

Alpha Phi Alpha demands attention

BY DARRYL RATCLIFF
Guest Columnist

It is ironic that in the midst of a maelstrom of rhetoric about diversity at Davidson College, The Davidsonian has completely failed to cover the recent history of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

The Davidsonian did do a good job covering the inception of Alpha Phi Alpha at Davidson College, but in the time I have been a student at Davidson, the paper has simply failed in its coverage of Alpha Phi Alpha. As a Senior Staff Writer for this paper, I am ashamed that I can make such a statement. However, this failing is not merely limited to The Davidsonian. It seems that almost every major institution, from the administration to SGA to PCC has decided to willfully ignore the achievements of Alpha Phi Alpha on this campus.

I am well aware of the boldness of this statement. Yet, I believe it seems even bolder because of the truth behind it. When I became chairperson of the SGA Charter and Bylaws Committee, Alpha was not even listed as a fraternity on this campus. In my dealings with PCC, Alpha is routinely either overlooked in terms of distributing information, in calling roll, or assigning shifts at PCC events. When one walks into the RLO offices there are pictures of all other fraternities on campus except Alpha. If we didn't wear our shirts and have dress up days, we might as well have been invisible.

Please allow me to make a bolder statement:

Alpha Phi Alpha won Fraternity of the Year.

Unfortunately this is probably a newsflash for many Davidson students and faculty alike. For those who don't know, Fraternity of the Year is the highest honor Patterson Court can give to a fraternity. One wins fraternity of the year by having a combination of highest fraternity GPA, most community service hours, best programs, and most participation at PCC events.

If we didn't wear our shirts and have dress up days, we might as well have been invisible.

I simply cannot understand how after only two years of existence Alpha Phi Alpha beat every other fraternity on the court to win Fraternity of the Year, and this extraordinary achievement received zero coverage in any publication, student run or otherwise, at Davidson College.

Neither can I understand how our coming out event in April which the Admissions Office decided to make its key event on Saturday night of Decision Davidson did not receive any type of coverage as well. This was an event that Admissions has put thousands of dollars into and that hundreds of Davidson students attended, yet The Davidsonian somehow didn't know about it or didn't think it was newsworthy enough.

There is only one word to describe The Davidsonian's treatment of Davidson's first historically black Greek organization: unacceptable.

The Davidsonian's lack of coverage of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc is an injustice not only to Alpha, but also to The Davidsonian's journalistic integrity, and to the entire Davidson College campus. I ask for an apology from The Davidsonian and a pledge to do better in the future in covering not just Alpha Phi Alpha but all minority events and organizations on Davidson's campus.

I also urge that The Davidsonian have a forum with at least the presidents of all organizations whose main purpose is to foster and support diversity at Davidson College, with the Diversity Coordinating Committee, and with Dean Shandley, Dean Jeffries, and Kema Gadson, in an effort to help fix The Davidsonian's ongoing struggle to cover diversity at Davidson College.

Finally, I would like to urge minority students to take up the challenge of writing for The Davidsonian in an effort to make its staff more diverse. In order to tackle the challenge of diversity it will require both sides making strides toward each other, and if The Davidsonian does call for a forum and no one responds, then diversity-oriented organizations on campus and other interested minority students have failed themselves.

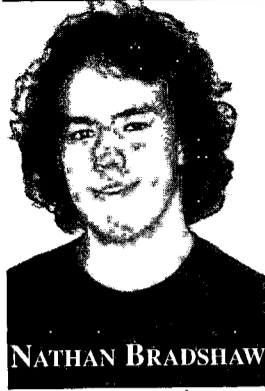
I believe it is up both to The Davidsonian and diversity-oriented organization to learn from the past and to make a better future.

To do so we must all first learn to listen to the truth, even when it hurts.

Darryl Ratcliff is a sophomore from DeSoto, Tx. Contact him at [daratcliff@davidson.edu](mailto:daratcliff@ davidson.edu).

The misguided and the (not) misogynist

face the nathan



NATHAN BRADSHAW

I have a penis.

Anyone who has a problem with that statement will do both him or herself and me a favor by stopping reading right now.

In addition to a penis, I have a severe problem with all the flak that The Yowl has been catching recently for having a few articles that were considered offensive by some members of the Davidson community. Apparently, having at least one of those two makes me a coward. Before you ask, yes, I write regularly for The Yowl; no, I

did not write any of the articles in question, so I'm not just defending my own work.

For reasons I will expound upon for hours if you let me, I consider those who feel offended by The Yowl to be overreacting severely, and with an almost mercenary motive to scapegoat the satire page as the symbol of all that is archaically misogynist. I'm here to address the second issue.

Before I continue, let me take my hat off to Jack Hubbard, Professor Suzanne Churchill, and the Davidsonian editorial staff; your words last week addressed the controversy in a useful manner, and the editorial was particularly on target.

