

Change — at Davidson and beyond

STAFF EDITORIAL

Freshman Orientation is, to put it lightly, an adjustment period. The changes facing the Class of 2016 are daunting. For many students arriving on campus this week, the prospect of living away from home, taking challenging courses and braving a communal bathroom is understandably terrifying. In this, our Orientation Issue, you'll see that the Davidsonian is also facing an adjustment period, and tackling our own changes.

The biggest change accompanying this issue is our massive expansion in readership. The Davidsonian exists to serve the Davidson College community, a duty we will try to fulfill for the next nine months. We believe, however, that the scope of the college community goes well beyond the boundaries of Exit 30. With new capabilities and a talented team of writers, photographers and technicians, The Davidsonian wants to not only serve Davidsonians on campus but to bring Davidson to our 25,000 alumni around the world.

If you follow our website, www.davidsonian.com, you've seen that we've already expanded our online content to include forums on major issues. Our website has served as the medium for the college community to discuss topics like health care, gun control and stereotypes. As the semester begins, we will continue to host forums for these conversations online, in print and in live Talk Back events. A number of issues will come to a head this year, including the degree to which Presbyterianism should be emphasized in the search for Davidson's president. The Davidsonian would like to serve as a hub for our community's nuanced perspectives on this and other pressing issues.

Another change you may notice in this issue is the "Living Davidson" section, formerly "Arts and Living." In the spirit of bringing the college experience to our former classmates, we've reworked the Arts and Living section to reflect the cultural trends and events affecting the student body. The Living Davidson section should serve as a live feed of sorts, to provide a window into what's happening at Davidson. We hope readers will look at Living Davidson as their campus away from campus.

The Davidsonian, a campus institution since 1914, has undergone innumerable changes in the last century. We, the 136th and 137th editors of the Davidsonian, see it as a true hub for college news: from theater productions to student government meeting minutes, from basketball round-ups to a place for thoughtful debate. Whether in print or online, the Davidsonian should be the college community's source for all news distinctly Davidson.

If today was your first day at Davidson College or your thousandth, we hope that we'll be able to change together, and that you'll join us for the 2012-2013 academic year. It's going to be quite a ride.

Sincerely,
Sarah Welty and Scott Matthews, #136 and #137

The Davidsonian

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Colorful

"When fast food options are abundant, why support one that isolates individuals"

Alex Hauer

"Be loud/ Let your colors show." When the Avett Brothers wrote that, I doubt they intended it to be a catchphrase for gay pride and expression. But, there are many ways to interpret a text. Recently a lot of people have been letting their colors show, so I thought I would show you mine. But, first a little background information.

As we all know, the rainbow flag has become ubiquitous with gay pride. Although the gay community does not have a monopoly on the rainbow (Italians use it as a symbol of peace; Peruvians and Bolivians to represent their Incan ancestors) it has become synonymous with the gay rights movement. So, when the Avett Brothers tell their listeners to let their colors show, I can't help but think of the ROYGBV.

Recently I have been thinking about gay rights more than usual. Our country has found ourselves caught in the middle of a culture war disguised as a discussion of "civil rights" and "Christian values." Dan Cathy is 100% entitled to his own opinions, as is everyone else. That is not what disturbs me in this issue (though it does disturb me in general). What is more unsettling is the fact that the customers' patronage is going to fund these opinions, despite what their personal beliefs might be. Chick-fil-A's charitable arm WinShape Foundation over the past few years has donated money to a slew of anti-gay foundations including Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, and Exodus International.

While it is a travesty that there are people, now the minority, who believe the gay community is not worthy to marry, the injustices committed by these groups are much graver. For example, the Family Research Council (FRC) released a press brief in 2009 stating that they believed anti-gay hate crime legislation was an encroachment on the free speech of American citizens, and specifically pastors. As recently as 2010, there was a quote on FRC's website that read: "While activists like to claim that pedophilia is a completely distinct orientation from homosexuality, evidence shows a disproportionate overlap between the two... It is a homosexual problem." That is not only completely inaccurate, but incredibly disturbing. Focus on the Family (FoF) believes that it is immoral for Americans to "seek legitimization" of gay rights. It is also founded on the principles of a man who publicly announced: "Communities do not let prostitutes, pedophiles, voyeurs, adulterers and those who sexually prefer animals to publicly celebrate their lifestyle, so why should homosexuals get such privileges?"

Exodus International, on the other hand, has made great strides in the recent year. Before 2012 they advocated and practiced the harmful, and degrading, "ex-gay therapy" which seeks to help people reorient their homosexuality. [The Pan American Health Organization stated in May that ex-gay therapy is not only unfounded, but causes a serious threat to the health and well-being of an affected person.] However in June of 2012, the president of Exodus lead a conference denouncing the junk science. The organization does still uphold the idea that homosexuality is an unnatural flaw though, which can be just as harmful as any therapy.

