

opinion

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BROADSIDE

George Mason University's Student Newspaper

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Musings of Student #GOO

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs will not talk to students. It sounds ironic, I know, but try it. Go to his office. You won't be given a sit down appointment time, you won't be asked to come back later, you will be directed to a form, identified by a G prefixed serial number which will pass through several bureaucratic processes, and may, or may not reach the person who represents our effective voice to the university.

I've been at Mason for five years and have worked full time to put myself through college. I understand that this situation isn't universal, but the uneasy feeling of not being heard is certainly prevalent throughout the student body. We all would agree that our concerns of parking have fallen on deaf ears, 100 level classes have exploded into sizes of preposterous anonymity and, I would argue, the majority of us feel disconnected from the institution as a whole. I fear that as an entity, and as reflected in its policies towards its students, this will only get worse as our alma mater observes its manifest destiny over Northern Virginia.


Over the past few months, I've been attempting to get permission on a minor course substitution that has withheld my graduation. Despite the approval of my advisor and the Registrar's Office, it was declined on an issue of course

numbers. To be fair, my adviser, LaKesha Anderson, has been extremely helpful and an advocate of helping me graduate. When my waiver was declined by Dean Jamie Cooper, who oversees undergraduate affairs, I simply wanted to sit down, and speak with him about my situation. Upon arriving at his office, I was offered several forms which I've already submitted, and told it was against policy for a student to talk to the dean directly. Of course this is no fault of the dean himself, but in itself, is scary—but as Mason grows larger, in campus size, class size and capacity, I see this as devolution of us as students, into simple numbers who, semester by semester, contribute to the bottom line of a growing education factory.


Mason is an institution that prides itself on diversity; an understanding, tolerance, and blending of different people with different backgrounds. But as it grows, the university itself is developing its own culture and behavior that undermines the idealism of its mantra. I beseech us, as students, not to let them forget we are individuals, not just G numbers, and to acknowledge and treat us as such. I'm not advocating an intrinsic right for special treatment; I'm advocating a consideration for human treatment.

Aaron Truax

Eamonn Rockwell



WRITER



In the world of low-to-mid-quality college journalism, there are usually two types of editors depending on what kind of school you go to. Type A believes our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ says Support The Troops blah blah blah 9/11 and you're all wrong for supporting gays or women or Muslims and you'll burn in hell, you heathenous

feminazis. Type B was very lonely in high school, weighs a few hundred pounds and wants us to live in peace and harmony unless you don't believe that transgender-on-vegetable sex education should be taught to kindergartners and supported with billions of tax dollars that are being wasted on defense spending/Israel/blah blah blah corporations.

I am neither of those people. I'm the type of editor who will set you on fire for no reason at all. When it comes to an opinion section, I feel that opinions and facts should be in the same area, but only to prevent more unnecessary lawsuits that are tearing this nation apart. With too much detail and not enough soul, the paper becomes a listing of boring events that nobody cares about. News, in its most perfect form, is a telling of who did what where and when. Occasionally you can throw in a why if you want to win a Pulitzer. If I wanted news, I wouldn't read the opinion

section, which should contain people's beliefs and their flimsy or good reasoning of why they support said belief. The reader, not the editor, should decide how racist or stupid a writer is and whether or not their work is worth reading.

Anyone who has enough balls (or ovaries, I don't want to get into a big heteronormative thing here) to write for me will be showered in riches and glory that even the pharaohs of Egypt would call extravagant. Chances are that you don't, which is nothing to be ashamed of. It simply means that you are a sissy, and I will make fun of you accordingly. Opinions are a rare and more important gem that can be discussed and admired, unlike the ugly coal-like necessity that is the common news article, and therefore I will do my best to provide you with brilliant gems that you can pawn for beer money.

I want to make you read *Broadside* (preferably without using threats), but I don't want to have to report on actual news

and issues in the Mason community that you're supposed to care about but probably don't. Instead, I will aim to make the paper readable, and preferably ridiculous. The vast majority of us recognize that a commuter-school newspaper is the equivalent to the interoffice newspaper, in that nobody reads it and it's usually written by that Carol broad who wears those ugly sweaters and will probably die a virgin when her cats finally eat her. Having said that, the least I can do is try to fill that empty void you feel when you walk onto campus and pick up the paper. If you want to help fill that soul-numbing emotional black hole, just come into the *Broadside* office during whenever the hell my office hours are and wow me. I have a short attention span and a fondness for garter belts, so I look forward to those of you who are funny and can at least write well or throw wads of cash at me. Good luck.

Inaugural Gold

Obama Replicates Spirit of MLK's "I Have a Dream"

MATT TODD
Connect2Mason Breaking News Director

As our 44th president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, like another African-American hero Martin Luther King, Jr., has a dream for America. Despite the slight slip-up in which President Barack Obama forgot a line in the "Presidential Oath," his speech proceeding that made the kind of impression Martin Luther King, Jr. made when he gave his famous speech in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. The speech was given exactly on the opposite side of the National Mall at the Lincoln Memorial to more than 250,000 civil rights supporters.

