

Taking pride in sexual identity

BY ANGELINA DARRISAW
Guest Columnist

At this year's GLBTQ Pride Parade in Durham, N.C., I noticed a woman carrying a sign that read, "I am a Lesbian and so much more." Though most people were there to celebrate and support people's diversity in their sexuality, her sign pointed out something that many fail to realize: Our sexual identities are just a small part of who we are.

Who and how people love should be irrelevant, but unfortunately, in many cases it is not. People's alternative sexual identities have been the cause of all sorts of discrimination, disownment by families, loss of friends, suicides and hate crimes.

Alternative sexual identities are not the norm and are more often taboo than acceptable. Despite this, families, churches, student groups, cultural institutions and even politicians all marched in the Durham parade. They served to demonstrate that while everyone may not be accepting, there are people from all walks of life who are.

Unfortunately, homophobia often seems more prevalent than acceptance. At Davidson, I knew that there were people who were accepting of all sexualities, but those people were not as noticeable to me as the ones I heard expressing their disgust with homosexuality. I heard homophobic comments from friends regularly, and some of my friends seemed so vehement about their dislike of homosexuals that I was usually afraid to even voice my opinion.

These kinds of comments made me ashamed to discuss my feelings about the death of one of my gay relatives last year and made me feel very guilty about not being sure of my own sexuality.

I felt I had no choice but to internalize my confusion and depression, because I suspected my friends would shun me for thinking differently and maybe even for being different.

Since I am very outspoken and assertive, hiding my true feelings and identity was miserable. I considered leaving Davidson because I feared the repercussions of being true to myself and I hated feeling like I was lying to the people I cared most about.

I felt cornered and sought an escape, so towards the end of year, I turned to Georgia Ringle and some gay students and staff for support. Finally, I voiced everything I had bottled up inside. Georgia was a great listener, and speaking to people with similar experiences was very encouraging. I wished I hadn't waited so long to be true to who I really was, but I realized that it was better late than never.

Having that support as I left for the summer gave me hope for this year. I knew that Bobby Vagt had opened his home to gays for the Gay Alumni Reunion Weekend, and I saw his open-mindedness as a sign that this campus could be a place for all types of people.

I knew that in order to return to Davidson, I had to stop hiding from my friends and from myself. Like the woman at the Durham Parade, I believe that people are so much more than their sexualities and one's sexuality is personal. However, I felt I should be honest with my friends who shared their disapproval of that lifestyle.

"We already knew," two of my closest friends told me. "We were waiting for you to tell us so we could stop pretending we didn't know." I felt like a huge weight had been lifted from me, and I no longer had to walk around with so much baggage. They had known all along and they had treated me the same and loved me that whole time. Knowing that made me feel secure and comfortable in a way I hadn't before.

I couldn't believe I had spent all that time being afraid of what others might say, but I know why I did. In my experience, I have been lucky to find more people who are accepting, but the homophobic comments of those who are not make being open very scary. Still, I was pleasantly surprised to see that even some of the people who I thought were the most homophobic were willing to change their thinking after getting close to me.

I know that some people feel like we run diversity talks into the ground here, but I think they are very valuable because being different can be scary for both those in the minority and the majority.

But as scary as it is, I've realized that being true to myself is worth overcoming the fear of being different. And while I feared my relationships would end because of my differences, they have only gotten stronger because I have been true to them.

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On the state of rights in America

face the nathan



NATHAN BRADSHAW

And now for the two words you never thought you'd read next to my ugly mug: I recant. I am patriotic, I support America whole-heartedly, and I am proud to be an American—but, as Samuel L. Jackson said in another recent thinly veiled political allegory, "Enough is enough!"

The time has come, the walrus said, for impeachment. This divisive, partisan, power-abusing Republican autocrat needs to go. Let's look at the laundry list

of shocking, but hardly awesome, denigrations of the presidency he has committed.

First, his effect on politics as a whole in this country has been disunifying at best. How many red-blooded citizens considered breaking away from the United States—or, in some cases, swore blood oaths to that effect—simply because of his election?

His suppression of opposition has exceeded by far the rights of the executive branch of the government; indeed, it is almost impossible to be a Democrat and to live in this country.

Of course, the media, who should be able to hold the powers that be accountable, has suffered horrific censorship at his hands; whatever he does not want published receives a stamp label of "unpatriotic during wartime" and is thus shot down before it even reaches the public. What happened to the first amendment, one asks? Or at least, one would ask that if it wouldn't land one in jail.