These issues, which are not mutually exclusive to each organization I might add, far exceed the fight for marriage equality. These are full-on fronts on the idea of basic human equality. What more, in 2010, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) designated the Family Research Council as a "hate-group." Other

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organizations designated as hate-groups by SPLC include Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi, Holocaust denial, and black separatist groups. Clearly, I take it as an issue that Chick-fil-A uses a portion of their revenue stream to fund these groups. Yes, Chick-fil-A, its patrons, is free to do what they please with their money (with limited restrictions). But, just because you are free to do something, doesn't mean you should.

Turning my attention to Davidson, the Academic Tax Credit funds are allocated to each organization for their use. These funds are comprised of a certain percentage of each student's tuition that means that regardless of your sexual orientation or belief, a group decides they want to buy Chick-fil-A for an event, so what Union Board used to do for After Midnight, a portion of tuition is going to that transaction. As someone who is adamantly opposed to Chick-fil-A's WinShape Foundation charitable donations, I think this is unjust of our college to allow this to occur. Not only goes against my own principles, but also is disrespectful as my own money is being used to fund causes that directly infringe my rights. That just doesn't seem fair. I am glad to hear that the Union Board has decided to cut their ties, for the time being, from Chick-fil-A for the After Midnight program. I think that was a wise and responsible step.

Inequality is rampant, but Chick-fil-A has garnered so much attention because it is popular, visible, and so easily avoided. It has become an idol of bigotry, as now it is hard not to equate continued patronage with an affirmation of the organizations' beliefs.

That may seem like an unfair assumption, but when you compare equally delectable chicken sandwiches at Tenders, Wendy's, and Schippers, etc, it is not unreasonable. Jesse Bering of Slate.com through thousands of tweets, found thousands of examples of how Chick-fil-A had become a beacon of the anti-gay movement. I cannot and would not repeat those tweets here, but if you want to read the tweets she highlights, you can read the entire article, "The Prideful, Arrogant President of Chick-fil-A." Unfortunately, this is surely not the intention of every customer, but when you enter one of the chains nowadays, you must know where your money is going.

So, if I were to see Chick-fil-A on my campus, in my community that has become a home, I would not be able to establish a link between the restaurant and this hate. Uncomfortable and I would not even begin to describe my feelings. What more, it is disheartening how easily some people write off homophobia as a "personal belief." No person, regardless of his or her personal identifiers, should be classified as inferior. No perspective, regardless of support or reasoning, has the right to subjugate a man/woman. That is why this issue of Chick-fil-A for me, and for millions of other people like me (and unlike me), has become a national issue. Seeing all those people celebrating Chick-fil-A appreciation Day affirmed the horrible idea that there are people in our country who discriminate against people solely for their sexual orientation. It is nonsensical. At a time when fast food options are overly abundant, why give patronage to one restaurant that chooses to isolate individuals, divide communities, and propagate hate?

The aptly named band Grouplove also advocate, "If the only reason you have/ no need to be sad." So, I am not sad to express my sexual orientation and defend my rights. The fervor around Chick-fil-A is about much more than just the right to eat chicken, the right to express one's opinion, or the rights of government officials. It is about more basic rights: human rights. And through it all, it is unfortunate to see how "bigot" can be "explained;" "bigot" can even be "excused;" but "faggot" cannot.

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A step in the right direction

"Chick-fil-A may not have fired the gun, but they paid for it. Let's stop giving them bullets"

Matt Gilbride

I think people keep misunderstanding what it is the students at Davidson are trying to do. We aren't "banning" Chick-fil-A, they were never here to be banned in the first place. They were simply one restaurant selected to cater a specific student event, and the fact that Chick-fil-A was served is entirely contingent. As such, students are not entitled to having Chick-fil-A served at these events. In fact, we could stop serving Chick-fil-A for any reason at all (excluding this one), and the only controversy would be "who are we replacing them with". What is occurring is an exploration of a choice to be made by the students of a private institution. The choice is whether or not we as a student body want to continue tacitly consenting to Chick-fil-A using profits (made off of our students) in order to fund organizations and groups actively influencing the legal and political sphere for the implementation of a discriminatory world view.

Chick-fil-A's statement; "The Chick-fil-A culture and tradition in our restaurants is to treat every person with honor, dignity and respect regardless of their belief, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender. We will continue this tradition in the over 1,000 restaurants run by independent owner/operators. Going forward, our intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena.", cannot be understood anything other than a blatant lie if the company continues to donate portions of its profits to organizations who are attempting to influence the policy debate in the government and political arena. Chick-fil-A may not have fired the gun, but they paid for it. Let's stop giving them the bullets.

Additionally, I hope that this sort of "smart consumerism" comes a new norm, and people who have complaints about Chick-fil-A and vocalize their opinions about it continue to do so for other companies who's actions violate abuses of various kinds (child labor, environmental pollution, etc.). In the wake of Citizens United ruling, we may not be able to stop big corporations from spending their money for particular causes, but we can remember that it is our money that fuels them.

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