

Gay marriages don't have to lack sanctity

BY BRENT BYARS
Guest Columnist

In the third century in Rome, there was a priest named Valentine. As the story goes, Emperor Claudius II was having difficulty raising an army to support his unpopular military campaigns. He knew that single men were more likely to join than those encumbered by romantic entanglements. Believing that he could decree an end to love, Claudius the Cruel cancelled all marriages and engagements in the city.

Valentine knew that what Claudius was doing was wrong; he knew people would fall in love no matter what the Emperor legislated. So he continued to marry men and women in secret, bringing sets of young lovers into secluded passageways or rooms and mumbling the wedding rites.

Claudius discovered what Valentine was doing and sentenced the priest to be stoned and beheaded. While in jail, Valentine fell in love with the jailkeeper's daughter. Though the daughter was blind, on the day of his death Valentine sent his lover a card. It read, "From your Valentine."

If you believe in miracles, you can believe that the power of Valentine's love brought back the young woman's sight, that the very first Valentine Day card was the first thing she saw.

This Valentine's Day, our own Emperor embarked on an attempt to legislate love. But he's not defending Rome or its possessions from invasion; he's "defending" marriage from "activist judges" and "liberalism." He's not trying to raise an army of dedicated soldiers; he's rallying the troops of oppres-

sion and extremism. If need be, he's going to use the Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman, to "codify that."

The fight for gay rights isn't about compromising the "sanctity of marriage." Marriage is not an institution that needs "preservation" from hordes intent on anarchy. Words like these are religiously motivated and don't belong in jurisprudence.

The people fighting for the right to marry their loved ones aren't cultural crusaders or social anarchists, but highly conservative people. Most care less about recognition than they do about the protections marriage affords: inheriting the home you share with your spouse, raising children together, and visiting your loved one in the hospital.

Our Emperor is set on cultural crusades, while real people just want to get on with their lives.

I wish I could be a modern-day Valentine. I would take couples to dark passages and candlelit rooms, have them exchange rings from Cracker Jack boxes and tell them they could start taking two deductions on their taxes. Of course, I may not need to since the mayor of San Francisco has upended state law and is marrying gay people in the lobby of City Hall.

I don't know if I will ever end up in City Hall. But one day, I just might find someone with whom I can navigate this unpredictable life and strive towards the elusive eternal. I want to be able to marry him. I want to know that the law won't discriminate against our desire to share a home or children. That's my view of family values.

So Mr. Bush: codify that.

Primary fervor strangely absent

To many Davidsonians, politics may be a boring topic involving nothing more than the over-hyped rhetorical give-and-take between a pack of sleaze balls whose illicit private lives contradict public lives of supposedly idealistic "social service." Indeed, politics can sometimes be reduced to such generalities. But during primary season, such political indifference is especially dangerous. To be particularly (but not unnecessarily) dramatic, it is a rejection of every citizen's responsibility towards furthering and protecting our fragile democracy.



ZACH WILLIAMS

The Davidson "bubble" has shown yet another of its negative impacts on the minds of this campus's students. There has been virtually no activity on campus concerning one of this country's most volatile political seasons: the primaries. Howard Dean, largely known as the one time hero of internet-obsessed college students across the country, has fallen disastrously from his front-runner position without any public concern from the Davidson community.

We've all seen the stats from the past few years. This campus is supposedly divided equally between Republicans and Democrats. And yet, if it weren't for a few grumblings in the Libertas, an outside observer of the student body might think Davidson was either one of the most apathetic political populations among colleges in this country, or one of the most conservative.

C'mon liberals! I know you're out there. Show your face and make some noise. This perspectives page is jammed with articles promoting the Republican party line every week. Does anyone like John Kerry? Does anyone care that he might be destroyed by an intern catastrophe akin to Clinton's? Who even is John Kerry anyways?

C'mon liberals! Show your face.

For Democrats, it is an understatement to say that there is a lot riding on this election. A recent article in The New Yorker briefly pointed out what the next four years might look like if the Dem's screw up this November: "George Bush with no concern about re-election, a filibuster-proof Senate, a G.O.P. able to raise a billion dollars a year, packed courts, government shrunk to whatever level they like, gerrymandered districts." In other words, the next four years could be a dream-come-true for the pro-globalization capitalist with a neo-conservative set of international ideals and a disliking for both abortion and gay marriages.

And you're telling me you couldn't care less? If it weren't for the daily New York Times available in the Union and dorm rooms, this campus would be almost completely in the dark in regards to national events happening outside the confines of I-77 exits 25 through 36.

It's really kind of sad. The well-being of our democracy depends on the educated, on the intellectuals of our society (that's us everyone) to make the informed vote that is demanded of us come this November (that's when the presidential election happens).

Hopefully, next fall students will begin to take a vested interest in the future of our country and, for that matter, the future of the world order.

Outsourcing works: more people win

BY RICHARD GUYER
Staff Columnist

In recent months, the public has become increasingly worried about American jobs heading overseas. There are many reasons for this - steel tariffs, the farm bill, immigration debates, and our current "jobless" recovery. Unfortunately, the rising concern over outsourcing could severely hamper the global economy if policymakers revert to protectionism.

