

The Davidsonian

ALENDA LUX UBI ORTA LIBERTAS

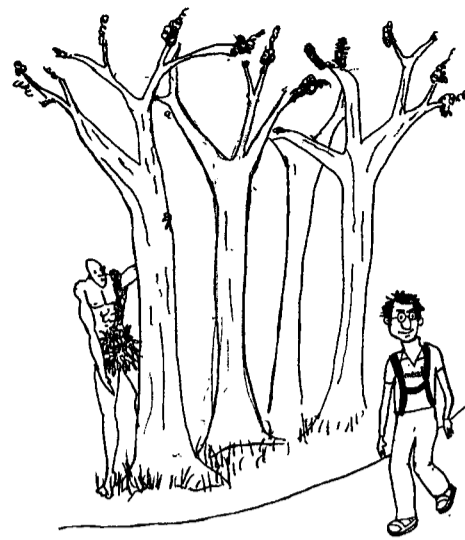
<i>News Editors</i> JESSICA GOODSON NARESH NAGELLA	<i>Opinions Editors</i> KRISTEN BARTCH DAVID SANTSCHI	<i>Arts & Living Editors</i> WESLEY GOLDSBERRY CARRIE MORRIS
<i>Layout Editor</i> RANDY SKATTUM	<i>Sports Editor</i> JAY CANTRELL	<i>Web Page Manager</i> HENDI FINK
<i>Photo Editor</i> ANNA JUDY	<i>Advertising Managers</i> SCOTT REEDER MICHELLE BOUGDANOS DAVID JOHNSTON	<i>Business Manager</i> CHLOE BROOKE
<i>Copy Editors</i> WHITNEY BLAKE ANNA ERIKSSON	<i>Circulation Managers</i> CHLOE BROOKE MCNEIL CARSWELL	
<i>Editor in Chief</i> MICHAEL J. KRUSE	<i>Associate Editor</i> MATTHEW EIRICH	

Founded in 1914

"The South's Foremost College Weekly"

Read The Davidsonian on the Internet at

<http://www.davidson.edu/student/organizations/davidsonian/davidsonian.html>



Larry Nearfoot heard the rumors of a "Party Monster" who roamed campus at night, but he never considered that this midnight trip to the library would change his life forever.

Cartoon by Alan Hyder

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poll was flawed, unscientific

To the Editor:

I read with considerable interest the Davidsonian's Sept. 23 coverage of the Ryan Gist trial, but I'm dismayed at the unfortunate and arguably irresponsible use of the poll of Davidson students.

Readers might conclude that the survey represents the views of the Davidson student body, especially given the presentation of the date in a front page story and in two tables on page 5, each of which given a "scientific" precision normally associated with reputable surveys of randomly selected samples within a population.

This misperception is encouraged further by the large number of respondents. Readers might conclude that a sample of 302 students in a relatively small population of about 1,600 students is representative of the student body as a whole.

A careful reader would not, however, that the sample methodology does not conform to any occupied standard of survey design. The poll was apparently "conducted in the Union and around-campus Wednesday and Thursday."

It is difficult even to list the number of flaws in this methodology since we know so little about how the survey was done, but it seems clear that self-selection biases, at the least, create a sample that is unrepresentative of the student population as a whole.

Should the Davidsonian therefore not conduct such "unscientific" surveys? No — that is not the point, for such polling may, under some circumstances, offer intriguing insights into what some students are thinking.

But, at a minimum, the Davidsonian should tell its readers how a survey was conducted, and offer an unambiguous disclaimer when the poll is not generalizable to the entire student body — as this survey clearly was not.

To create the impression that a survey accurately represents the views of the student body — whether the editors intended to create that impression or not — is irresponsible, especially when the survey concerns issues of real importance to the life of the College.

Tom Kazee
Professor of Political Science

An Inaugural thank you

To the Editor:

My thanks to all of the wonderful Davidsonian staff for its splendid coverage of the Inauguration of President Vagt.

You covered history-in-the-making at Davidsonian in a way which made us all proud, and reminded us of not only the specialness of the day, but also of our good fortune to be a member of the Davidson College family.

Leland M. Park '63
Library Directory
Chairman of the Inaugural Committee

Constructively critical, Zac set standard

I didn't know Zac Lacy very well, a fact which now seems like a terrible mistake. But I always admired the professional, constructive public persona he displayed during his time as the editor of *Libertas* and in his other activities.

As I see it, there is a large group of students who dislike the same things about Davidson that Zac did, but rather than affecting a disinterested and apathetic attitude as so many do, Zac tried to make Davidson better from the inside.

He spoke on panels, served on Union projects — including operating 21-year-old night, something for which I will be eternally grateful — and edited *Libertas* with great nuance, sensitivity and professional acumen.

What always impressed me when I saw Zac in these different public capacities was how he blended casualness and seriousness, a great sense of humor and razorsharp analysis. He always seemed to be having fun, enjoying being involved, recognizing that by helping to direct the process he was creating a better result.

Three specific instances from last semester come to mind as I write this. First, when FLAG's Sexuality Forum failed to happen on its original date, Zac agreed to sit on the panel for the rescheduled date. The continuation of the dialogue, the process of reconciling differences through an exchange of ideas, was paramount, and Zac would not let it stop.

And he did not "go negative," as our politicians say, but gave honest answers about being gay at Davidson, which were a mix of bitter and sweet experiences. He was not consumed by the institutional obstacles and personal hatred he found along the way.

Second, last semester Zac wrote a piece for *Libertas*, "Seven Davidson Myths." It stands as the most sensitive and persuasive evaluation of the Davidson social scene I have ever read. Perhaps it will seem redundant at this point to say that, while the piece was critical of several sacred Davidson institutions, it was never mean-spirited or cruel. He intermingled criticisms and solutions into a blue-print to solve all of the problems he saw.

And third, in his last editorial, he found himself fighting for "the very existence" of *Libertas* and still did not go negative. Considering his opponent, Zac would have had ample precedent, if not actual right, to be nasty, but he did not. As he wrote: "But I have no choice here but to claw tooth and nail to defend the very existence and importance of a publication like *Libertas*, somehow without being sappy, melodramatic, masturbatory, or raucously angry. I will choose an approach based on fact."

He wanted to write on a host of other subjects which would have been far more fruitful than the one that was forced onto him: "I wanted to make some grandiloquent speech about the trials and tribulations of producing a student publication at Davidson, or about the plight of publication staffs at this school, or student apathy, rampant anti-intellectualism, pasts, futures, the present."

In retrospect, it is regrettable that we did not have the opportunity to benefit from his thoughts on these other topics.

This is the last edition of the Davidsonian in which my name will appear in the staff box. The demands of a thesis call me away from what has been my primary extracurricular time commitment since freshman year.

And as I reflect on the things I have done well and the things I have done poorly in my time as an editor, I think a good standard for judgement would be Zac's: to write critically and constructively; to have as one's goal making things better, and not more antagonistic; to recognize the process as an integral part of the result.

Zac Lacy raised the bar for campus media and their relations to this contradicted, conflicted college.

I hope we can always proceed with the same dignity and insight he did. For this example, we are all indebted to Zac.

Matthew Eirich

To submit letters to the editor

Submit all letters to the Davidsonian office on the third floor of the Union by Thursday at 6 p.m. Or e-mail any submissions to Editor in Chief Michael Kruse at mikruse@davidson.edu.

Please turn in any submissions on a Macintosh-formatted disk, preferably in WordPerfect. Keep all submissions under 400 words.

The editors reserve the right to cut and otherwise adjust submissions as space requirements mandate.