

## Charlotte celebrates acceptance at Pride Festival

BY AMOURA CARTER  
Arts & Living Editor

The Gateway village in downtown Charlotte filled with excitement last Saturday as people gathered to celebrate the Pride Charlotte festival.

According to its mission statement, Pride Charlotte is aimed at "empowering all LGBT and allied peoples to stand as unique individuals and together as a community, with the purpose of uniting as a creative, social, economic and political force."

Last week, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) and straight individuals had the opportunity to watch a gay comedy show, short film, and pageants, take a religious seminar about scripture and attend festive parties.

"Before going, I was really looking forward to the festival because I had never been to one before, but I heard they were amazing," said Katie Currie '09. "It's not often that you can get most of the gay people and gay supporters all in one spot in a city, but that is what the festival did."

Jessica Harding '08 also looked forward to meeting interesting new people.

"I was looking forward to seeing the many forms of diversity that the Charlotte area has to offer because I strongly feel that diversity enriches almost everything," Harding said.

Davidson's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) car-pooled a group of about 15 students to Charlotte on Saturday.

The students left at around 2 p.m. and



Akosua Goosby smiles with Pride Drag Queen.

enjoyed Pride Charlotte until 6 p.m.

The students visited booths from Wachovia and Bank of America to Gay reli-

gious groups. They also watched Drag King and Queen performers and listened to a gospel choir.

Many students said they did not know what to expect, and some were both pleasantly and unpleasantly surprised by the festival.

"I really enjoyed the festival. It was amazing to see so many people who have been discriminated against come together to celebrate themselves and show everyone that they are proud to be who they are," said Currie.

Jordan Wall '08 had a mixed reaction to the event.

"I enjoyed and didn't enjoy [it]. I was fairly disappointed that it was all drinking, cigarettes and business booths. There was nothing that really struck me as showing pride in sexuality other than the consume goods you could purchase," Walls said. "I enjoyed the festival purely because I'd never gotten to see the normalcy that is gay life, not that I thought it was especially strange but rather I'd only seen glimpses of it."

Next year's Pride Charlotte cannot come too soon for some students, said Currie.

"I will definitely attend the festival next year. I also will try to go to the NC Pride in September because that one is supposed to be even bigger and better," Currie said.

The North Carolina Parade and Festival will take place Sept. 30 in Durham. With floats, concerts and competitions, it is North Carolina's largest parade.

For more information on attending area Pride festivals, visit [pridecharlotte.com](http://pridecharlotte.com).

## Dating at Davidson: join the revolution

BY DARRYL RATCLIFF  
Staff Writer

Sometime last semester, I got the idea of writing a dating column for The Davidsonian.

I was really concerned with mental health and wellness issues at our college, and I have always been fascinated with the different types of relationships, people and communication.

After attending a Dating at Davidson panel discussion sponsored by the Lily Program, I knew that I would definitely write it. So I gathered two of my best buddies and set out on the monumental task of providing thoughtful commentary on various issues dealing with dating and relationships at Davidson.

This column does have several biases.

First, it is written entirely by heterosexual males.

Second, it joyfully promotes dating.

Third, no one is an "expert" on the subject.

Yet we have thought and debated for countless hours about each column, and we hope that even if every reader disagrees with everything we say, at least they will gain something valuable from thinking about the topics for themselves.

At Davidson College, there are two commonly-held stereotypes about relationships. One is that people randomly hook up, often while

under the influence of alcohol. The other is that people are in very serious long term relationships that have a high possibility of resulting in marriage.

These two stereotypes are the polar ends of a large relationship spectrum, but they are the ones that are most celebrated and talked about in our student culture.

Developmentally, many of us are not ready for really intense relationships, especially when we first enter Davidson. Yet at the same time, many of us desire something greater than a drunken hookup.

Society has long come up with an answer to this question: dating. We strongly believe that Davidson students, and by extension Davidson College, would be a happier and healthier institution if a strong dating culture existed on campus.

