

A Few Last Words . . . Unless Something Really Big Happens

When I first began writing this column, I was asked to write mostly for a freshman audience. I was a little unsure about the overall tenor I wanted to project. While I felt a real need to discuss aspects of the College deserving of scrutiny, I wanted to avoid the negativity that is the hallmark of too many publications of all kinds. Another fear, and one which proved to be unfounded, was that I would run out of things to discuss. A person could make a life-long career out of responding to the events which transpire on this campus.

I guess I expected a lot of things when I began writing for this paper—some of those expectations have come to fruition and others have not. I've always tried to focus on the things with which I was involved, and perhaps one thing I did not expect was my eventual tiring of wanting to discuss those things at all. After serving on committees searching for answers to inflammatory questions—issues like the alcohol policy, or race and gender relations, or the direction of Patterson Court, or admissions recruiting goals, or more broadly, just how much influence college authorities ought to have over their students in the early 1990's—well, after all that, I've decided that I've said my piece. It's time for another perspective, for someone else to write about the issues facing Davidson students, and I have a feeling Alex Crumbley will do that and more. The transition in the Editorial Board provides a good jumping-off place for me. In this last column, I am

taking advantage of one last chance to go on the record on a few disparate issues.

On Patterson Court:

Last week, Kirby Shealy wrote in Deep Thoughts his belief that Patterson Court ought to remove



Andrew Spainhour

itself from the business of food service. The houses on the Court would exist as many fraternities and sororities across the nation do—as social clubs. Parties, service projects, and overall intra-house interaction would remain unchanged, but students would eat with other students, regardless of social affiliation. I think it's a wonderful idea, and one whose time has come, for it affords students the opportunity to socialize with friends who may not share the same social affiliation, much less the same gender. And for those

who want to eat *en masse* with their brothers or fellow eating house members, a Commons-type atmosphere provides ample right and room to do so. To that end, I don't buy the argument that house unity would suffer; rather, as Kirby pointed out, houses potentially would have to deal less with apathy and rampant absences from meetings. Kirby is on to a good idea, and one with which most house members would probably agree, except for maybe the sophomore members of houses, for whom everything is still new and wonderful.

It seems patently obvious to me that Patterson Court needs to try something new. I need only point to the standing room success stories of Back Street and the Pub to demonstrate that the Court is no longer the pre-eminent social attraction at Davidson, which it undeniably was my freshman and sophomore years. The idea Kirby articulated last week is a least worth considering, and if it's wrong in the minds of a majority of students, I hope someone else will publish another innovative idea.

On Religion:

Last year, I wrote in one of these columns that DCPC failed to attract many College students. I was on the CCRL at the time, and I've always regretted not making that belief more of an issue. In my mind, an 11:00 a.m. church service for which people are expected to dress up is not much of an alternative to sleeping late and driving to

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Guilty Before Proven Innocent!

By Marilyn Ambrose

What does the judiciary system have to offer African-Americans? For many, namely, African-Americans, this is not a rhetorical question. Upon the results of several cases that involved African-Americans, chaos evolved about the justice system. African-Americans are not really sure about what the justice system has to offer them.

Yes, of course, African-Americans are educated, too! They know what is stated in the United States Constitution. Still, what is stated in the Constitution and what occurs in the courts are in direct opposition with each other.

When the United States Constitution was written, it was not written with the equal consideration of African-Americans. Indeed, the words were chosen very carefully by the forefathers of this country to suggest the inclusion of African-Americans, but past and current evidence has shown otherwise.

Yet another example is the "The Pledge of Allegiance" which reads, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Liberty and justice for all? Give me a break! Who are we trying to fool here?! Were African-Americans free then and better yet, are they free today? Is there really justice for all or does the word "justice" imply "just us"

Caucasian Americans? Ideally, I would like to answer "yes" to the former serious questions, but realistically, I cannot.

