

## The Gay Support Group: Something does not fit

Glenn Fogle

It's easy to tell when spring is getting near in sacred community of intelligence as Davidson College, because some unknown champion (whose name has been "withheld upon request") of the invisible gay segment of the student population courageously pokes his head out of the proverbial "closet" by sending a letter to *The Davidsonian*. This has occurred since my freshman year (and apparently a couple of years previous to that), and I've come to await the almost-legendary Davidson "gay letter" with eager anticipation each spring (give or take a month). I was disappointed almost to the point of tears this year because the "gay letter" in last week's issue of *The Davidsonian*, "Homosexuals are people just like the rest of us," was simply pathetic.

My favorite part is the *Jaws 2*/horror film beginning: "Just as you thought we had receded back into the closet, here we are again." Watch out Davidson! I quote from *Poltergeist 2*, "They're back!" Following up the ominous first sentence is the wimpy, apologetic, "I almost regret bringing up the subject..." Then the mystery author spills the hard facts to the already shocked readers, "I know how a majority of you are frightened by the implications of such an article." Maybe I better transfer for the last term of my senior year... After that we learn, gentle reader, of the tragic news that the Gay Support Group is in trouble--

not because there are not enough "eligible" people (no, nay, never!) but because, (of course! eureka!) the burgeoning masses of homosexuals in the Davidson community are "too scared to join." It's the fault of all those "thick skulls and closed minds." That's always the case, sad though it is, the closed mind is responsible for all the problems in the gay community and most of the problems in the world at large. I think a much more appropriate title for the article would have been, "Wanted (Desperately): Members for Almost Extinct Gay Support Group" or "Closed Minds and Thick Skulls Drive GSG to Near Extinction."

Some of the assertions in the article are ridiculous. For instance, the second paragraph states, "It [the GSG] is not a secret society (imagine a *homo* fraternity)." If the GSG is not a secret society, why then does it operate along lines similar to the cell group of a modern terrorist organization, making use of a highly developed system of anonymity (see the fifth paragraph)? No one knows who these people are, where they meet or what they really do (but is that so hard to guess?). The GSG is a completely invisible organization. There could just be one person in it, if any at all and no one would know. Why don't they have meetings once a week, open to anybody, like the Eating Disorders Group?

The best line in the whole article is the first sentence of the paragraph which tries to justify homosexuality: "Homosexuality is a weird thing, no doubt about it." Well... actually I think it's pretty normal myself. Then, our anonymous gay champion paints a picture of the GSG which closely resembles a gay dating service: "Relationships are important, and I hope that the GSG can become

a way to foster good relationships. Don't be shocked at that. What are singles bars for?" What are good relationships? Is that like the "good" in Dr. Ruth's *GoodSex*? The mystery author continues, "There's nothing wrong with having a place that is good and clean and healthy to establish a friendship that may satisfy a real need." What's a "real need"? Maybe they should have "Gay and Lesbian Night" in the 900 Room if it's a gay bar that Davidson lacks to serve the "real needs" of homosexuals.

Well, I've "simply [taken] a deep breath and opened up," like the article challenges in the next to last paragraph. I'm really disappointed with this year's "gay letter." At least the ones in former times had some fire and excitement to them. They were rather blatant and militant, though none of the authors (or author, as the case may have been) were brave enough to sign their names. Despite this yearly phenomenon, I have yet to see hidden masses of homosexuals (at least 10 per cent, right?) charge forth from their closets brandishing the banners of gay rights. Where is the GSG now? Nobody knows, it's invisible--always has been. If you believe in something why be ashamed of it? There's nothing wrong with being gay, is there? If so, why all this super-secrecy, why all this paranoia? Why are all the homosexuals that supposedly form a significant portion of the student body not in the GSG? Why was the pathetic article by the GSG last week nothing more than a melodramatic plea for members? Something does not fit.

Glenn Fogle is a senior English major from Charlotte, NC.

## The case against more Contra aid: an analysis

Sen. Terry Sanford

I have concluded that we should not supply any further Contra aid, and this is no snap judgement. It comes from a hard-nosed, realistic analysis.

I have been to Central America four times. I have talked to the five presidents both in their own countries and in Washington. I have talked to about half of the Contra leadership group, all of whom live in Miami or Costa Rica. I have spent time with our Secretary of State, the Assistant Secretary of State, and the two special Central American envoys who have successively represented the Secretary of State over the past two years.

I have flown by helicopter into the south of Honduras and visited the Contra headquarters camp, talked with soldiers, and spent considerable time with the field commander, General Enrique Bermudez, going over his operation and situation maps, his supply operations, his strategy and his own evaluations of military capacity of the Contra forces. It is not a very effective fighting force.

I have conferred with foreign ministers of the five countries, the top military in three of the countries and ranking military officers in the other two. I have talked with civic, business, and church leaders, especially in Nicaragua, and in the other four countries as well. I have refreshed my memory by reading histories of the region.

