

Davidson must admit racism exists

Jessica Thurbee

According to the book *Choosing the Right College*, Davidson is one of the places to go if one wants a college with a relatively separate black community. What does that mean? Well, it means that racism against blacks exists at Davidson.

The majority of people interviewed agree that racism at Davidson is subtle. "Racism is subtle—very subtle here, because if it were more blatant, more people would be aware of it." However, not all racism against blacks is subtle. Black students at Davidson have been stopped and asked by the police if they attend the College. Black students are repeatedly asked to show their ID cards. As one student put it, "The police force is horrible."

There are more horror stories of faculty members who practice racism in the classroom. Apparently, these professors will give a "C" to a black student, no matter what the quality of the work is. Some feel that the subtlety of the racism at Davidson is due to the

small number of black students attending the College.

I asked people if they thought there was a difference between racism here and where they were from. As can be expected, the answers vary. One student interviewed came from an integrated school that was 50% black and 50% white. This student had plenty of black friends and said the atmosphere at this high school was open and easy. Another student interviewed went to a 98% black school, and said that racism wasn't really an issue there. One student said he came from the north and that racism was not tolerated in any way, shape or form.

One of the things that needs work according to some is the image of Davidson as an "elite white anglo-saxon male" college. This image needs to change. The most noticeable evidence of racism at the school to one student was the looks this student received. In the opinion of this student, these looks seemed to say "you're here, but we're not really sure how you got here." Finally, I asked what people thought about having a predominantly all-black fraternity on campus. One student said that he felt that it might "rein-

force the dichotomy" that is already present on the campus. Another student thought that a fraternity of this type could be either a good idea or a bad idea depending on how it is handled. "It could be good, because it could help increase enrollment by black males who might feel more comfortable on a campus that has a black fraternity. However, it could be bad because once it is here it could be used as a leverage tool."

In other words, this student feels that as long as it is just a black fraternity, it will be good. But, it should never be used as a tool, a way to get things out of the college, a sort of blackmail. Another thought it was a great idea as long as one didn't have to be black to join. It should be open to everyone.

Racism is a touchy subject and one that a lot of people want to avoid. Almost nobody wants to admit that racism exists in their community, but it is something that this community must face.

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Reflections on being a member of co-ed PAX

Lucia Kendall

After having had such a wonderful experience during JYA last year I wondered if returning to Davidson might be a letdown. It wasn't. Last night when I should have been reading for my English 495 class I was thinking about all the things I love about "coming home" to Davidson, and I realized that most of them have to do with my eating house. So instead of telling you why I loved being in a foreign country, I want to tell you why I love being in PAX.

I love sitting around on Sunday evening after having eaten some semi-congealed, half-reheated leftover food and chatting with leftover PAXites who haven't yet wandered back to their books, and then hearing "Jive Bunny" playing on the stereo. When I go over to investigate I see Joe and Lara, in a burst of spontaneous energy, cutting up the rug in the best 50's dancing I've ever seen, ending in him flipping her backward over his shoulders. Then everyone applauds and Joe giggles a little, out of breath, while Lara, smiling, sinks to the ground mumbling that she will never dance that hard again (but she will).

I love sweeping the floor for my house clean-up: listening to mellow, warm-fuzzy, Cat Stevens songs on the stereo, looking through into the living room and seeing Ying stretched out on the sofa with a Chemistry book in her lap and her eyes closed. Nathan, Bradford, Bob, and Chris are concentrating on one of an endless series of bridge games, until Nathan drops some bizarrely funny remark and they all, especially Nathan, collapse into laughing fits.

I love seeing Mary walk up to Tim and look earnestly into his eyes, and put her arm around him and say "Hey, how's it going?" and really want to know.

I love the family atmosphere at PAX. I originally joined one of the women's eating houses and stayed there until about halfway through my sophomore year. All the members were nice to me and I enjoyed

my time there. But it was only when I came to PAX that I found a family.

I love being able to come down to the house after yet another crisis in my love life. I don't know who will be hanging around, but I'm looking for somebody to talk it over with and I find Marion, or Joe, or Janet, or Jim, who will advise me and console me, and give me a hug, and reassure me that I am lovable after all.

