

Training tomorrow's killers since 1837



assemble

I am, or rather was, a participant in the newfound obsession (I mean, game) that has hit the Davidson campus like a sack of potatoes. I originally signed on for this rousing game of water guns and good old-fashioned fun when I noticed the creepy black poster in my 3rd Richardson bathroom. The eerie, ethereal white creature appearing out of the darkness beneath seemed to suggest playful children running around with

water guns—I couldn't resist.

I was instantly excited—my high school had instigated its own little version of Assassins, and it was always fun to hear about the crazy, funny things that people did to hit their respective targets. One of my friends holed up in his house and refused to leave for an entire weekend because he was afraid of his assassin waiting outside. If that doesn't sound like fun, I don't know what does.

We should feel bad for this misunderstood hacker--not everyone can do Pilates every Monday.

I signed up for Assassins and trudged over to the 1st Watts lounge to receive my itchy-bitsy water gun on the eve of the game's commencement. The next day, Assassins began.

Actually no—it didn't. Someone had apparently hacked into the moderator's computer and accessed certain assassins and their targets.

If anyone skipped the last sentence, read it again, say it out loud, and rejoice in the fact that this hacker actually attends Davidson College and lives amongst us. This person might also receive the grand prize of Assassins—the coveted lifetime PE credit. Violating the Honor Code, risking expulsion, and ruining the rest of your life is more than worth this checked box next to "Lifetime Credit" on one's file. We should feel bad for this misunderstood hacker—not everyone can do Pilates every Monday.



The freshman weapon of choice.

I have to admit that I've been rather impressed by the savvy and stealth of my fellow Davidson freshmen and hall counselors. When the game finally began for real, I sat at breakfast with an unnamed hall counselor while he scoped out his target. When it was time to go to class, he proceeded to shoot her with water, only to find that this was not his target.

Now that is what I like to call junior stealth in action. Some people truly are CIA agents in training—one of my friends was shot at from the bushes as he walked out of Chambers. Another tried to lure his target out of his hall by screaming and faking an injury outside of his window. A sophomore told me that she was shot last year when her assassin jumped out from behind a wall at 5 a.m. when she was leaving for crew practice.

I am so proud—nay, honored—that I attend college with these brilliant Assassins in training.

The game plays on as I finish this article, though I am no longer a part of this twisted web of water. I was actually shot on the second day—that's what I get for never taking my water gun out of the plastic bag.

I wish everyone luck as they continue on their quests for the holy Lifetime credit that has eluded so many starving Davidson students. Go forth with honor, bravery, and duct-taped teeny water guns. Make Davidson proud.

Ashley Semble '09 is from Winston-Salem, N.C. Contact her at assemble@davidson.edu.

Bring homosexuality 'out' on campus

BY SAMI JARRAH
Guest Columnist

In last week's Davidsonian, Paige Taylor expressed her disapproval of the College's Gay Alumni Weekend on Mar. 17-18 ("Gay alumni reunion creates segregation," Mar. 22).

While Ms. Taylor's comments come from a sense of equality and an antagonism for exclusivity, we would like to address several of her points to explain why Gay Alumni Weekend is exactly the right decision for Davidson College.

Ms. Taylor argues that an alumni event exclusively for gay graduates serves only "to alienate alums that do not belong to a favored minority." In fact, gay alumni are certainly not a "favored" minority.

Perhaps Ms. Taylor is unaware of You Are Not a Stranger Here, a confidential support group for the many "in the closet" students on Davidson's campus. If it were entirely easy being gay on Davidson's campus, every gay student would be "out." This is not even close to true.

Also, perhaps Ms. Taylor did not realize that Gay Alumni Weekend was open to and, in fact, attended by straight allies in addition to gay alumni. College representatives, including Director of Alumni Relations Matt Merrell '84, have stated that Davidson is willing to support any sustained interest among graduates who wish to join together in fellowship, including Jewish Alumni or African-American Alumni Weekends as Ms. Taylor proposes.

"Given that we speak of a 'diverse' community that welcomes individuals of different races, sexualities, talents, and interests," Dean of Faculty Clark Ross said, "it is perfectly appropriate for black alumni, gay alumni, former choir members or former football players to have meetings and sessions at which they address issues of common concern."

On the flip side, gay graduates, of course, also regularly attend the alumni events and reunions which Davidson organizes.

Ms. Taylor is absolutely correct, however, in stating that homosexuality on campus is indeed a sensitive issue. It is so sensitive, in fact, that many Davidson graduates have decided to live their entire lives "in the closet," even to marry spouses of the opposite sex in a facade of conformity.

For most of its history, until quite recently, Davidson was not a friendly place for gay students, and that alumni might want to discuss this among themselves in an open environment of acceptance and of understanding seems not at all wrong or undesirable.

