

Fixing the serious flaw

STAFF EDITORIAL

On Monday night, *The Davidsonian* hosted our first talkback of the semester on Davidson's Drinking Culture. The students, faculty and administrators who gathered in the 900 Room on Monday were asked to take part in an anonymous survey, and what they shared was, to put it simply, stunning.

Of the roughly 60 students in the room, eight respondents indicated a sexual assault related experience as an incident that discouraged him or her from drinking. Taking our survey as a representative sample of Davidson's student population, the data demonstrates a serious flaw in our social culture.

Monday's talkback was one of many campus dialogues on the subject of alcohol use, but few of those conversations have acknowledged this terrifying aspect of Davidson's drinking culture. While some students at the talkback expressed satisfaction with the campus drinking and social life as is, it's impossible to ignore the prevalence of sexual assault as a glaring problem in our current system. No amount of sexual assault is acceptable, and our campus' relationship with alcohol will continue to be deeply flawed until we eliminate assault from our drinking culture.

Sexual misconduct is one of many symptoms of a drinking culture without consequences. We know everybody likes to have a good time and blow off steam. We, too, like to have a good time, but as several students said at the talkback, drinking on campus should be a matter of personal responsibility. While the Honor Code and Code of Responsibility reign supreme up the hill during the day, nothing's getting pledged at a court party.

Students who binge drink see few consequences for their actions. If a student, like one of Monday's survey respondents, defecates down the length of his or her freshman hall, that student will not be responsible for cleaning up the mess. Nor will that student see legal action for drinking underage. While the consequences of cheating on an exam or essay are clear, students' actions down the hill seem to take place in a moral vacuum. Campus police are expected to look the other way if a gaggle of first year students stumble home at 2 AM. If a drunk, belligerent student smashes a window, he or she definitely won't be expected to fix it.

So what can be done about our consequence-free drinking culture? One senior student at Monday's talkback had an interesting suggestion: more arrests. That's one opinion and we want more. This discussion is not over and we feel that we are still a long way from solving it. We want to hear your ideas: talk with your hallmates or roommates and share your ideas. We're Davidson students: we're the ones best equipped to fix this broken system, and we're the ones who should be trying to change it now. Right now.

On Bibles and Blackness

Cidney Holliday

During Black History Month, Davidson will host a lecturer that I will be thrilled to see. Professor Angela Davis will be the 2012-2013 Wearn Lecturer. Davis is the Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is well known for her work and activism during the Civil Rights movement in the US- if not for her iconic 'fro. Contemporarily, she has not abandoned the Civil Rights that have not been met, like feminist rights and the prison system complex in the US. She is history.

On my Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day I was fortunate enough to watch history being made. The Inauguration was set to occur at noon, and as I watched Michelle Obama hold the Bible and President Obama hold his hand, repeating the words securing his position as president for his second term, I knew this was something I could tell my grandchildren.

News outlets online highlighted a different significance, though. While browsing through the Internet, I came across an emotionally fueled interview from Dr. Cornell West. He was speaking about his "blood boiling" because Obama was swearing in on both President Lincoln's Bible and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Bible.

His interview was on the "Smiley and West" radio show on CBS with Tavis Smiley. He expressed how he felt uncomfortable with the action because "you don't use [Kings] prophetic fire in a moment of presidential pageantry." He also expressed: "you don't play with Martin Luther King and you don't play with his people."

He used terms like "tainted" when describing the swearing in ceremony. He felt that Obama was not right for using King's Bible because there is so much that Obama is controlling that King would not approve of. But I know that I am Dr. King's and President Obama's people. I am an example of strives that have been made and are still being made. The symbolism of the Bible used made sense to me. These facts made me proud to understand and appreciate the representation.

