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Delivered this morning by: Jack
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OUR CAMPUS DEMOCRACY

Most people on campus are aware of the recent instances of bias/hate on campus: A swastika was drawn in the library and poster vandalization targeting the BSU and Outlook. To echo what President Weinberg has said, these acts are hateful, they are harmful and has no place in our community and Denison as a liberal arts institution. While I do believe these acts are either to be “edgy” or from a place of hate that needs to be confronted and address there is also a larger issue. As a community, we suck in engaging across difference either to better understand someone’s view or to confront problems.

Denison is a diverse place but it does not take a person all that long to figure out that we are a fractured community. People tend to generally associate with people like themselves. Greek Life with Greek Life. Students of color with students of color. Progressive students with progressive students and conservative students with conservative students.

There are a lot of reasons for that: Finding a sense of belonging here with others, people you work within orgs, a busy culture that forces you to spend your time only on your interests, or maybe it is just human nature to be around people like you, among others reasons. Those are all valid and maybe some of them are good reasons. I am not here to argue against them or advocate for people to give up their community or groups. That is a different issue, but we must be aware that this causes problems for our campus in being able to engage across difference.

I was recently going through old floppy disks in the Bullsheet office from the 1990s. There was a whole bunch of them and some contained content what went into ‘Sheets. That content was largely people arguing and confronting people on issues. Fraternity members were talking about the social life they provide for all students while other students pointed out the reckless and dangerous behavior by fraternities all in the lead up to them becoming de-residential. There were also students criticizing chalking done by GLAD (predecessor to Outlook) for National Coming Out Day as too sexualized for campus and then people defending it and the broader issues with being LGBT in the 1990s.

We do not need to relitigate those issues but it is clear that those types of discussions and confrontations, both civil and uncivil, do not happen anymore. If there is a campus issue, people now tend to only discuss it in their own groups of people and rarely bound that. This could be because people are afraid of losing social capital within their groups or potentially making someone/group pissed at them or just going against the grain of the dominate campus thinking. While some students do cross differences, mostly those in leadership positions, most students do not.

This is a detriment to our campus and our democracy. Our democracy only works when people are engaged and their ideas shared and debated so that the best possible one for most people can be found. For campus, issues and problems can only be addressed when all the different stakeholder groups are involved. We have been failing in this. Not just in the Bullsheet, which is a means for discussion, but all over. The Sexual Respect Dinners last year were beneficial but they only went so far as the people that needed to be in that room were not in the room. The video response that is being prepared to counter the poster vandalizing showing the benefit of C3 orgs on campus is needed but its extent only reaches as far as the people that watch it. I doubt that the people that committed the vandalism or target C3 orgs to induce fears, the people that do need to actually watch it, are going to.

We have to be more willing to stake our views and opinion even in the face of potential social consequences. That is easy for me to say as a white man with generally liberal views on this campus, but I still believe that we must or the future of our Denison Community and our larger liberal democracy, which is under siege, is in jeopardy.

Continues on back...

FROM FRONT

This is no small task, and this piece will not solve all of it. As denisonians, we are socialized to avoid conflict. The statement that denisonians are too apathetic to act rings all too true. But we have the tools. We have a statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression that protects the broadest possible right to free expressions. The organizations and groups we are apart of that lead to our fractured campus can become places support that can help mitigate any social consequences from speaking out or dissenting. We also have knowledge of the problems on campus. There is not a lack of social consciousness. We just have to be willing to engage in civil and uncivil conflict with others more, to accept that democracy is at its best when it is messy and evolving, and accept the potential for offense and harm, so long as that's not the goal of the expression, if we are to have the best possible Denison Community and our shared democracy.

STUDENT VOICE

- Zach Correia, Head Writewr

A STORY FROM JAX'S CHILDHOOD

Hi everyone. I'd like to share a harrowing tale from my childhood, or tweenhood, rather. I think I was eleven going on twelve. Sixth grade. The prime of my life, really. If only I knew.

Allow me to set the scene: It was Labor Day, in lush Greensboro, North Carolina. I was spending time with my family and they decided that in typical American Family Labor Day Fashion, they wanted to go to the pool. I glanced outside my window and noted how overcast it was and decided I did not want to join my mother, father, and younger brother (who happens to attend Denison University as well. His name is Four, he is a first-year, and he can corroborate this tale. Approach him. Tell him I sent you) at the pool due to the weather.

And, what's this? Much to my shock, my parents agreed to this request and decided to grant me my solitude. A peaceful afternoon at home. It occurred to me that while I had on many occasions been left at home with younger children to watch over (such as the aforementioned sibling) I had never been left at home completely alone.

Let me tell you: I was ecstatic. I LOVE being alone and always have. Once my family was out the door, I poured myself a full bowl of goldfish (which is, without a doubt, a pre-teen girl's equivalent to a crisp glass of chardonnay after a long day working in Human Resources) kicked up my feet, put on my favorite episode of Degrassi: The Next Generation, and placed the bunny rabbit my family had recently

brought into our home as a new pet (his name was Buddha) on my lap for some quality bonding.

It. Was. Blissful. About ten minutes in, I got up from the living room to the kitchen for a glass of water, bringing Buddha the bunny rabbit with me. He had in the past displayed sociopathic tendencies and could not be left unsupervised.

Now, this detail is very important: at the time, my family was living in what was effectively an estate that had formerly belonged to my late aunt, and we had been charged with the task of living in the house, managing upkeep so that it would sell. This house was genuinely enormous. That's a story for another 'Sheet, but the reason this is significant is that you know just how far the kitchen was away from the front door.

I hear the doorbell ring. I had been told from a very young age to never open the door when there were no adults in the house, which is good advice, but do this day has instilled me with a paranoia that makes me nearly unable to open a door at any time because it has not yet registered that when I am alone in a house, I am technically a present adult. And so, I ignore it. The person will surely leave without causing disturbance and I would be able to return to watching Drake pre-rap career performing tear-jerking drama performances on MTV.

But, no. I hear the door open (it had been locked) and a man's voice shouting, the words incomprehensible, but absolutely a man's voice. An intruder. I have to act quickly. I grab Buddha the bunny rabbit and put him in a paper wastebasket to

contain him and keep him safe. I grab my motorola flip phone and sprint out the kitchen door, not even thinking to close the door behind me.

I go to the garage, lock myself in a closet within that garage, white knuckling the door handle as if my prepubescent body is going to prevent this intruder from knocking down the door. I call 911 and frantically explain my situation to the dispatcher, who tells me to stay put, help is on the way.

About five minutes of being certain I am inches away from being murdered or abducted pass before I hear my mother's voice frantically calling for me outside. I open the door and start screaming, "THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE HOUSE! I'M ON THE PHONE WITH 911, I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL BUT WE NEED TO-"

My mom and dad grab onto me, frantically trying to calm me down before my mom sheepishly says, "Jax, it was me. I was trying to scare you. There's no one in the house. I am so, so sorry."

You read that correctly. They had come home early from the pool, BECAUSE IT WAS OVERCAST, and my mother, a full-grown woman, was so dutifully committed to scaring the shit out of me that she feigned a man's voice, not even CONSIDERING the fact that I might think it was real and call the AUTHORITIES, who were pretty much horrified. And it was convincing. I have never been the same. Thank you for reading.

-Jax Preyer, Managing Editor

HUMOR

Staff "Is their apartment ceiling leaking?" Box

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