The most recent and national evidence that I have to support my argument is the Rodney King incident. In this situation, (for those of you don't know), an African-American was beaten by Caucasian policemen who claim that there was no alternative to the beating. The beating was video-taped by a Samaritan, and for months you

"Is there really justice for all or does the word 'justice' imply 'just us' Caucasian Americans."

could not escape viewing it. The tape (81 seconds long) showed several Caucasian policemen beating

a handcuffed African-American male. When the case went to court, the policemen were acquitted.

Of course, there were many Caucasian males and females who tried to justify the verdict. I am not surprised because these are the same individuals who warn their children of "big black men." And these are the same type people who were on the jury. The only thing is that they were not selected for jury duty.

My point is that just because we have a constitution that uses idealistic words, and a justice system that is set up in an idealistic fashion, does not guarantee African-Americans anything. Keep in mind that the judge in the case was a person before he came a judge; the jurors were people before they were appointed as jurors; the po-

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In Black and White . . .

What Constitutes Being Black

Pretend you're a stranger on campus and you're people-watching in the Union. You see two groups: the members of one group are all white, except for one who is black. The black person, by his clothing, manner of speech, and interests, seems to fit in with the rest of the group. The members of the second group are all black. Is your reaction to the black person in the mostly-white group different from your reaction to the black people in the all-black group?

The goal of this scenario is to bring up the question of what constitutes being black. It's more than a general skin, hair, and eye color, more than racial identity; it's a general cultural identity. However, there are many traditions within the black culture and no single black person practices them all. You'll find different types of black people who listen to different types of music, eat different types of food, and speak different

dialects. Not all of them are going to hang out exclusively with black people.

The problem is that people in general, including Davidson folks,



Scott Windham & Deidre Montague

often treat this question as a simple matter of skin color, identifying a person's race with a specific culture. If you're black, you're expected to act black. If you're white, you're expected to act white. People who don't fit these general expectations are treated as odd-

ities.

Black people who hate rap, can't dance and whose idols are U2 are seen as not totally black by blacks and whites alike. Those

who go to a predominantly white college run into conflict and doubt from friends at home. Black people who hang out with mostly white people are regarded differently from those who hang out with mostly black people. White people who love rap, can dance well, and would shoot all members of U2 on sight are received with surprise.

Even though many white people,

in feeble attempts at dancing, are largely incapable of more than a honky-esque jumping up and down in approximate correlation to the beat, and even though many black people would kick sand in Willie

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Gays in the Military

By Will Lazenby

I was going to start this article by telling you what a problem it would be to have homosexuals in our military. I was going to say that there would be a problem with the housing and bathing facilities. I was sure that the backbone of the services, the enlisted males, would never accept gays into their units, because it would break tradition and decrease unit pride and morale. But then I remembered something I had heard years ago.

I was transported back to first grade, Shorecrest School, 1980. I recalled lots of voices, reciting in unison: "I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America . . . one country . . . indivisible . . . with liberty and justice for all." For all. Period. Remember the pledge? It's what most of us were brought up saying. It's what we learned, and it seems like it's what we've forgotten. Not just for whites or blacks. Not just for males or females. Not just for heterosexuals. For all.

So I can't tell you that we shouldn't have homosexuals in our military. It doesn't make sense. Equality and freedom are two of the things that America stands for. These are two things we have fought for. If there is any organization that should embody these

two ideals, it is our military.

We've already gone through this once. Now blacks are in every branch of the military, and have proven to fight just as well as any white person. Granted, this is a more complex problem. Color is a very different issue than sexual orientation. But there is still a prejudice against homosexuals, just like there was, (and to some degree, still is), against blacks, that shouldn't be there. Racism is a problem that we have dealt with and are still dealing with. Our nation has grown up a lot since the times of slavery. Now we have a more complex problem. But we are a more sophisticated, educated nation, better equipped to handle this ordeal.

Letting admitted homosexuals into the military, will not be easy. There is going to be a lot of internal strife and conflict over his issue. People aren't going to like it. There will be harassment and hazing. Regardless, homosexuals should be allowed to join the ranks of our military. Anyone, black or white, male or female, straight or gay, who has the desire to serve in defense of his or her country should have that opportunity.