

Oops, wrong person, I'm sorry; Who looks the same?

By Tene' Moore

Has anyone ever approached and addressed you as someone else? Do other students constantly mistake you for another person? Maybe you have similar features of another person, like the same smile, hair style, physique or whatever. If this has happened to you, like me, the first time you might laugh to yourself, say hello, and continue on your way without giving the mistake a second thought. You may even be bold enough to politely correct the person and inform them that you are not really the person whom they have mistaken you for. Or maybe, like many students, this has never happened to you.

I ask this question because, I, like several Davidson African American students, am constantly addressed as other African American females. That's when it occurred to me that the rumor of whites thinking that we all (African Americans) look alike might

actually have some truth to it. I didn't attribute the incorrect name calling as pure error because it happened so much.

After my freshman year I began correcting people when they called me the names of other black female students. I could understand it if someone saw me from behind or a distance and inaccurately called me another person, but to blatantly see me face to face and still think that I was someone else became rather irritating. Many, if not most of the time the mistaken person and I, aside from being black, looked nothing alike.

Some instances people actually carried conversations with me, thinking that I was Shiela or Janet (fiction names) and still did not detect any discomfort. Sometimes I went along with these conversations and the person never knew that I wasn't the other person, and other times I'd say, "I'm not such and such" then listen to them explain how identical such and such

and I look. Last year I saw one particular woman every other morning.

For two entire weeks this woman said, "Good morning Theresa (another fiction name.)" It was pretty early in the morning, so I was usually still tired. But one day I was awake enough to respond, "I'm not Theresa, but my

name is Tene'. I appreciate your friendly greeting each morning." My response may've slightly eliminated some of her embarrassment, but her white face turned a burning red.

I hope and believe that the majority of these cases are innocent goof ups, but since I am not white I do not positively know.

My point is not to condemn students for making unintentional offensive blunders, but to encourage white students to think twice the next time they approach an International or African American student.

And just think, y'all (white students) may all look the same to us too. Hum.

Lack of action upholds discrimination tacitly

Phobia continued from page 8

those enjoyed by heterosexuals, but merely those equal to them!

"They choose to act like that, so why should we protect them when they can just change?" Another obstacle to equality is the perception that government should not endorse a deviant lifestyle that individuals choose.

This claim assumes that there is a certain lifestyle that goes along with being gay, that it is voluntary, and that it is intrinsically harmful to society. In fact, we cannot pin down a "gay lifestyle" or substantiate the claim that it is harmful, nor can we logically conclude that gays choose to be hated and discriminated against. Gays are found in every socioeconomic class, in all professions from the clergy to the Congress, in both political parties, and in every extended family.

They are conservatives, virgins, housewives, suicidal teenagers, criminals, volunteer workers.

Being gay does not necessarily bring about other qualities of character, positive or negative. Moreover, as we heterosexuals can easily see, individual sexuality is a profound, unchangeable, and innate aspect of the self. Thus, it is an unjust basis for discrimination. Of course, civil rights protection allows for the possibility that someone may be homosexual and incompetent on the job, deserving to be terminated. However, a competent homosexual could not be fired because his or her boss happened to hate gays.

The specific policy I am advocating, namely a Civil Rights Act to protect sexual orientation, will not change attitudes towards homosexuality overnight. However, the U.S. government must quit tac-

itly upholding bigotry by its lack of action. If gays know they cannot be discriminated against, they will be more willing to acknowledge their true identity.

Their "coming out" alone reduces homophobia dramatically, as was shown in the U.S. News poll. Knowing someone gay was the second-most important influence on one's gay rights stance, and of those, 66% supported gay rights. How ridiculous the homophobic stereotypes seem when one realizes that a "fag" or a "dyke" is a loved one! This Act will gradually erode the practice of discriminating against homosexuals, allowing us to finally utter truthfully, "...and liberty and justice for all".

Sources: "Straight Talk About Gays", U.S. News and World Report, 5 July 1993, p. 44.

Carpenter's art stifled at VAC

VAC continued from page 8

light of the emphasis Davidson places on the availability of its facilities to its students, such as the use of athletic facilities by non-Varsity athletes.

While I appreciate the potential difficulties of making the Visual Arts Center open to general student use due to regulation, budgeting, and safety problems; I believe it is possible to allow students with a proven interest and viable experience access to facilities constructed with the aid of their tuition, especially if that use is in some way controlled and the school is reimbursed for the materials. Perhaps the institution of such a system would allow the students of Davidson to feel truly that the new Visual Arts Center is "theirs," as its promoters claim.

Although it was discouraging to learn from Professor Jackson that the facilities of the Visual Arts Center are not available to students not currently enrolled in art classes, the restrictions of the department's policies were not nearly as daunting as the attitudes expressed toward my interest in ceramics. I was informed that Davidson's sculpture program was never intended for the production (as opposed to creation) of ves-

sels, that any use of the wheel in Davidson's sculpture classes would be primarily to fashion a component or base for a larger piece of sculpture, and the focus of those classes would be "risk-taking and exploration," spiritual experiences apparently not attainable through the art of pottery. Far from encouraging my pursuit, both professors left me with the impression that my little hobby had no place in the grand realm of real art.