Outsourcing occurs when American companies shift jobs to a destination overseas to cut production costs. The result is a product of similar quality at a considerably lower price to the American consumer. A related topic is American companies being undersold by foreign competition, and hence forced to close shop. For now, let's deal only with the outsourcing issue.

Opponents of outsourcing - who also tend to be allies of protectionism and/or anti-globalization types - cry foul at the loss of American jobs that inevitably results. Jobs are not the only concern of protectionists, however. Some claim pity for workers in Belize and Calcutta, who work long hours for low wages relative to unionized Americans. Others simply seem to think that capitalism is the root of all evil; since trade is a manifestation of capitalism (some might argue it is the *definition* thereof), it is bad.

Some seem to think that any profit-maximizing decision made by corporate America is wrong, and so impulsively oppose job outsourcing.

There are some problems with these arguments. The space here is insufficient to investigate them all in detail, but a basic analysis can be undertaken. If you've taken Common Sense 101, what follows should make sense; if you've had Econ 101,

it'll be second nature.

When a firm chooses whether to send jobs overseas or not, it has one consideration - the bottom line. For simplicity's sake, let's say our company makes something virtually everyone consumes; we'll say its cola. If people in India are willing to bottle sodas for half the price as people in Minnesota, the rational CEO is likely to shift some jobs (for ease, assume transportation is free; assuming otherwise does not seriously alter the situation).

The most obvious result is the loss of 500 American jobs; this part of the story also makes a better headline than "PepsiCo's Profits Rise in 3rd Qtr." and so tends to get greater media exposure. The people of India also have no congressman, so Joe Representative doesn't rush to introduce a bill for them.

Although CNN and Joe Rep's press secretary give a different impression, everybody except those 500 laid-off workers is better off. If you don't believe this, consider the broader picture.

Once the company has shifted part of its operations to the Eastern Hemisphere, 299,999,500 (out of 300,000,000) Americans have greater purchasing power, because they can buy the same basket of goods they used to consume for less money. PepsiCo is happy because it is making more money, and PepsiCo's shareholders are happy because they are earning more dividends. Also, 500 Indians are happy because they have jobs.

In other words, there appear to be more winners than losers as a result of this outsourcing.

That's all for now, but more columns on this topic may be forthcoming. Until next time, remember: most international trade helps society more than it hurts. It wouldn't be so popular otherwise!

Value of pornography not static; depends on personal ethics

BY TIM KELLEY
Guest Columnist

I'm a feminist and I watch porn. By feminist, I mean that I think that everyone should have equal rights (human, social, economic) regardless of what sex they are. Just because I don't agree with anti-pornography feminists doesn't mean I'm not a feminist. How many politicians out there agree with every stance or policy their party maintains?

The Libertas was on the right track when Sterling Rozear mentioned pro-porn feminists. They fall under the category of pro-sex feminists. These feminists are for pornography and against censorship. Censoring pornography undercuts efforts to strive for equality - women can be sexual beings just like men.

Betty Friedan said that the "current move to introduce censorship in the United States in the guise of suppressing pornography is extremely dangerous to women." Nadine Strossen, pro-sex feminist author and president of the ACLU agrees, "Given that there is an inevitable subjectivity, that no two people are going to agree on what is liberating versus degrading, we necessarily hand over to whoever is enforcing the law an enormous discretionary power."

What one person finds degrading another may find invigorating.

Explicit material has always been controversial, and enacting a law to regulate it would be no different than the laws used to ban James Joyce's "Ulysses" in the 1930s, or the laws used to arrest Margaret Sanger and Emma Goldman for distributing information to lower class women concerning birth control.

If you agree that sex and sexual pleasure are an intrinsic part of being human, then you'll agree that pornography's effect, to titillate, is just as acceptable as mainstream movies and literature intent to produce other human emotions such as sadness or joy. All pornography does is stir up existing instincts. I think America is too sexually repressed.

What one person find degrading another may find invigorating... Porn is not going away

Pornography can be used as a tool to teach men and women about sex. Too many women today reach adulthood without ever experiencing an orgasm, be it through sex or masturbation. Pornography can even be an outlet through which couples open up a line of communication regarding their own sex life.

Porn should not be regulated. If you have a problem with it, voice your opinion or have a penetrating intellectual conversa-

tion with a friend, but don't discourage others from making their own choices.

Some interesting facts and ideas to consider:

-Men are objectified in porn films more than women. You often see women's faces and entire bodies while men are reduced to one single body part.

-Men, just like women, feel inadequate when comparing themselves to porn stars. Tanned, toned muscles and 12-inch "shafts of manhood" would make anyone feel deficient.

-Singapore, which strictly restricts pornography, has higher rates of rape than does Sweden, where laws regarding pornography are more lax than in the U.S.

-The adult film industry is one of the few where women make more money than their male counterparts and get to call the shots.

-Pornography does not promote rape or violence towards women. The 1980s Meese Commission's report, often cited by those proposing this argument, is not based on experimental evidence but rather on anecdotal experiences.

-Porn is not going away.

According to 60 Minutes, in 2002 alone, over 11,000 movies were made employing an estimated 20,000 people and the American public spent over \$10 billion on adult entertainment.

Porn isn't smut. Everyone should have the right to determine for themselves what is obscene or not.