We advocate a fun, low-maintenance and low-expectation form of dating. We realize that many Davidson students have limited or no dating experience, and in the next few articles we will address some basic questions regarding dating. However, first we want to answer the question: "Why date?"

Dating is the process by which we reconcile our ideals to reality.

We all have an idea about our "ideal" mate. We want someone tall, smart, funny, creative, athletic, caring, compassionate, attractive, fun, witty.

The prob-

lem is that we are often not completely correct in what we think we are attracted to.

To phrase it another way, we don't always know who we want. I may think I want a smart and creative person, but have the time of my life on a date with an athletic and caring person.

This doesn't mean I don't like smart, creative people, but perhaps I should also consider caring athletic people as well.

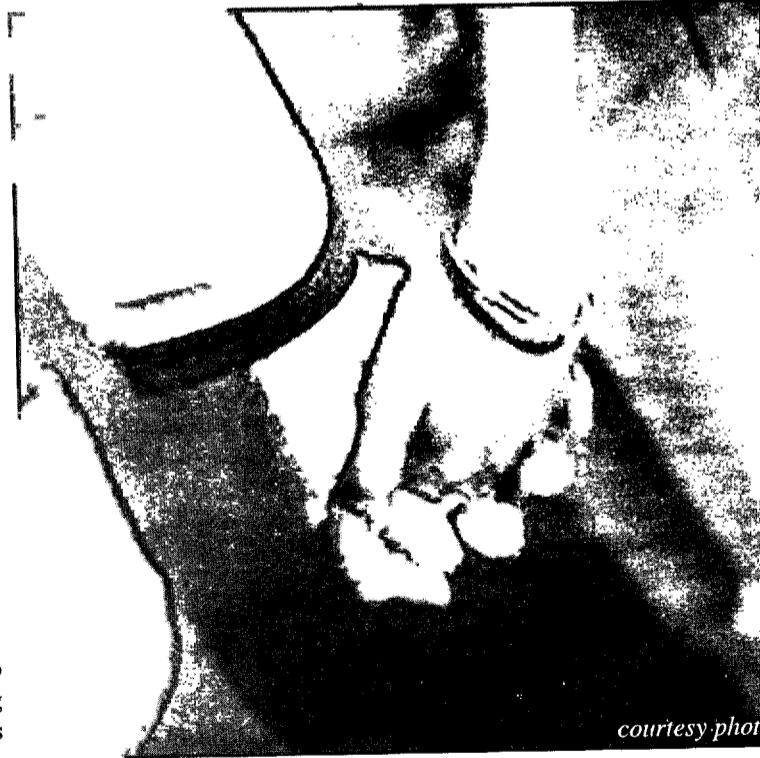
Or perhaps I learn that although I value witty people as friends, I can't deal with a very sarcastic romantic partner. The point is that you don't know unless you date.

There are also certain social skills that one can only learn by dating. There are some things that one can do around friends that won't fly on a date.

The ability to interact well with people we don't know in various social situations is a wonderful skill to have.

Furthermore, dating allows us to meet new people and learn something about them. You probably won't know someone's life story after one date, but you will know much more about them than if you had a two minute conversation as you both walked to Chambers.

Not every date will lead to a romantic relationship, but even if it just leads to a



courtesy photo

casual friendship, then it was time very well spent.

Finally, dating allows us to learn about ourselves. What we like, what we don't like, how we interact, what are prejudices, what makes our hearts flutter.

The journey to know oneself is one of the hardest and most important tasks that we have in life. Dating is an invaluable tool to achieving this goal.

One of our favorite shows growing up was the Magic School Bus. In the spirit of Miss Frizzle, Davidson students we urge you to "Take chances, make mistakes, get messy and date!"

If you have any suggestions or comments please contact Darryll Ratcliff at [daratcliff@davidson.edu](mailto:daratcliff@ davidson.edu).