With all due respect to every several professor and student who has published his or her notion of the word feminism, let me cut and paste from Merriam-Webster Online. If you go to m-w.com and look up the definition of feminism, this is precisely what you will find:

- 1 : the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes
- 2 : organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests

I'd love to think that you simply forgot about the second half of the definition, but the bottom line is that you deliberately leave it out so that your cause appears to be one of equality. In The Yowl, nobody even suggested violations of political or economic equalities. With regard to social equality, the fact is that it is a work in progress, even at our progressively beloved Davidson. Nothing The Yowl satirized was factually inaccurate. Nothing The Yowl satirized was based on something women do. Everything The Yowl satirized

was, in fact, based on stereotypes that men perpetuate, actions that men take, and the low standard of morality of men.

I was mildly offended by the idea that Sketchy Steve is a member of my sex. But I don't know what you people are complaining about. Not to make The Yowl seem less socially educational or anything, but the purpose of it is not to undercut those who abuse power (although RLO might disagree) or to bring about social change. It is published to make you laugh.

As for where we might learn about the struggles of oppressed peoples in our society against established power structures, I have one suggestion for concerned professors to explore: the classroom. And if you didn't find The Yowl funny, why don't you submit something that is funny? Bobby and Jeff can use the material, I promise you.

Incidentally, I did say that there are oppressed peoples in our society. Equality is not a reality. So if all of you "feminists" wish to be "equalists," that is, people who support

You are indeed feminists. You support both halves of the definition of feminism, but somehow "women's interests" are more important than true equality.

equality, why aren't you outraged that women play with smaller basketballs? Where are you when a man finds himself in a situation where he feels that being male is morally wrong?

And who among you will write a loud, angry

letter to The Davidsonian, full of pomp and huff, about the fact that women are not subject to the draft?

The answer, I would argue, is that you are indeed feminists. You support both halves of the definition of feminism, but somehow "women's interests" are more important than true equality.

You know what I think is funnier than an overweight freshman being used by an upperclassman who got her drunk because he sexually objectifies her? Nothing. Unless it is, of course, a young man, being told by his government to kill another human being, who dies or at least is crippled in battle.

Inequality has always been a reality, and maybe men do owe women some socioeconomic and political reparations. But if they do, then American women owe American men 407,000 lives for World War II alone. 407,000 fatalities. How the boys on the hall love that punch line.

Nathan Bradshaw is a sophomore English major from Swannanoa, N.C. Contact him at nabradshaw@davidson.edu.

Dating-phobia polarizes relationships

baxter's banter



CAREY BAXTER

Our generation can't hit a happy medium when it comes to relationships. The only two kinds of couples are those who are using each other for the evening or those who are practically engaged. The nice moderation of casual dating has become almost obsolete. Of course as soon as I started writing this article I was informed that a few people at Davidson are dating the old-fashioned way, but the general trend is definitely to one extreme or the other.

For many of us, the lack of dating is frustrating. Some see dating as "a situation representing the worst of both worlds ... it requires work and commitment but brings no assurance of sexual favor," says Barrett Seaman in his new book *Binge: Campus Life in an Age of Disconnection and Excess*. But I think the fact that we are left with no middle ground to work with is unfortunate and unhealthy.

Davidson is certainly not unique in this phenomenon of relationship-phobes and married old farts. It is a nationwide trend among college students. And, happily, we can for the most part blame the environment of college rather than ourselves for our awkward, untraditional college mating culture.

Up until about 30 years ago most colleges were single-sex institutions, so the only way to meet members of the opposite sex was through scheduled mixers. And then if a guy found a girl particularly pleasing, he asked her on a date so he would be sure to see her the next weekend.

Today, with all the hanging out that goes on in co-ed colleges there is really no need to set a firm date for a future meeting if you only need to walk upstairs or to a nearby dorm to see your latest crush. Not only does this mar the mystery and allure of someone you can only see once a week, it squelches the giddy anticipation of an upcoming get together.

Something else to factor in: most of today's female undergraduates have much more on their minds than finding a husband. "Today's female undergraduate is more focused on career and fearful of letting a relationship interfere with her career trajectory," writes Seaman.

Hooking up is truly hard to avoid since hanging out one-on-one at night on campus almost always means in a dorm room with an oh-so-inviting bed. And, hey, this way you can reap all the benefits of a real relationship without the emotional risk and plain old bother of awkward dates. Cool deal! But doesn't this set us up to become frighteningly numbed recluses?

Our communication and social interaction is becoming increasingly impersonal and computerized (or drunken).

If lonely physical gratification becomes unfulfilling, people tend to plunge into really serious "let's live and breathe each other" relationships to find something meaningful in their lives. This is great, but it doesn't leave much room for opening up a little to different people to see how the chemistry works. We could all use some social skills practice since our communication and social interaction is becoming increasingly impersonal and computerized (or drunken). And dating casually might just lead to a really great friendship.

Without risking our pride and asking someone on a date, we are forced to surrender to the whims of weekend nights or to vainly hope that a hook up or friendship will somehow lead to something more committed. Now it's not only the guy's job but sometimes the girl's to take the initiative and ask someone out. So go for it, or you'll always wish you did.

Carey Baxter is a sophomore English major from Monkton, Md. Contact her at cbaxter@davidson.edu.