

Please excuse our dust

I don't know exactly how early it was, but I do know that no rational human being should have been out of bed. Yet, obviously someone was — several people were, actually. It was still dark when I groggily awoke to the sound of heavy machinery right outside my window, heard the rumble of dirt being transferred, the backing-up beep that sounded just a bit too much like an alarm clock, even the occasional shout from one coworker to another. And it was pretty irritating at the time. After spending half the night studying, I was ready for a few hours of heavy sleep before class, sleep that the construction site outside was interrupting.

But worse was when I walked outside many, many hours later on my way to class. For the first time, I looked around and thought, *Wow, Davidson just doesn't look that pretty.* The entire area between Sentelle and Cannon had been torn up. Gone was a sizeable chunk of the brick wall that runs along dorm row. The brick path that runs behind Sentelle and Cannon was buried behind red netting. And there were large tubes of *something* sitting on the lawn, presumably waiting to be placed in the ground.

After I thought about it for a second, I realized that these were the mythical steam pipes that need to be run from the laundry to Watson. And I remembered the

article in a long-ago issue of The Davidsonian in which someone large and in charge warned that campus would be, shall we say, not in prime form for a few weeks. But it didn't really sink in — until recently.

What kind of impact does this have on the College? Obviously, visiting prospectives must see things differently now that our campus is filled with construction vehicles, not only at the sites of Watson and Turner, but also in more random places. Have they had the advantage of seeing Davidson before the construction began? Do they know what's going on? Does the appearance of our campus negatively affect their opinions of Davidson?

I hope not, because, for all the "agony" it causes us now, for all the dirt and the inconvenience, this construction will ultimately be of benefit. In other words, building is a happy thing. Watson offers space for new labs and allows for further research and other work in the departments of psychology and biology. When Turner is finished, the women of Patterson Court will have a shiny new house in which to eat, play, and serve the Davidson community. And eventually, the new Union will facilitate the making of an even closer community among Davidson students through such things as study rooms, a post office, and a food establishment with longer hours.

So while we may be subjected to a not-as-beautiful campus and some detours in the meanwhile, the means surely justify the ends. Just remember that when the construction vehicles start up again tomorrow morning.

Sarah E. Ogden

The Davidsonian

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Submit all letters to the Davidsonian office on the third floor of the Union by Thursday at noon. Or e-mail any submissions to Davidsonian@davidson.edu.

Please turn in any submissions on a Macintosh-formatted disk, preferably saved in either WordPerfect or Rich Text formats. All submissions should be no longer than 500 words.

The editors reserve the right to cut and otherwise adjust submissions for space requirements and clarity. **No anonymous submissions will be published.**

◆ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ◆

Issues of gender, sexuality, and identity

To the Editor:

In the Sept. 22 issue of The Davidsonian, Adelaide Leitzel writes that the program of events planned for the 1998 Homecoming and 25th Anniversary of Co-Education at Davidson "fails to commemorate the contributions, sacrifices, and achievements of Davidson women" with its inclusion of Gloria Steinem, Chickspeare, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. I disagree. I am particularly delighted to celebrate 25 years of co-education at Davidson by welcoming Gloria Steinem, an entirely appropriate representative of women's empowerment, to lecture. I read Steinem's "Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions" during the summer following my sophomore year. I returned to Davidson for my junior year as an enthusiastic and energetic feminist. In the years since my graduation in 1986, I have been proud to call myself, among other things, a feminist, a friend of lesbians and gays, and an actress, director, and fundraiser for the arts.

I am the Director of Development for North Carolina Dance Theatre. In addition, I and a group of friends, including some Davidson alumni, started Chickspeare, a theater group which produces all-female productions of Shakespeare's plays. Chickspeare's principal goal is to provide performance opportunities for women. Our efforts are a true celebration of the contributions, sacrifices, and achievements of at least five Davidson women and more than 50 Charlotte men and women who have participated thus far in our projects. In addition to Davidson Homecoming weekend, Chickspeare is proud to have been invited to perform at several local venues this fall, including as a workshop presenter for the OutCharlotte Festival in October and with our own evening of performances Nov. 12 and 13 at the Great Aunt Stella Center in Charlotte.

Ms. Leitzel claims that "Davidson women, like Davidson men, earn their place at Davidson College with God-given talent and moral character. . . [I]ndividual woman's God-given abilities and grit opened Davidson's doors to girls [sic], just as each student. . . earns admittance today." Although Ms. Leitzel believes that her acceptance to Davidson was entirely the result of her own achievements and relationship with God, I know that it was not my individual merits alone that got me into Davidson and kept me there, but the support, encouragement and financial sacrifices of my mother, my teachers, my friends and my community. I also know that had it not been for the efforts of the feminist movement—the sea-change in societal attitudes, as well as the legal rights fought for and won by feminists on behalf of all women and men — there might not have been a place for me at Davidson when I was ready to go. Twenty five years is not a very long time to be celebrating.

Ms. Leitzel further suggests that a proper celebration of Davidson womanhood would exclude speakers like Steinem and groups like Chickspeare and FLAG that explore issues of sexual identity and sexual difference. Again, I disagree. In fact, I am reassured by Davidson's overdue efforts to recognize the gay and lesbian community in alumni cultivation efforts in general and at the 25th Anniversary of Co-Education at Davidson celebration in particular. As for issues of gender, sexuality, and identity, they preoccupy us not merely in the bedroom, as Ms. Leitzel imagines, but in the board room, in the ballot box, on the stage and on the sidewalk, in the supermarket and in the media. Any celebration of the accomplishments of women, and Davidson women in particular, is not limited to issues of gender, sexuality, and identity. Yet by allowing these questions and issues to share the same prominent platform with discussions of professional development, parenting, creativity, and ethical concerns, Davidson honors all of its women and its men, taking tentative steps towards truly recognizing the diversity that has always been a part of the Davidson community as well as the efforts and accomplishments of all of us who claim to share in it.

Anne Lambert '86
Co-Founder, Chickspeare

Environmental conservation

To the Editor:

Everybody appears to be stressing out about the plans to close Chambers at night to save money. It seems to me that a major point has been neglected — environmental conservation. How can \$250,000 a year of energy be justifiably put to such a use? As Davidson students, I would have hoped that we would be conscientious enough to realize that such a waste of limited resources is a crime against ourselves and our children. I really cannot understand how such a privileged group can be making so much noise about such a small inconvenience.

Chris Pearson '02