

The Davidsonian

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LETTERS

Sig Ep flyers offend women

To the editors,

I am angrier and more offended than I have been in a long time. There were several flyer designs for one of last weekend's Patterson Court parties. Among them was a flyer posted only in women's bathroom stalls, a design which featured a well-endowed woman, lingerie-clad and half-naked, who quipped, "Oh, Sam, I can't believe it's been 20 years."

I do not think it necessary to elaborate on the blatant sexist objectification of women communicated by

this flyer. If you need an explanation, ask me. The flyer did a great job of discounting the contributions of Davidson women over the past twenty years in addition to presenting a seemingly clear exposition of the "philosophy" of Patterson Court held by the flyer's creators.

There are two ways to interpret this flyer. Either the creators thought seriously about what they were communicating, or they did not. I have no choice but to urgently hope that the messages were not intentional, a

result of too little thought with the head and too much hormonal influence.

If this is the case, I am disappointed and frightened by the apparent lack of awareness. We cannot afford to ignore the statistics and the stories--one of four college women in America is a victim of sexual assault, and I promise you that the number of survivors even on this small and beautiful campus is higher than you think.

The presentation of

See **Flyer** on page 8

What's the big deal?

Davidson College is by nature a safe-haven for those who desire to ponder the abstract. Perhaps the result of this study is no better illustrated than by the debate that has "raged" between those of us who believe that the Trustees should allow non-Christians among their ranks and those who believe that doing so would betray the tradition and spirit of the college.

At the same time, in Washington D.C., the capital city of one of the world's most "civilized" countries, the mayor has called for the presence of military troops to protect citizens besieged by violence. In Los Angeles, crime and anarchy reign and few are sure what to do about it. Davidson's troubles pale in comparison.

But taking *The Davidsonian* as a gauge of society would lead the average reader to believe that ours was a country mired in a tumultuous battle over whether or not pop art was a proper format in which to celebrate women.

Obviously, as Davidson students, we are lucky enough to be able to leave our dorm room doors unlocked. We can walk all over our campus with little thought of danger and those thoughts most likely are the result of too many nights spent watching horror films. And it is certain that Davidson students do not carry guns.

But it is hard to be certain that Davidson's sons and daughters realize how lucky they are. In a country so afraid of violent crime its citizens have considered changing their constitution to outlaw guns, Davidson's private battles seem trivial and nearsighted.

So what, then, is the purpose of debates about non-Christian inclusiveness or images of women in the media when people are nailing shut their doors and hiding guns under their pillows?

Every society has its intellectuals, and Davidson expects its teachers and students to fit that characterization. Those intellectuals debate the philosophical issues that arise from tangible events in society. Yet, in light of the real world troubles of those living in the inner-cities, these debates seem trivial at best.

But appearances can be deceiving. In the United States' past there are two glaring examples of effective solutions brought about by the combination of philosophical and tangible approaches. One is the country's constitution, which is a response to the desires and problems of the masses, but the product of intellectual thought. Another example is slavery, which was debated in philosophical terms while being fought out on the battlefield.

Attacks on inner-city problems in America and debates about political correctness and date rape, etc. on America's college campuses are two viable approaches to one question: How can we forge a better society? In essence, by squeezing the problem from two sides, it may one day be possible to push out an ultimate solution. But if not, at least some questions might be answered.

Dunifon defends inclusiveness

To the editors,

I would like to answer the question posed by Rob King last week: Why is the SGA so antagonistic towards Christianity? I am a member of the SGA who strongly supports the removal of Davidson's requirement that all trustees be active members of a Christian church.

This action by the SGA is, for me, more than just a trendy political statement. Like many students, I often struggle with my perceptions of God and religion, challenging previous beliefs and trying to form new ones of my own. The concept of religion that I have in mind, though always changing, consistently demands the acceptance of all groups, known as, (not the dreaded "i" word!), *inclusiveness*. For me, this is not a term of

political correctness, but a deeper, moral conviction. This belief is what inspired me to support an act aimed at making one of the most influential bodies on this campus open to all worthy contributors.

Rob refers to the feeling of shame that he would have if future Davidson students were unable to experience the spiritual growth that he has while in college. I could not agree more. I just wonder what kind of spiritual growth can occur in an environment in which people of other faiths are considered unworthy of making the college's major decisions.

For me, true growth occurs along with an unbiased exposure to new ideas and ideologies.

Only through these means can one truly ques-

tion and solidify one's faith.

I do not understand how the SGA's resolution could be seen as a slap in the face to Christianity. Instead, it is an affirmation of it, as well as other religious views, which advocate the acceptance of all people, regardless of sex, religion, race, or sexual orientation.

This is not part of a "crusade of open-mindedness," in which terms such as "diversity" and "inclusiveness" are used as ammunition to silence dissuaders. Instead, it is the resounding of a very basic moral principle, advocated by Jesus, as well as many others before and after him: love your neighbor as you would love yourself. What could be more simple?

Sincerely,

Rachel Dunifon '94

Don't confuse group and individual

To the editors,

I want to thank Robert Ramsay for clarifying what I wrote a few weeks ago. Although he may not realize it, we said the same thing: respect the uniqueness of the individual.

I want to ask a few questions of the general readership: Is there something unique that you can find that every member of a particular group possesses? Do all white people have the same skin color? No. Do all women think the same? No. Do all men place sex above all other priorities? No. Is it possible to accurately char-

acterize people by including them in predefined groups? No. Therefore, we must characterize people, oddly enough, by their characteristics.

That was the point of my column. Mr. Ramsay, in what was really a letter to the editor and not truly an opinions column, apparently has a different definition of "humanity" than I. He states that "to refrain from pointing out anything unique about the group" is to become a part of "total, worldwide conformity." Ramsay's arguments show that he has fallen into a com-

mon trap—confusion of the group with the individual, confusion of differentiation with diversity.

Differentiation and a focus on stereotypical groups are the characteristics of discrimination. Diversity and a respect for the individual, regardless of groups, are the characteristics of humanity. As I said in the column, we must think before we act or speak, or in this case, write. Mr. Ramsay could have used that advice well in preparing his column.

Sincerely,

Jeff George '95

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