

## The President's war on drugs: What should it mean to students at Davidson?

Trina Janiec

In a televised speech on September 5, President Bush outlined the drug problem in our country as "the toughest domestic challenge we've faced in decades." As I watched his broadcast, I found myself forced to reflect on my contact with drugs here at Davidson. I have to admit that I was amazed at how blasé I had allowed myself to become in my immediate attitudes and reactions toward drug use. Admittedly, college is a time for experimentation; students explore various societal mores and ethical codes within the context of a protected and promising environment. I cannot help but feel that this experimentation is a very good thing, and indeed a very necessary one if we are to shape ourselves into what we perceive to be productive members of society. By all means, if we have to experiment, which I sincerely believe we do, this is probably the time to do it.

Unfortunately, we tend to forget that our years here do come to an end, and we will eventually have to synthesize what we have seen and learned into some foundation to face what lies beyond the protective red brick of Davidson.

The afternoon of President Bush's broadcast, I accompanied some members of a Charlotte news station to a drug-ridden neighborhood; one of the anchors did a live telecast from this area in order to get the reactions of its residents, as well as to inform the rest of Charlotte that the problem of drug abuse and drug-related crime does indeed exist in our own backyards.

When the station's van drove into the neighborhood, several youths pulled their shirts up over their heads, afraid of leaving their faces vulnerable to the camera. These same youths then ran over to a nearby fence to stash their "goods" under it while simultaneously yelling obscenities to the crew, all of which added up to one message: "Go away. We don't want you here." By the time I arrived, the streets had been deserted. All that I saw were children playing outside among used syringes, which were strewn across the grass. The broadcast itself was done from in front of a crack house right in the middle of the neighborhood.

The things I saw that day, especially the faces of the children there, filled in the psychological distance I had allowed myself to form between the drugs college students define as "recreational" and the drugs that promise to shatter the innocence, if not the lives, of these children.

Luckily, Charlotte Mayor Sue Myrick plowed down this particular neighborhood's crack house with a bulldozer a few days after the broadcast. One tangible house of drug-abuse was destroyed. But where do these houses still stand on our campus, and on college campuses all over the country? When asked how college students can react to the President's mandate to fight in this war on drugs, Allen Hildreth, a primary counselor at Open House, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center located at 145 Remount Road in Charlotte, replied that we must begin by being responsible to ourselves, because our decision to be responsible "is what the children in these neighborhoods will see." Taking away the crack will obviously not solve the

problem; users will simply switch drugs, for "what they're addicted to is not the drug; they're addicted to the high."

Until we provide more responsible adult models, they said, the problem will persist. Hildreth suggested that we tend to compartmentalize ourselves into a particular class, fencing ourselves in because we do not want to see how a drug problem can manifest itself. He compared this tendency to the robbery of a house seven houses down from your own: you don't worry about the robbery too much when the problem seems far away. But when it becomes the sixth house, or the third or second, "that's when you cry bloody murder."

Clearly, my observations on Charlotte's streets do not lead me to form any conclusions. However, it does make me wonder how I should react on a personal level to this nationwide problem which promises to become more and more relevant to us as we leave Davidson. President Bush surmised that "the war on drugs will be hard-won, neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, child by child." Indeed, as John Hayes, the director of special projects for the Charlotte Housing Authority, stated in an interview for *The Charlotte Observer*, "the [President's] plan will pay off if it helps improve the lives of disadvantaged Americans." Perhaps we need to ask ourselves just who these "disadvantaged Americans" really are.

## Davidson needs a historically Black fraternity

Davidson Charter Interest Group  
Kappa Alpha Psi

This article was written on behalf of the approximately 18 students interested in the formation of a Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. chapter at Davidson College. We feel the presence of this historically Black fraternity will have many advantages, not only for those who are interested in its formation, but also for Davidson College itself.

It is no secret that the social/cultural activities for Black students at Davidson are severely limited. The sole organization on this campus which attempts to meet these needs is the Black Student Coalition. While this organization does provide Black students with many social/cultural options, it does not approximate the closeness, brotherhood, or sense of oneness that a fraternity would offer. Virtually all other schools

which Davidson likes to compare itself to have taken the step of allowing the presence of a historically Black fraternity, and we strongly feel that it is time for Davidson to do the same.

In addition to satisfaction of social/cultural needs, this fraternity would also provide its members with valuable future resources such as graduate level fraternity brothers who would lend their experience and talents to our pursuit of success, and alumni fraternity brothers who would be very instrumental in areas such as job search and career choice.

Davidson College would also benefit from the presence of this new fraternity. As a liberal arts college, Davidson by definition seeks to provide a diverse, all-encompassing education to its students. This fraternity would fit right into this liberal arts framework by exposing Davidson students to the customs and traditions of an historically Black fraternity.

Davidson has repeatedly articulated its intent to

increase the Black student population and to reduce their attrition rate. Here is an excellent opportunity for the school to help bring about these changes. How?

The first of two ways is, of course, that by giving Blacks more social, cultural and community related options, we will be that much more likely to attract and remain at Davidson and leave here with a more fruitful experience.

The second way is that positive news about the college will begin to circulate in the Black community via fraternity lines and this too may show residential effects in the form of more applications and higher interest by Blacks in the College.

The two major questions we are commonly asked in our pursuit of this fraternity chapter are: 1) "Why can you join one of the existing fraternities?"; and,

See KAPPA ALPHA PSI, page

*The Davidsonian* is published weekly on Wednesday during the school year by the students of Davidson College. As with all other problems in Charlotte, Hugo is to blame for this issue being slightly late. We are pleased to report that MAC has returned from the hospital and his total lobotomy was a success! Amazingly, MAC suffered no amnesia and thus returned home remembering all our file, as well as our names and faces. Thanks to Lydia, our flexed her muscles and waved her magic wand for us, and thanks to the folks in Hickory at the MAC hospital. Please address fan mail and correspondences to: *The Davidsonian*, Box 219, Davidson, NC 28036. Phone (704) 892-2148 and -2149. Offices are located on the top floor of the Grey Student Union building. Opinions expressed in letters to the editor or Commentaries do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board of *The Davidsonian*. Subscriptions cost \$25 per year. Advertising rates available on request. Copyright is held by the Trustees of Davidson College.

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