

Staff Editorial

Reclaim the Outpost

From discussions with Bobby Vagt to the halls of Chambers to the SGA's Filibuster, the hot topic has been the Outpost and whether it will return to Patterson Court. And why not? The college needs to determine some purpose for CoHo's house next semester, and it needs to do so soon.

Frankly, the late night food options on campus could use some variety. The choices present are the Union Café or the Union Café.

The glaring fluorescent lights, the flyers stacked upon flyers and the silent roar of studious Davidsonians make the Union...the Union. It is, as Mac Skelton wrote in the Filibuster this week, "a place where they [students] can both study and socialize." But an extension of Patterson Court? Certainly not.

Bringing the Outpost back to campus would provide a mixing ground for students from different social circles. More importantly, the atmosphere would be more casual and student friendly. Simply the different venue would be an improvement. According to legend (and alums), the old Outpost had a certain ambience that just can't be replicated in the Union.

The Union as a late night snack location seems to cause more problems than it solves. Bringing back the Outpost could diminish tensions between Union Café workers and students.

In a 2001 Davidsonian article, students expressed the concern that the Union's "bright lights and the underlying presence of the administration" might dissuade people from getting food. What's more, the menu is limited and the food is overpriced. (Case in point: a quesadilla composed of two flour tortillas and some grated cheese costs \$4.95. That's a damn shame).

The new Outpost could be open Wednesday through Saturday night. The operation would be best when run by students, also providing work-study jobs. It could serve as both a late night food joint and an alternative hang out option for people tired of the court scene. Let's face it, watching our fellow classmates grind on the dance floor to the same overplayed music gets old.

The Outpost could also be relaxed venue for student musical acts. Whether it's impromptu guitar playing or a planned student performance, the Outpost could have a lounge-like atmosphere that would break up the conformity of the court.

Let's reclaim the late-night food scene. Let's bring back The Outpost and make it our own.

♦ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ♦

Basketball team says thank you, Davidson

To the entire Davidson College community:

Teamwork was a vital part of success during this past season. Because of you, that teamwork transcended the bounds of the basketball court.

We send our thanks to all of you. To professors, administrators, staff, and, of course, to the cheerleaders and to D Block for the significant and valuable role that you played as part of our team.

The journey of this year will be a memory that we will cherish for years to come. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for the encouragement and support that you gave to help create these memories.

Men's Basketball Team

Gay Alumni Weekend about celebration

Last week, I was somewhat saddened to read Paige Taylor's letter to the editor ("Gay alumni reunion creates segregation," Mar. 22), which attacked the recent Gay Alumni Weekend on the grounds that an event so "dedicated to a controversial issue" demonstrated "overreaching" support for "a favored minority." Though I did not participate in the events of Gay Alumni Weekend, I hardly feel comfortable allowing such a position as Ms. Taylor's to pass without rejoinder.

I will let slide her rather dubious description of Davidson's queer community as one "favored" in any sense by its larger culture, especially at the expense of other minority groups; indeed, I will even spare these pages my smoldering discontent with the overt anti-gay harassment I've witnessed here as recently as two weeks ago.

Nor do I have the space (nor steadiness of countenance) to defend the "controversial" position that Davidson should, at a minimum, provide for the well-being of its queer population. I will, however, state my strong support for events

targeted at building community amongst members of any social minority groups.

Ms. Taylor's notion of egalitarianism is a lovely ideal, but it hardly reflects the reality of the world in which we live. In fact, her assumption of equality belies the very reason why subculture-specific events like Gay Alumni Weekend are constructive: a person of any minority identity derives considerable benefit from a community of peers empathetic to those day-to-day difficulties that are almost always lost on those blinded by "majority privilege."

I would also hurry to point out that the queer community is unique amongst minority groups in that its members, here as much as anywhere, are both able and encouraged to hide their identities. As such, our queer community, historically at least, tends to lack the sort of visibility and internal support that arise somewhat by default in many other minority groups.

We're proud to be up to a rough dozen openly gay students here, but as recently as four years ago, that number was somewhere between one and nil. Our ability to cough up a handful of well-adjusted queer students is a sign of "improvement," yes; but to encourage those people to come together and find a common set of roots in the Davidson family: that is a real step toward humanely providing for the queer minority.

I applaud the administration's continuing efforts to stimulate and compassionately support diversity, in this and all its forms, within both our student body and the Davidson family at large.

Alex Wales '08

The Davidsonian welcomes letters to the editor. Please e-mail submissions of fewer than 250 words to davidsonian@ davidson.edu by Sunday night. We reserve the right to edit for content, brevity and grammar. Anonymous letters will not be printed.

The Davidsonian

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Keep New Orleans in headlines

BY WALKER SAIK
 Guest Columnist

In response to Carey Baxter's article ("Re-New Orleans," Mar. 22), I'd like to thank Ms. Baxter for bringing New Orleans back into the headlines. For the most part, the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina have received diminishing attention each day.

Ms. Baxter told the truth when she described the Lower Ninth Ward. The area was barraged by floodwaters from several directions, and the net effect was utter devastation. Houses are ripped off their slabs and are (still) lying in pieces all around the neighborhood.

But Ms. Baxter also implied that the majority of the affected areas were poor. This is simply not true. Eighty percent of the city flooded, including affluent areas in Lakeview and Uptown. In addition, most of the surrounding metro area flooded as well. Old Metairie, one of the richest suburbs, had three feet of water in many homes.

And even for those whose homes did not flood, everyone is greatly affected by the sudden decrease in living conditions. Road conditions are hazardous, medical services are overextended, phone lines are not all operating, stores close by 8 p.m., the mail is extremely unreliable, restaurants offer reduced menus and the list can go on.

Local businesses are taking a big hit as well. Hundreds of small businesses have closed, and the city's largest employers, Tulane University and Entergy Corporation, have undergone serious changes.

Tulane laid off 233 professors and suspended eight NCAA sports. Likewise, Entergy, the city's only Fortune 500 company, is still undecided on if or when it will return its operations to New Orleans.

The hardest news for locals to swallow, though, has been the numerous studies that have come out since the storm,

detailing just how and why the floodwalls broke. The fact is that the Army Corps of Engineers (i.e. the Federal government) had guaranteed that the city's floodwalls would hold up to a storm of Katrina's size.

To make a long story short, the floodwalls broke, the city flooded, and now the federal government is talking about making new floodwalls that will actually be as strong as they should have been last time. There is much more to this story, so readers should do some research if they're curious.

To get back to Ms. Baxter's article, though, she at one point criticized the Mardi Gras revelers "who came to help none but themselves." What Ms. Baxter fails to realize is that the city needs tourism dollars as much as it needs structural rebuilding. A successful Mardi Gras was essential for the city so that it could show the nation that New Orleans was officially open for business.

As for Davidson College, though, it's surprising how little attention has been given to New Orleans in the classroom. New Orleans is a walking, talking thesis topic for essentially any major.

Interested in studying the psychological effect of a catastrophic event on a large population? How about urban growth models? Sociology majors may even find interest in studying why so many families refused to leave their homes during and after the storm.

New Orleans is seemingly perfect for academic discussion; but up to now there has not been a single speaker at Davidson who discussed issues pertinent to New Orleans. Likewise, professors seem to shy away from the topic as they stick to their course syllabi. With that in mind, it was nice to see New Orleans back in the headlines and good to hear about students who want to help.

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