Obama's second inauguration was a momentous occasion for more than the previous owner of the Bible that was

used. Obama is a representation that a change has occurred although there is still much to be done. The parallel between the first 'black' president's second term inauguration day dedicated to one the most well-known Civil Rights activists is obvious. Both fought for and are continuing to inspire change. This change may take time and I believe Obama can't cure the prison complex, the poverty issues, even Xenophobia in only two terms. But by paving the way by setting examples, by being who they are, President Obama and Dr. King are showing future generations that a change can happen.

Dr. West's interview comments ranged from addressing the New Jim Crow and the prison industrial complex, and immediately made me think of Dr. Davis and her activism. The day prior to her inauguration she spoke at the Peace and Voices of Hope and Resistance: attendees ranged from Walker or Ralph Nader, and Angela Davis came to speak about the inauguration.

She noted this: "Our support should also be expressed in our determination to raise issues that have largely been ignored." I feel that she and Cornell West were hinting at the same overlooked issues. The amount of poverty, the issues with school systems and imprisonment- all of which are addressed that should be changed, and can be done. She said we should "critically celebrate."

I agree with this. Many Davidson students may have spent Monday talking up with work or from work, however, spent Monday trying to appreciate and understand the symbolism of the Bible used and the inauguration's intention. I appreciated Obama's inauguration occurring on Dr. Martin Luther King Day. I try to understand where I fall in all of these similar differing details and hope that I can pave ways in history for my fore brothers and sisters- Obama, Davis and West.

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Davidson does it better



Mary Click

This week has been a blur of receiving panicked texts about getting cut, suiciding, first impressions, and dress codes. Then comes the oxymoronically dreaded and hallowed day: bid day. Anticipated with sobs and for most ending with tears of absolute relief and happiness, this day unites women, who for the past week, have been almost enemies of the "do you like me?" or "are you good enough?" game.

My friends at other schools would absolutely disagree. Recently, I asked a cynical friend if she was irritated with being called "baby angel" by all of her new Pi Phi sisters. She responded, "Sororities make you like stupid stuff you would never be into in any other situation,"

I wondered why that was. Is it just the relaxation of being permanently on the inside after a stressful period of being so fixedly on the outside? Is it the knowledge that being accepted into one of the "good" sororities brands you as good for the rest of your four years? Would you be willing to give up the things you believe in- even something small like thinking the name "baby angels" is entirely ridiculous- to belong and be successful in the dominating, overwhelming, ever-present Greek life?

It certainly makes it easy and tempting to group people into a label and brand them as one. My friend at UGA is constantly referring to people in this way: "the Chi-O's always go to that bar" or "the Phi Mu's love him." I tease her by tugging on her ADPI sweatshirt and demanding, "Are you in a sorority??" but in truth, it's a culture I don't understand.

The extent to which I don't understand the culture that is such an overwhelming part of my friends lives is intensified by the upcoming rush and self-selection at Davidson. The reason is simple: it's welcoming. The idea of a gay man pledging SAE at the University of Georgia is almost ludicrous. The

fact that I was not shocked by accusations of anti-Semitism is the rush process at large state schools is upsetting. It's not that our social life is all-inclusive or perfect, but as my mother said: "friendship by definition is exclusive." The social life at Davidson reflects the attitude of an accepting and respectful student body.

The idea of "choosing a group" always bothered me on a moral level until my mom's words forced me to realize what I do everyday. I'm not friends with everyone because I don't like everyone and everyone doesn't like me. I could not justify joining a group that defines me or creates an impermeable boundary between others and myself.

What my friends' rush experiences have caused me to realize is that Davidson is special. People here choose themselves, people here choose their own friends, people here take for granted the joy of not having to put on a

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and smile for eight hours straight in hopes that a huge, intimidating group of strangers will drape a label around my neck and call you sister.

I am grateful to be a freshman at a place where sororities, fraternities, and eating-houses are demonstrative of the accepting and forward-thinking culture that defines this campus. I didn't spend my life's savings on a new wardrobe. I'm not scared that the upperclassmen hate me. I didn't know ten women I barely know to write me recommendations. Thank goodness I go to Davidson.

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