

Turn off your iPod and make your own noise

baxter's banter



CAREY BAXTER

Hey, I do it too. Let the Young Republicans and Young Democrats do their active political thing. Watch as groups organize fundraisers and charity drives and maybe contribute. But protest?

Not so much.

When you think about it, today's minority of active students poses a stark contrast to our perception of the wild 1960s and 70s of protests, disobedience, and challenges to authority.

I do acquiesce that our perception of those two decades could be tainted by memories and history books that only remember the wild ones and forget to mention the countless others who kept quiet.

It seems that the new alcohol policy caused more waves than it should have compared to the degree of severity of many of today's top stories.

As Barrett Seaman observes in "Binge: Campus Life in an Age of Disconnection and Excess" (2005), "[p]olicies that affect students' daily lives, not global history, stir the blood of today's undergraduates."

Don't get me wrong; I think our response to the victims of Hurricane Katrina has been powerful and immediate. But I guess I'd like to see a little more youthful idealism. A little more of my parents' generation.

A little more in-your-face action and demonstrating that gets people talking and doing. More than just on-campus political talks and forums. Certainly we all can't take up our cross at every outrage, but once in a while it is most appropriate. Sometimes I wish I could get worked up enough about an issue to want to stand out and yell and wave my banner and flaunt it in the face of the opposition.

I'm not the loud, outgoing type, but I think this would definitely be possible if someone other than myself were organizing such an event—someone who could really rally support and excite fervor.

I would have to be convinced that what I was doing was actually making a difference. I mean who cares if a white college girl at little old Davidson is getting her ovaries in an uproar over something?

But if we all have this attitude, then everyone is going to

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go about his selfish little life in his oh-so-comfortable routine trying to keep out anything that disturbs inner tranquility.

It seems like everyday American society in general is becoming more self-absorbed. This is most apparent on the roadways, but also at Davidson, as we all walk around plugged up with headphones and cell phones. Uncork yourself and take in your surroundings once in a while!

Not only is it gorgeous here, nature sometimes makes pleasant noises, and there are people talking—sometimes about important things.

Compared to other colleges I think Davidson students are really aware of current events. Awareness, however, is only personally gratifying, and it won't do much to ameliorate terrible situations around the world.

I like to think that if everyone does his best to be kind and do good in small ways everyday, then the world will be a better place. But no one is going to be nice all the time, so when we can we have to make up for all those slackers, including ourselves.

And sometimes community service isn't enough. Seaman writes, "community service is today's equivalent of student activism... this generation has learned to think globally, act locally."

Maybe a lot of us are waiting to graduate from Davidson and the rest of the 25 years of schooling to become Doctor Professor King Your Highness or whatever before we start saving our ailing world.

It's great to aim high for yourself, but I think we need to think big for the world too.

Hey, I'm as guilty as the most culpable. I need to shut up and take some of my own advice—and put it into action.

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The thing that shall not be named

BY SAM HOTCHKISS
Guest Columnist

Gay. There, I said it, gay. It is the thing that's around us, but the thing that no one likes to talk about.

Davidson is by no means a "gay" school, like our liberal arts counterparts in the North, and I would even go so far as to argue that Davidson is not entirely a "gay friendly" school.

One could argue that this is the way it is because of our location and affiliation with the Presbyterian Church; also, the majority of our student body comes from the Southeast, an area that is generally more socially conservative than other parts of the country.

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I will say in Davidson's defense that it is becoming more "secular" every year. For instance, women now make up 50 percent of the student body, attending church is no longer required, and we now have a more diverse population, racially, economically, and geographically. Orientation now includes a part about how to come out to your roommate if you're gay, and 30 minutes of the mandatory Sexuality 101 class is devoted to helping students understand homosexuality.

Being an out, gay male at Davidson, I can honestly say that it's been fairly easy being out. I've never been harassed because of my sexual orientation, and I have found an amazing core group of friends who are not just tolerant, but accepting of it. Also, we have a Gay-Straight Alliance, as well as the confidential support group, You Are Not A

Stranger Here.

Despite these organizations advocating tolerance on campus, prejudice remains. This became evident when the Gay-Straight Alliance decided to have a banner for people to sign in support of National Coming Out Day 2005.