Do most students, for instance, know that a young, gay Davidson alumnus and employee of the college (one of us!) killed himself on campus? When, one might wonder? In the 1920s? Maybe in the turbulent 1960s? Perhaps during the AIDS scare of the 1980s? No. In 1997, not 10 years ago.

Gay Alumni Weekend involved an emotional outpouring

by alumni, a coming to terms with a place that caused a lot of sadness and distress for so many graduates. The weekend was not all wine and socializing, but it was also tears and painful conversation.

If Davidson is to ask itself what embracing diversity means, perhaps the first step should be realizing that a problem exists (or existed) and moving on from there. Several alumni said how incredibly cathartic and healing it was to return to Davidson and see an improved atmosphere for out gay students; one man in particular stated that seeing out Davidson students gives his degree more value, makes his experience of Davidson somehow validated.

Do most students, for instance, know that a young, gay Davidson alumnus and employee of the college (one of us!) killed himself on campus?

If Davidson College has decided to devote a mere four days to addressing the pain caused to those hundreds (thousands?) of gay alumni, then how can that be bad?

Once again, the challenge of coping with minority groups confronts Davidson College; here, though, the administration is taking responsible and exciting steps forward.

Perhaps such discussions should even expand from alumni gatherings into the classroom, as Dean Ross suggests: "My earnest desire is for our faculty to incorporate, when appropriate, issues of sexuality and race within their courses. It is a rare course that would not have some occasion to raise such issues. When all students become more aware of such issues, serious conversation spills out of the classroom and into the dining hall or the dormitory."

Davidson students, for the most part, are very accepting of their gay peers, marking a huge institutional move in the right direction. With student support, Davidson can one day be a college so embracing and so open that all gay students (and staff and faculty) can be out, eliminating the need for any Gay Alumni Weekend, at all. This day can come, and this day can be very soon, but until that day is here...

Written with the support of Richmond Blake '09, Amoura Carter '07, Katie Cox '06, John Fry '06, Robert Galloway '09, Sam Hotchkiss '08, Robert Morris '08, Georgia Ringle, Ali Karami Ruiz '09, Rob Spach '84, John Syme '85, Maggie Thomas '08 and Natalie Watson '09.

Sami Jarrah '07 is an English major from Lakeland, Fl. Contact him at sajarrah@davidson.edu.

Question the (dis-)information age



the resident hall

MATT HALL

The "blog" is an interesting contemporary phenomenon. You see blogs mentioned frequently in newspapers, magazines and websites. Broadcasters and talking heads are constantly talking about them. On television, we hear lines such as "the bloggers are at it..." etc. Some have said that blogs are changing the way news is being reported and the way politics will work. I am one, however, who is wary of their influence.

Until very recently, I did not know what a blog was. I am sure that some people reading this article are also unaware. Wikipedia.org defines a blog as "a website in which items are posted on a regular basis...Like other media, blogs often focus on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news." So, in other words, it is like an online journal on which the authors post their personal opinion or news.

I think we all should be careful of getting our news and our information from sources such as blogs. Blogs, or at least the ones I've heard about, do not have editors, they do not have larger organizations or companies behind them (however, there are some exceptions, such as blogs tied to the media). They do not then have the structures in place that guarantee information is accurate. They just have one person, or several people, who decide what millions can read. Sure, on many blogs I am positive that accurate, accountable and reliable information is available, but what about the rest of them?

Now I do not mean to condemn blogs or to suggest that they are inherently bad. Blogs obviously serve numerous worthy causes. They allow people to communicate more effectively between one another. They can spread informa-

tion. They allow people to exercise their rights to free speech.

Nevertheless, we, those who pick and choose what we read, should think it over. If people eventually turn to blogs for their news--and some have suggested that that is the way the world is heading--what will happen? What happens if 95 percent of the information people have is accurate, but an all-important five percent is subjective, or worse?

Do blogs come with declarations? Do they tell you it's absolute news or opinion? Think about it.

Without safety nets and systems of checking information, what are blogs but the subjective reporting or opinionated writing of individuals who don't know what they're talking about?

Take the column you are reading right now as an example. It is in the Perspectives section. I do not pretend to report the state of the world as it is or to know everything about blogs. Indeed, I have much to learn about them.

I am, instead, declaring my opinion, my perspective. At least in this newspaper you have the Perspectives line letting you know that this is an opinion page. Do blogs come with declarations? Do they tell you it's absolute news or opinion? Think about it.

I do not know that much about blogs, just general details. It is my hope that you, the reader, will see for yourself what news is becoming.

Matt Hall '06 is a history major from Bennington, Vt. Contact him at mthall@davidson.edu.