. I'll have countless newspaper and magazine articles to prove it. That will shut them up.

Now that I think about it, this El Niño thing could turn out to be an extremely economical tool. Instead of the taking the GREs, I'll send a letter to graduate schools informing them that I was unable to take the test because El Niño broke every last one of my No. 2 pencils. How could they possibly argue with such irrefutable logic? I amaze even myself.

Even now I am starting to realize the full potential of this phenomenon. I mean, this could be used by any person in any given dilemma. Hugh Grant could have benefitted greatly from my discovery, for Divine Brown (I am absolutely sure of it) was really El Niño dressed like a prostitute. He's tricky like that sometimes, the little devil.

What about Black Monday, one of the biggest stock market crashes of all time? That was El Niño, too. He invested — heavily I might add — in artichokes, grain, toilet paper, lead, Apple, and Toyota, a portfolio that drove the economic world to its knees. Only El Niño could do such a thing.

Take Chris Farley, for instance. How did he die? It was the fatal mixture of alcohol, cocaine, and just a touch of El Niño. Such a concoction would kill any man.

I conclude this article by giving the power of El Niño to you. Be extremely delicate with him, I warn you. Use him to your advantage, but do so with discretion. It takes a wise man to rationalize the irrational. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go sell some crack...

STUDENT OPINIONS

Jenny Haggood

STUDENT COLUMN

Britton Taylor

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The tale of a stranded passenger

To the Editor:

When people ask me how I manage without a car in a town as small as Davidson, I tell them that Davidson provides transportation via the Vamanos Van for those car-less students who dare to venture off campus for an evening away from studying. Not having a car has not bothered me thus far, because I know that there is always something I can do on campus during the weekend. However, I decided that I would enjoy going to the movie theater Saturday night. My friends and I decided to rely on the Vamanos Van, since we knew it would provide our transportation at a minimal fee and that it would be there to pick us up after the movie — or so we thought. Upon disembarking the Van, we told our driver what time to come back for us after the movie. The driver said that she would advise the driver of the next shift of our plans. When it became 11:45 and the Vamanos Van had yet to arrive, my friends and I resorted to calling my roommate and disrupting her plans so she could come pick us up. Perhaps what is most amusing about this episode is that my roommate had seen the Van sitting outside Richardson about the time it should have been picking us up. What happened? Was it a communication problem? Are the drivers of the Vamanos Van so irresponsible that they cannot remember who they drop off and who they are supposed to return for later?

One of the movie theater employees informed me that he had taken Davidson students back to Davidson on a previous weekend because the Vamanos Van had forgotten them, too. I do not think that the Vamanos Van is doing its job efficiently. Perhaps drivers need to develop a system of writing down whom they drop off so they can return these transportationless people back to Davidson. How can students rely on a service that is so unpredictable? Although our driver told us who to call if we had a problem, nobody answered when we called his room. Maybe the Van needs a car phone so stranded students can call and remind the driver to come get them. Maybe the Vamanos Van program needs some revamping.

This is definitely an issue that needs to be addressed. I do not plan on using the Vamanos Van again, and I hope that those who continue to use this service will have better luck and a more enjoyable evening than we did.

Sincerely,  
Lee Ann Petty '01