

Unfounded gendered politics must stop

ANJAN MUKHERJEE
Guest Columnist

On Tuesday Jan. 29, the Massachusetts chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) heavily criticized Senator Ted Kennedy for endorsing Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. NOW endorses Hillary Clinton. The state chapter of NOW claimed his endorsement to be the "ultimate betrayal," because it shows he "can't or won't handle the prospect of a woman president."

Furthermore, the state chapter accused Kennedy of continuing to dismiss the "status of and respect for women's rights, women's voices, women's equality, women's authority." They brought up his past voting record, claiming he was late to get behind Title IX. The national chapter of NOW, however, has tried to separate itself from the statements made by its Massachusetts chapter, stating that although NOW proudly endorses Sen. Clinton, it respects Sen. Kennedy's decision.

It is important to clarify something before moving forward. Supporting Hillary Clinton does not make someone a sexist. Similarly, supporting Barack Obama does not make someone a sexist. Voters should select a candidate based on the politician's platforms on important issues. While it is a big step in this country's history that an African-American and a woman have emerged as the two frontrunners for the Democratic Party, factors such as race and gender should not matter while choosing a candidate.

The Massachusetts chapter's claim that Sen. Kennedy cannot handle a woman president is ludicrous. Explaining his reasons in a speech at American University, Sen. Kennedy said that Obama provides a "new generation of leadership," desperately needed in Washington. In his eyes, Hillary Clinton's presidency would be a continuation of current Washington politics. Since 1989, the president has been either a Bush or a Clinton and Hillary Clinton taking over in 2009 would not bring the right change.

He also pointed out that Obama never supported the war in Iraq, while Hillary Clinton originally had. Throughout his speech Kennedy reiterated that a President Obama would bring about the right sort of change both domestically as well as in foreign affairs.

According to The New York Times, Kennedy's decision was partly fueled by former President Bill Clinton's statements in support of his wife. Some of these statements were aimed directly at Obama. Kennedy likened Obama's message to that of former President John F. Kennedy, his brother. He said that just as President Kennedy believed that man could go to the moon when it seemed impossible, Obama has a vision that carries the "politics of hope." Clearly, Kennedy's decision has nothing to do with Clinton's gender, but rather her platform. The Massachusetts chapter of NOW also said that it is their "obligation" to support a woman candidate after centuries of men in power. This should not be a reason to support a candidate.

If the state chapter cited Clinton's plan for universal health care, or lack of support for No Child Left Behind, their support of her candidacy would make more sense. If the Massachusetts chapter of NOW truly respects women's rights, women's voices, women's equality and women's authority, it should look past its blatantly hypocritical statement.

Voters should enjoy the right to support whomever they choose, and NOW should respect that right. Its website says that its purpose includes "living free from discrimination." Supporting a candidate simply because of gender is indeed discriminatory, and the Massachusetts state chapter should be ashamed for making its sexist claim.

Hiring practices dictate that merit should determine hiring and firing, not age, disability, race or gender. NOW, or any other voter or interest group, should support a candidate based on his or her qualifications.

The Massachusetts chapter of NOW has not only made itself look foolish but has placed Hillary Clinton in a tight spot as well. On one hand, she does not want to lose votes by chiding NOW; on the other, she does not want to condone their statements. The Massachusetts chapter of NOW should issue an apology not only to Sen. Kennedy and the national chapter, but also to its members.

Anjan Mukherjee '09 is a Music major from Chevy Chase, Md. Contact him at anmukherjee@davidson.edu

Consider attending GSA, SGA forum

ROBERT GALLOWAY
Guest Columnist

On February 11, the Gay Straight Alliance and SGA's Real Talk are having an open discussion on homophobia at Davidson. The aim of this forum is to raise awareness of this often-times neglected problem and discuss how the campus can end it.

Our inspiration came from the Free Speech Board last semester asking "How can we better embrace the GLBT community?" Although there were many supportive and constructive comments written, the board was dominated by extremely offensive comments lacking any type of thought. The GSA and SGA realized that homophobia needed to be addressed outright. Most people on campus do not consider homophobia a large problem and do not know how to solve it.

The aim of this forum is to raise awareness of this oftentimes neglected problem and discuss how the campus can end it.

Many school administrators and student leaders have been invited to attend to give their own personal perceptions of homophobia and explain Davidson's policies and actions to promote acceptance of the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender (GLBT) community.