It is not a private studio or a one-woman show right in the atrium next to the Rodin that I request. My aim is simply this: to be allowed access to facilities already in use in order to pursue something that gives me great pleasure. Is this asking too much? I didn't think so, but it seems that amid all the special events concurrent with the opening of the Visual Arts Center, my invitation got lost in the public relations fuss. I am left wondering what exactly Davidson is promising its students and how much they will actually deliver. Lastly, I am reminded of the familiar descriptions of "a community of exceptional individuals with diverse interests and backgrounds," carefully selected to populate our lovely campus and regret being unable to make my own contribution.

Country heads down the tracks

Trains continued from page 9

Okay, you might not own a truck. You might not want to own one, and I realize that pick-ups aren't real practical for carpool, etc., so I won't tell you to buy one. But you all can identify with the truck topic, I'm sure. Everyone has, at sometime or another, had a bottle or a garbage bag or something fly out of a truck bed and land on the hood of his car.

And I know that every one of you has had two very large, very powerful, very scary eighteen-wheelers form a wall on Highway 77 to keep you from getting by at the speed you would like to. We've

all seen and admired the earthy, genuine, and horny folks that drive these trucks, so even if you can't identify with the truck theme, you know exactly what the songs are talking about.

Prison. I'll be the first to admit that songs about prison pretty much go flying right over my head. But if the songs speak to you, I'm all for it and am behind you one hundred percent in your struggle for recovery.

No matter what your background, country music has something to say to you, whether it be to remind you to drive friendly, ride a train, clean your room, or visit your parole officer soon.

Davidson's glass should be half-full

By Susan Beale

The other afternoon I was sitting outside procrastinating on my paper that was due tomorrow, belaboring over my reading and complaining to my roommates that I was having a bad day. Not only did I curse Davidson, but nature as well: for the bright sun was bothering my eyes, and the gusts of winds were blowing my papers around. I didn't bother to notice the bright blue sky, the pleasant temperature, or the squirrel romping precariously from branch to branch.

After a few minutes of self-pity, I realized how spoiled and ungrateful I was sounding. There I was, a student supported by my parents at one of the best liberal arts colleges in the country, learning from some of the best professors in the country, surrounded by many interesting and highly-talented students on a wonderful and charming campus...and all I could contribute was a complaint.

Yes, the workload is demanding, the social scene is at times limited, the school lacks some diversity, and yes, there are some racial tensions; but when I peruse through the *Davidsonian*, or walk along campus, these topics seem to be the only ones of interest.

These complaints are very different than the personal ones I experienced today, but my point is that most of us seem to complain too much.

What I am trying to relay is coming directly from my heart. I'm sure you have heard the phrase, that a glass is either half-full of half-empty, depending on the way you interpret it. Today I was seeing a half-empty glass, and it took a lot of strength and discipline to pull myself out of this mood. For

some reason, people find it enjoyable to commiserate, complain, criticize others, or feel sorry for themselves as opposed to changing their situation.

Although the college needs healthy criticism (or we would make no progress and would always be a reactionary campus), sometimes we need to put our situation in perspective. I have noticed that the campus morale seems depressingly low this year. What happened to the "I love Davidson" attitude that I heard as a freshman?

Before we complain about how bad life is at Davidson, consider how many wonderful things we should be thankful for. I would venture to say that we all have enough to eat, clothes to wear, and a comfortable bed to sleep in. (These simple aspects of life which

we consider as basic necessities are, in actuality, luxuries for many underprivileged people).

Have you ever visited the shelter for homeless men in Charlotte? These men really do not have any place to go or any money to buy food to nourish themselves. Before we envy someone else's position or status, we should rethink how many people would be overjoyed to be where we are situated in life.

After having my revelation this afternoon, I tried to see the glass as half-full again. I looked around, saw a beautiful campus, a beautiful blue sky, enjoyed a gentle, fresh breeze, breathed deeply, and became thankful that I am who I am and am where I am.

It is your decision: how do you want to view the glass today — half-full, or half-empty?

Anyone can be a racist

Stock continued from page 7

or common stock that a company issues. I can think of no other reason why they would say that "Racism implies economic and political power..."

I admit that the word "stock" can be confusing. To make sure that stock does not imply economic and political power, I looked up the word in my thesaurus. Just to make it clear, a thesaurus, according to the dictionary, is "1. a book of selected words or concepts as a specialized vocabulary of a particular field, as medicine or music. 2. A book of synonyms." I used the type of thesaurus described in the second part of the dictionary's definition.

According to my thesaurus

(Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus), a stock is "1. *syn* FAMILY 1, clan, folk, house, kin, kindred, lineage, race, tribe." According to my thesaurus, a stock has nothing to do with economic power.

By inserting the thesaurus' synonyms into the dictionary's definition and taking out the word "stock," racism must be the notion that one's own ethnic lineage (race, tribe, family, kin) is superior.

So according to the dictionary and my thesaurus, minorities can be racist. In fact, *anyone* with ethnic lineage can be racist.

"Hey," I say to my sixth grade teacher. "I looked it up!"

"Wait a second," I say to Rafael and Travis. "Did you?"

Sincerely,
Jamie McConnel '96