Which is a beautiful segue into the other two violations of the Bill of Rights that he has perpetrated. First, the invasion of privacy with spying on American citizens. Second, the suspension of the right of habeas corpus. The result? An American citizen may find him or herself imprisoned indefinitely without any indication of why he or she is imprisoned and upon so-called evidence obtained through illegal and unconstitutional surveillance. Atrocious.

The big one, of course, speaks for itself. He goes to war, first citing "national security" and "the integrity and good of the United States" as the cause. A few years later, nobody's

buying it, and he changes the impetus to "freeing an oppressed people." That's good: free the oppressed there and oppress the free here.

The president's conduct of the war is equally condemning. He has overruled and replaced prestigious generals who call for change. His plan shows no consideration for the land over which our armies march, nor for the civilians whose lives are destroyed daily by the chaos and combat around them.

And what does he offer now that he has run out of excuses for an unnecessary war that has killed far too many on both sides? A word (at most, 278) on how those lives lost must not be lost in vain. The barbaric opportunistic warmonger turns the casualties he himself has caused into a reason to keep dying and killing.

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It has gone too far. The time has come to act, to take a strong stance against the power-hungry executive. I wonder, though, if impeachment will even be enough. He should, after all, pay for the lives he has destroyed. To truly render the scales equal, one must ask if the time has come for more drastic action.

Obviously, we could not take such action at some highly secured event. We would need to pick a time when he would be vulnerable, perhaps when he is out driving a Ford pickup, or when he goes to the theatre.

Some of you may think that assassination of our president is too extreme, that as criminal as his actions may have been, he does not need to die.

You know what I have to say to that? Sic semper tyrannus, boys. Sic semper tyrannus.

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What you parents need to know

dose of the dutch



LAURA VAN OUDENAREN

On Saturday, the campus will suffer from a parental invasion, complete with dust-buster attacks and constant trips to CVS to buy more snacks. For students, this is a stressful weekend that involves a haphazard pre-arrival room cleaning and many dodged questions and safety lectures. For parents, it is a chance to see their offspring flourishing in an environment that is not within a 10-foot radius of the television, catch up on all the exciting details of today's college life and uncover enough tidbits of information to keep them awake and worrying for the next three months.

In the interest of saving the students a few explanations and assisting those parents who find themselves wondering why their son or daughter exchanged his or her new L.L. Bean comforter set for a Value Village leopard-print one and several pages of the Charlotte Observer, I am here to offer a few hints to parents about what their children do not tell them. Remember that my explanations do not apply to everyone, and that some students really do spend Friday nights studying. Others do not.

First of all, parents, the library does not open until 1:00 p.m. on Sundays. When you call your son on Sunday morning and his roommate informs you that he is studying in the library, it is a lie. Your son did not come home last night and was last seen making out on the dance floor.

Similarly, your daughter did not actually lose that beautiful leather jacket you bought her last Christmas. She knows exactly where it is—it's in the basement of the Sig Ep house. She is just too embarrassed to go back there and claim it.

When you are investigating your son's room, do not open the refrigerator. And, while you might think that owning three Nalgene's is a little excessive, the real reason your son or daughter owns so many is because they keep getting mold on the inside. The easiest solution is to buy a new one and leave the old ones at the bottom of the closet. Even if her bed is dangerously unsanitary, washing her sheets is the last thing on your daughter's to-do list.

Yes, even behind calling you.

Your son will probably tell you he still likes the food at Commons. That is because he orders French fries and fried chicken with every meal. Likewise, when your daughter complains about those extra 15 pounds she gained, know that they are not really from late night study break snacks and Red Bulls. She is actually the beer pong champion of her hall.

Speaking of beer pong, the reason your son's closet door is missing is because he took it down to make a table, and then it got passed on to Second Belk along with all his clean socks and a spoon.

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When you first see your daughter she will probably be sporting a brand new wardrobe. Two words: online shopping. Your daughter does it, and she plans on asking you for money before you leave so she can do even more of it. She will tell you the money is for books.

She also may be either pregnant or suffering from mononucleosis. She is not sure which one, either. And, while it might look bad, your son does not know how he got that huge bruise on his leg.

Lastly, remember that though your son or daughter may complain about your embarrassing presence, their overwhelming workload and the stress of college, your child is happy to see you—and happy to be at Davidson—no matter how much he or she pretends not to be.

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