I love coming back from the grocery store with a dozen boxes of Pop Tarts, (I'm a co-board manager) and stacking them into an architecturally perfect pyramid on the breakfast table. As Sydney strolls in for the exec board meeting she sees them and her eyes light up like sparklers and she gasps with excitement, "Oh! Pop Tarts!"

I love walking in the door and having Jim look up from what he's doing and declare that I look too ravishing for words and then hug me as if he meant it. Or to be minding my own business, reading Calvin and Hobbes, and feel Steve come up behind me and put his arms around me and sigh deeply; and give me a peck on the forehead.

I love seeing Helene pout when she discovers that her beloved "honey bear," the plastic honey container whose tummy she likes to squeeze, has once again had its nose mercilessly mashed in by Bowe, who is off snickering good-naturedly in the corner.

I love hanging around as Nancy (this name has been changed to protect the not-so-innocent) informs us of some interesting facts that she has learned in her comparative anatomy class. She mentions that Joe is almost exactly the size of the average whale's penis, and the conversation degenerates from there.

I love all the hugs at PAX. Joe brags that he is the most hugged guy at Davidson College, and I would be inclined to agree. In fact, I would guess that all of the top ten hugged guys are in PAX. It feels very warm and comfortable to be around a group of people who aren't afraid to touch each other. We also give plenty of back massages and put arms around each other all the time.

I love hearing "Rock Lobster" come on at parties and remembering how whenever that song came on John David, a PAXite who graduated two years ago, used to dash across the room to grab me and pull me out to dance with him until the sweat sprayed from his forehead.

I love strolling in on Saturday morning for my daily bowl of cereal (in a poster on the wall Tony the Tiger himself reminds us that we can have one bowlful a day) and seeing three human blobs sprawled out asleep on the couches. Upon closer inspection I notice that one blob is actually made up of two people cuddled together.

I love being in a co-ed atmosphere. There are advantages to single-sex environments, but overall I believe that co-ed eating is much less artificial. I won't go so far as to say that we have spokespeople for "the female perspective" and "the male perspective." Instead we know each other not just as males or females but as individuals. We see each other not as members of the opposite sex, but as friends.

I love taking off for a PAX weekend in Greensboro to help Vickie, Sharon, and Linda, a bunch of PAX alumnae, move into their new apartment, and on the way home having Marion suggest that we stop at a roadside flea market where I buy a pair of fuchsia shorts for a quarter, and pay a couple bucks for enough pancake mix to feed the whole house for the next ten years. The woman who sells it to us decides to throw in two dozen bottles of salad dressing for free. Then Chris and I discuss deep religious questions all the way home.

I love knowing that I am in a group of people who genuinely enjoy spending time together. This enjoyment is the reason that, more than any other house I've seen, PAX members go down to the house just to hang out. I love the feeling that I can go down to the house at any time of the day or night (especially late at night) knowing that there will be food there (all the leftovers in the fridge are free game) and someone interesting to talk to.

I love hearing Chris and Nathan and Ginny repeat the same jokes from *Raising Arizona*, and laugh with the same enthusiasm that they always have. I love seeing how Ginny can inspire laughter just by making a silly face or by biting the heads, legs, and arms off the Teddy Grahams and lining up a row of the little amputees with nothing left but a tummy with a belly button in the middle. If anyone else did it would just be stupid, but with Ginny it's genuinely funny.

I love knowing that although we are all friends, there are many house members who are more than friends. I have no statistics to support this statement, but from my observations there is no doubt in my mind that PAXites have a much greater number of successful romantic relationships (with people from

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- All submissions should deal with subjects of interest to the campus community.
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- All submissions must be signed. Writers must present the editors with compelling reasons if they do not wish their names printed with their work.

- The staff will not edit commentaries for content or for style, but for the rules of English grammar only.
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- All submissions should include the author's address and phone number. Submissions to the "Commentaries" section should include the following information: the author's home city and state, graduating class, and major.