

SPECIAL SECTION: YE OLDE DAVIDSON

The Davidsonian

◆ "THE SOUTH'S FOREMOST COLLEGE WEEKLY" ◆

DAVIDSON COLLEGE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2008

VOLUME 99, NUMBER 18

Go Green and Contra



James Garrett '09, first time Contra dancer, with Katie Epstein showing him the ropes at the EAC Green Ball last Friday.

Davidson College to begin a dialogue amidst racial tensions

BY CLINT SMITH
Staff Writer

In last week's issue of The Davidsonian, a disturbing piece written by David Dennis '08 was published in the Perspectives section.

The article recounted the treatment Dennis' friends received from some Davidson students over the weekend, who racially profiled and stereotyped the visitors who had come to support Dennis in a concert at The Outpost.

Dennis' article has begun to reignite dialogue concerning racial prejudice at Davidson in a variety of venues, ranging from the classroom to Commons.

Many students seem to feel that the incident that occurred two Saturdays ago was blown out of proportion. They believe that it was simply a means for particular students to get attention based upon nothing more than exaggerated claims that made a harmless event appear much worse.

Others, however, believe that the incident is indicative of an extremely serious issue that has been ongoing on Davidson's campus. These students claim that incidents like this can no longer be categorized as "harmless" and require immediate attention.

While there are two sides to this story, there is no denying that issues of race relations have been increasingly prevalent this year on campus.

President Tom Ross claims that

the cause is not a spike in racial tension on campus, but simply an increase in dialogue that has brought these previously existing issues to the forefront of the campus' attention.

"I know that these issues can make people uncomfortable, but sometimes people have to be made uncomfortable in order to change," Ross said.

Conversely, some feel that the dialogue is doing more to hinder than help.

"All of this 'racism' talk is doing nothing to help bring us together but is only dividing us more," one anonymous student said.

Patterson Court President Paul Stroup '09 begs to differ, arguing that the dialogue has helped in addressing sensitive topics.

"Denying that racism exists will not help solve any problems: students must engage in discussion about racism and other prejudices to better understand one another," Stroup said. "Actions like the ones described by David are another reminder that Davidson still must actively combat ignorance and bigotry. It is disheartening that after so much effort to combat racism, it still permeates Davidson's social life."

Stroup also rejected claims that Patterson Court is directly responsible for facilitating prejudicial sentiments.

"The responsibility [for these acts] lies in a myriad of factors - many that predate students' arrival to Davidson. The responsibility is

upon all of us to respond to these incidents, and we must refuse to tolerate racism," Stroup said.

When asked what can ultimately be done to eliminate such sentiments, Stroup commented that the importance of forums and discussion panels cannot be underestimated.

"While I think that students must take the initiative to combat bigotry themselves, organizations certainly can help start the conversation. Just like the result of the Homophobia Real Talk dialogue is leading to a Patterson Court discussion of 'being out on the court,' there is certainly merit to forums, speakers and educational events that help address topics such as racism."

Chief of Police Fountain Walker agrees with Stroup's sentiment that there needs to be dialogue, but points out that both sides must be heard in order for there to be any real progress.

Walker asserts that often in these discussions, one group of students who deem themselves morally accurate on the issue blindly attacks the views of the students with whom they are supposed to be conversing.

Walker does not necessarily feel that these students should try and justify themselves and their belief to be right, but instead feels that people should understand that there is a fine line between bigotry and ignorance, the latter of which he

See Race, page 2

Robbery at BB&T puts town on edge

BY ALISSA IREI
Staff Writer

The suspect matches the description of the person in the banks' security camera footage, according to Davidson Chief of Police Jeanne Miller.

The robbery suspect was described in a campus-wide alert email from Director of Public Safety and Campus Police Fountain Walker as "a black male, about 5' 10" in height, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt with white patches."

Miller said that the defendant entered BB&T around 2 p.m. and

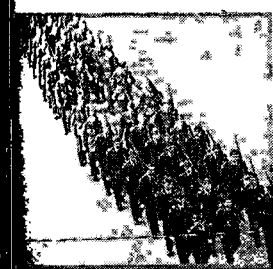
See Robbery, page 2

A suspect in last week's Davidson bank robbery turned himself in to Iredell County Police Saturday night.

The man, who is being held on related charges of failure to pay child support, is also suspected of robbing a bank in Mooresville approximately 15 minutes after the BB&T robbery occurred on Davidson's Main Street.

The Iredell County Sheriff's office is currently calling the man in custody "a person of interest."

INSIDE THIS WEEK



Davidson life during times of war

see YE OLDE DAVIDSON, PAGE 8



Harry Potter objects to Dumbledore

see YOWL, PAGE 11



Women's team wins Conference

see SPORTS, PAGE 16

Pulitzer Prize winning author speaks with Davidson community

BY BRENNNA KELLY
Staff Writer

Last night, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon presented the sixth annual Conarroe Lecture in the Duke Family Performance Hall.

A large audience attended the lecture, including students, faculty and members of the Davidson community.

While people attended the lecture for a variety of reasons, Chabon kept all his listeners entertained and interested for the entirety of his talk entitled, "Imaginary Homelands."

Joel Conarroe, the lecture's sponsor and namesake, gave Chabon a colorful introduction.

"[He has] the ear of a poet, the eye of a painter, the stamina of a long-distance runner and the...paradon my Spanish, 'cojones' of a

bullfighter," Conarroe said.

Chabon then launched into his speech, explaining the reasoning behind one of his most recent novels, "The Yiddish Policemen's Union."

This book, which Academy Award-winning directors Joel and Ethan Coen ("No Country for Old Men", "Oh, Brother Where Art Thou?", "Fargo") plan on making into a film, is set in a Yiddish-speaking Jewish refugee settlement in Alaska after World War II.

In this novel, Chabon wanted to convey a different perspective on what the "Jewish homeland" could have been.

In thinking up the idea for "Policemen's Union," Chabon explored the idea that had Israel not been declared the spiritual and physical home of Jews after the mass Jewish genocide of WWII, a settlement similar to the one in

"Policemen's Union" could have been an alternative homeland for European Jews.

In his lecture, Chabon humorously referenced in great length his discovery of a guidebook entitled, "Say It in Yiddish." In an essay he wrote in 1997, "Guidebook to a Land of Ghosts," he discussed this book and imagined the areas of the world in which such a travel book would actually be useful.

Where could one find actual use for a book that helps its reader articulate phrases such as "I need a tourniquet" in Yiddish?

Chabon said he brainstormed with places like Madagascar and Alaska as Yiddish communities in his essay.

Clearly the idea of a Jewish settlement in Alaska was something he wanted to expand on, and as a

See Chabon, page 3