I was shocked, to say the least, at how many people flat out refused to sign the National Coming Out Day banner.

We were very clear in saying that the only reason we had the banner was just for people to sign and show support for the Gay-Straight Alliance on campus, and in support of people who were coming out. In a recent CORE survey, 94 percent of students said that they thought it was healthy to have students of different sexual orientations on campus.

I know that nowhere near 94 percent of the people who walked by signed the banner.

Homosexuality, I'm sorry to say for those of you who don't approve, has become fairly commonplace in our society. The majority of Davidson students attempt to attain high-ranking jobs in the corporate world; that's just who we are. Let's say you don't approve of homosexuality, and one day your female boss at a nationally-recognized bank invites you over to her house for a cocktail party.

How will you react when you walk in, only to find that her partner is not a man, but a woman?

My point is, people who are going to put up a fight about homosexuality in our society, in the near future, are going to get left behind. It will not be P.C. anymore to be anti-gay.

Davidson has been getting better, and continues to get better for gay students. Each class has more out gay students and is, overall, more accepting than the class before it.

Davidson will probably never become an NYU or an Amherst, but it would be nice if some day in the near future, everyone signed the banner.

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Immigration offers opportunity for USA



SCOTT SALDAÑA

The topic of immigration reform has received a lot of attention since September 11, with calls from all sides for tighter border control. Despite this added emphasis, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that nearly 11 million undocumented aliens reside in the United States, with an additional 700,000 entering each year.

This month, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced the end of the "catch and release" policy that freed captured illegal immigrants.

Congress has also been addressing the issue, with Sens. John Cornyn (R-Tx.) and Jon Kyl (R-Az.) presenting an immigration reform bill, and Sens. Ted Kennedy (D-Ma.) and John McCain (R-Az.) sponsoring a competing piece of legislation. Neither offers a suitable solution to the problem.

The Cornyn-Kyl bill unrealistically suggests shipping all undocumented workers back to their home nations, where they could then apply for a temporary worker visa to re-enter the country.

Since it is doubtful many illegal aliens will volunteer to be uprooted, we currently lack the funds and the manpower to forcefully deport 11 million people.

Although the Kennedy-McCain plan is a step in the right direction, with provisions supporting a temporary worker program and the opportunity to gain citizenship for currently undocumented residents, it falls short in that it aims to replace the current "I-9" system of employee documentation with a similarly convoluted, and thereby ineffectual, program.

These politicians fail to see the real problem driving the issue. Some pundits endorse placing the National Guard on

the border to seal it off. But in all practical reality, it is impossible to end the flow of immigrants across the border.

Why are they coming? Since illegal aliens are not racing across the Rio Grande to collect welfare benefits, it is logical to assume they are finding jobs.

All of these proposals rely on a system of quotas on legal immigration. The current caps have produced a backlog of foreign nationals requesting visas, making legal entry impractical. The Kennedy-McCain legislation would raise the number of issued visas, but not to a level that would alleviate the problem.

Why not eliminate quotas?

If we allow immigrants to enter the country freely, provided they register with the government, they would have no reason to sneak across the border.

This system could also offer the opportunity to gain citizenship after a certain number of years spent working.

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If all available jobs in the U.S. are filled eventually, unemployed entrants would have to find an alternative place to go (preferably Canada).

The main argument against such a program is that it would allow "foreigners" to steal the jobs of American workers who need to support their own families.

Currently, illegal immigrants work for less than employers could legally pay their American counterparts; however, if all entrants were documented, that would end. It would simply foster some healthy competition by expanding the workforce.

Very little separates the current flood of immigrants from the group that came from Europe through Ellis Island in the early 20th century. Each sought a better life in this land of opportunity.

Rather than attempt to achieve the impossible goal of sealed borders through wasteful government bureaucracy, we need to acknowledge that as long as jobs are available, immigrants will come.

We need to have an effective policy waiting for their arrival.

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Sen. McCain, R-Az. (left), and Sen. Kennedy, D-Ma., are working together on an immigration plan.

Source: The San Diego Union-Tribune