And I have conversed with hundreds of citizens of North Carolina.

Central America is not on the verge of tilting toward communism. Honduras has its second elected president, and is heading for a third. Guatemala has a firm and determined elected government. Costa Rica is a model of free and open democratic government. El Salvador has a courageous president who is caught between the old guard and the old leftists; the Arias peace plan, which he vigorously supports, will help him prevail in his efforts to take El Salvador into full-blown democracy.

The trend is against the Sandinista leaders in Nicaragua, who claim allegiance to Marxism in varying degrees. There is formidable internal opposition to this philosophy, from a half dozen opposition parties, organized business leaders, and the leadership of the Catholic Church. The economy has generally not been socialized, although the sugar plantations and some other areas have been taken over by the government.

In Nicaragua, as in the other Central American countries, people are not attracted to and are not seeking political ideology. They want, and are crying out for, food, decent shelter, jobs, education, health care and a future for their children.

There is no question that the Soviet Union, directly and through Cuba, is sending aid to Nicaragua, although not nearly as much as sometimes is claimed. They have provided attack helicopters and tanks. They were furnishing oil on credit, but they have cut that off. The Soviets are not furnishing foreign credit, and Nicaragua is broke.

Now for the big questions: Is Nicaragua a threat to the United States? Is Nicaragua likely to invade its neighbors? Does Nicaragua pose a threat in supporting insurgency against its neighbors? Can a Soviet base be established there? What should the United States of America do?

Nicaragua might be forced into communism by dictatorial tactics, but not easily, because the people are devout Catholics. If there are open elections, and the issue is the economy and the way of life, the Sandinistas will have a tough campaign. In signing the Arias peace proposal, they committed to free elections, as well as recognition of opposition parties, free press, human rights, and reconciliation with all opposing factions, including the Contras.

Will they keep their word? Perhaps not, but there are pressures that could cause them to do so. The presidents of the four neighboring countries will pressure them.

Furthermore, if the present "mini-Marshall plan" being developed is implemented, and surely it will be, the price of admission will be continuing compliance. Nicaragua cannot prevail in a regional climate of economic and social development if itself is not sharing the progress the others are making.

So there are some compulsions. The four Central American presidents are willing to take a chance; we should let them call that shot.

That does not answer the question of whether this little poverty-wracked country of about three million people offers a real security threat to its neighbors or to the United States. If it does, the United States ought not to be relying on the Contras to defend our interests.

Do the Sandinistas really intend to build their army to 600,000? Sheer numbers make that hard to believe. Consider the total population of three million, subtract the youth, the women, the old, the disabled and the infirm, and then figure where they would get that many able-bodied soldiers.

A Soviet base in Nicaragua would be a true risk to American security, but one we can handle, by reaffirming

the Monroe Doctrine, and by repeating what we did about the Soviet missiles that once were in Cuba. We need simply to announce to the world that we will remove any such installations with our own air strikes. Given the greater stakes that Gorbachev has in his dealings with the United States, it is hard to think he would not get the message. Continuing Contra aid gives no message at all except to say that we are depending upon a mighty weak reed for the defense of our nation.

Almost all of the leaders of the other four countries want Contra aid stopped. They would rather count on their Central American home-grown approaches. They do not think invasion is likely, and they should be assured that we will assist and retaliate if there is such an invasion.

They think they can contain subversion and are not afraid of that. Their real fear is continued unrest and instability. The real need is economic health, jobs, and education. The initiative of the Central American presidents offers all of these advantages and more. To fly in the face of this initiative, to continue the instability by more military aid, will jeopardize, possibly kill, the heroic efforts the presidents are making to bring peace, freedom, reconciliation, and prosperity to their region. And such confrontation in no way enhances or even affects our national security.

Does the offer of more Contra aid help? I am convinced it will simply prolong the process. The purpose of Contra aid was to get the Sandinistas to the peace table. (No knowledgeable person thinks the Contras can overthrow the government.) They are at the table, a table put there by the Arias plan, and set by the Guatemala Accords signed by the five presidents. Now, having assured ourselves of our own security, we should leave this process to those whom it directly affects.

As I said in the Senate Chamber this week, "we are far too strong, far too mighty, far too wealthy, far too large, for Nicaragua to be anything but an irritant." For us to go into contortions because a mosquito is buzzing around our heads is not in keeping with the best of America's past bravery and its self-confidence. To say that to vote for Contra aid will be a great victory for Russia or for communism is ludicrous. A vote for Contra aid tells the four presidents that we think we know what is good for them better than they do. A vote for Contra aid is a manifestation of fear and lack of confidence in ourselves, and is totally unworthy of our great American tradition.

Terry Sanford is a U.S. Senator for North Carolina.

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