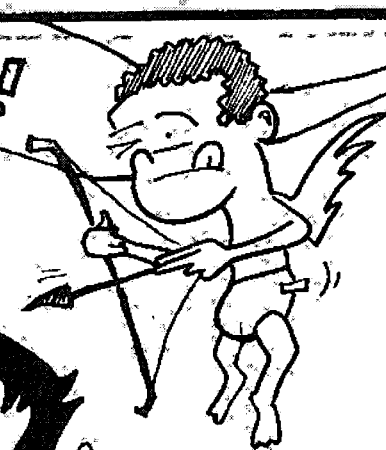
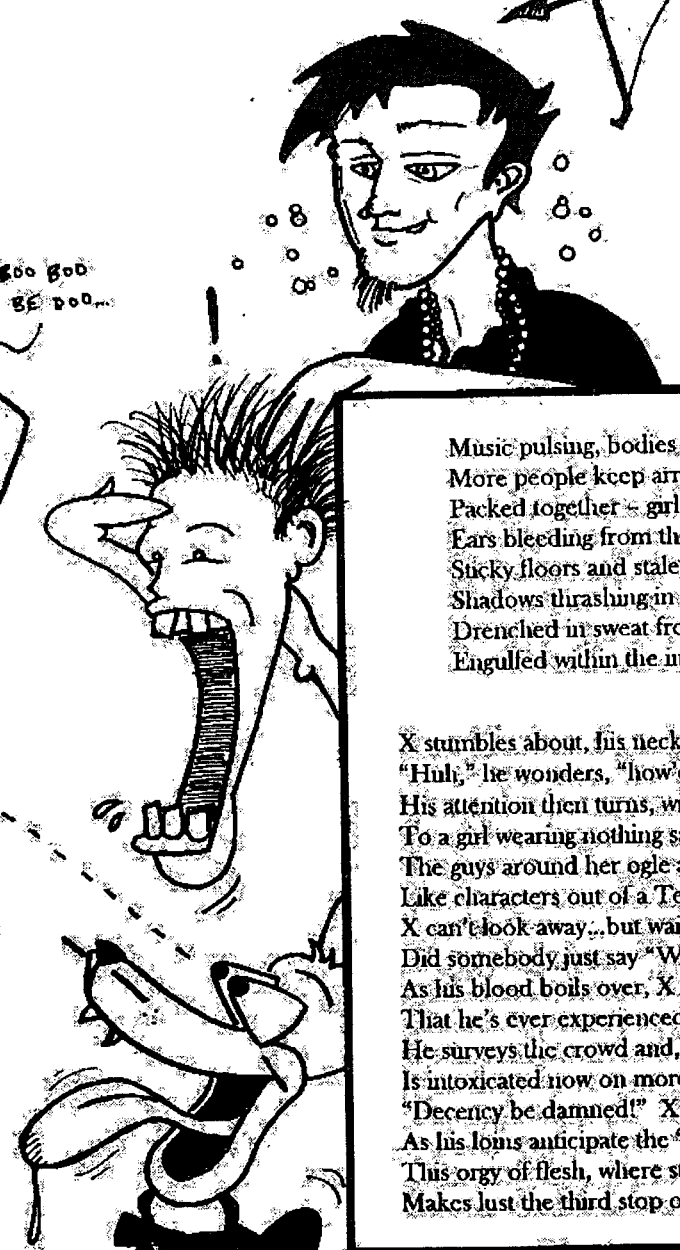
The discussion will open with our guests' comments, and we hope it will be followed by "organic discussion" clarifying the size of the problem and devising real solutions for the campus. A large and diverse turnout is vital for the success of this discussion. We want all people to come with questions, personal or witness experiences, or a general interest. "Davidson's Homophobia" is February 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sprinkle Room.

Life on the Court An Epic Poem by Andy Knauss Chapter Three: Lust

Meet college student X, a would-be Don Juan,
As he hits the dance floor and gets his "freak" on.
When last we saw X he was totally drunk,
And had started to imagine himself as a lunk;
With alcohol inflating his sense of pride
An average Jekyll transformed into boisterous Hyde.
This booze-induced courage impaired his cognition
To the extent that X acts now without inhibition.
His modesty o'erthrown by Budweiser Light
Certain "urges" awoke that X could not fight,
Compelled by his hormones out into the night
In a madcap pursuit of carnal delight.

X soon came across a faux Mardi Gras,
The theme of the party at Alpha Omega.
As fraternities go, AΩ has excelled
In the throwing of parties esteemed nonpareil;
Although the GPA of the frat ranks dead last,
In terms of "rockin' out" they're first in the class.
With his wild oats in need to be sown,
X hastened his pace toward that pleasure dome.
He could not resist, so completely enthralled:
As if under the spell of a sweet Siren's call,
Lured by temptation, X entered the squall.
Even the best among us can fall.

AΩ MARDI GRAS!



Music pulsing, bodies writhing,
More people keep arriving...
Packed together - girls and boys -
Ears bleeding from the noise;
Sticky floors and stale perfume,
Shadows thrashing in the gloom;
Drenched in sweat from head to toe,
Engulfed within the inferno.

X stumbles about, his neck lined with beads...
"Huh," he wonders, "how'd I get these?"
His attention then turns, with unbridled glee,
To a girl wearing nothing save a bikini.
The guys around her ogle and swoon
Like characters out of a Tex Avery cartoon.
X can't look away... but wait, what's next?
Did somebody just say "Wet T-Shirt Contest?"
As his blood boils over, X does not believe
That he's ever experienced such *joie de vivre*.
He surveys the crowd and, brimming with cheer,
Is intoxicated now on more than just beer.
"Decency be damned!" X thinks with a sneer,
As his loins anticipate the "final frontier."
This orgy of flesh, where students wantonly cavort,
Makes lust the third stop on our tour of the court.