President Obama delivered the lines so intensely, without a single moment of hesitation, and spoke effectively, much like he has throughout the bulk of his campaign. Viewers and attendees shed tears; many nodded their heads in accord; and in the end, the applause roared and the U.S. flags waved by the thousands harmoniously. Here are my takes on several key moments in the 18-minute long speech.

Thanking Former President George W. Bush and Current Conditions
"I thank President Bush for his service to our nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition."

President Obama's sportsmanship has been tremendous throughout the campaign and throughout the election. The transition has been smooth with the media, even the conservative media, being a little kinder and gentler during this process.

On the other hand, while thanking former President Bush, I could not help but feel President Obama was taking a

few jabs at him later on when he talked about the current state of the country.

"That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet."

A subliminal verbal prod? It is more than likely considering President Obama has been more outspoken about Bush's presidency throughout his campaign (more than his Republican opponent Sen. John McCain, who also criticized the Bush Administration), but it's graceless to say at the inauguration whom exactly was to blame these past eight years.

Again, we are reminded sadly how much the housing market has suffered, along with the job market, folding businesses, and so on. President Obama looks to this day, this era, as a time of "change." Promising to stabilize the housing market, job market, health care, education, etc., is a substantial promise to make.

Obama's MLK, Jr. Moment

"Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met. On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

On this day, we come to

proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics."

The moment in Obama's speech that reminded me emphatically of King's speech (in construction and the general mood), and the highlights of that speech as well were his "On this day..." moments.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood."

President Obama shed a great deal of light unto us and assured us that he has to straighten out the sloppy politics that have snarled our economy and everything else since 2001. A promise of unity, a promise to end the war in Iraq, a promise to balance the unbalanced and a promise to put a stop to the corrupt politics that put the country in near shambles to begin with. Much like MLK Jr.'s followers in 1963, Obama helped strengthen our faith.

Once Again, "Hope" and "Change"

"We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our

time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions—that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America."

Never forget President Obama's solid platform, one that brings change and revives the hopes of Americans. His affirmation that we are still one of the world's strongest nations helped renew my conviction in the whole system. He speaks truth and knows it when he reminds us we are no less productive or inventive despite the economic crisis and we still have the greatest capabilities to bring back what was lost in the last eight years. If anyone has fallen, then it's time to stand up, begin again, and make a comeback.

The Lion in Winter

"America. In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back, nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations."

The fact that his roaring presence could bring an end to our current state and bring us back to where we were pre-W is electrifying. President Obama has made history in more ways than anyone could ever have imagined. He's aware of the present dilemmas and knows the challenges he's up against as the first African-American president. His messages of hope have always relayed exactly that.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down



Washington Capitals are still first in the Southeastern Division and second in the Eastern Conference behind the Boston Bruins, but need to improve on the road and overtake those Penguins and Sidney "Glassjaw" Crosby as the favorite NHL team.



President Barack Obama works to fulfill numerous campaign promises, including closing the Guantanamo Bay prison, approving stem cell testing and reversing many other controversial decisions of the Bush Administration.



Economy still blows hard. Instead it should go hard and go global, like DJ Khaled.

Quote



of the Week

"Absolute truth is a very rare and dangerous commodity in the context of professional journalism."
--Hunter S. Thompson

LETTER FROM OUR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

Why Mason Needs a 24-Hour Library



PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

George Mason University has seen tremendous success and growth since we became an independent university in 1972. By making good strategic decisions that have immediate benefits and achieve long-term goals, Mason has become a top public university in a few short decades. Now, only four years away from celebrating our 40th Anniversary as an independent institution, Mason needs to take the next steps that will continue our rise into the upper echelon of public Universities: Mason needs to offer a 24-hour library.

Many top universities offer a 24-hour library. The

University of Virginia's Clemmons Library and the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's Robert B. House Undergraduate Library are both open to students 24 hours a day from Sunday morning until Friday evening.

Students today have more responsibilities than ever. Mason, as it has in the past, must continue to address ever-evolving student needs. Jobs, internships, student organization memberships, and athletic teams are all common student commitments that create a lifestyle that lends itself to studying long after midnight, which is when Fenwick Library currently closes.

There are two segments of the Mason student population who would benefit most from library that was open to students twenty-four hours a day on the weekdays: non-residential students and residential freshmen. Non-residential students, especially those enrolled in science majors, constantly find themselves facing the following situation: I have an exam in my 9 a.m. class tomorrow. I need to study all night to prepare myself for this exam. Do I waste an hour in the car driving home tonight and back tomorrow morning or do I stay here and take advantage of the extra hour of studying? Unfortunately, if they choose

the latter, they have nowhere to study after the Johnson Center closes at 2 a.m. and before Fenwick reopens at 7:30 a.m.

The second segment of the Mason student population that would stand to benefit most from a 24-hour library is residential freshman. At Mason, almost every residential freshman shares a room with at least one other person. As a former Resident Advisor on a freshman floor, I can say that one of the most common sources of roommate disputes is keeping lights on late into the night. Around midterm and finals time it can be very challenging to find an open study room. Having a 24-hour library would give these students an

alternative place to study late into the night so that their roommate can have suitable place to sleep at a reasonable hour.

Being the number one up-and-coming university to watch is a source of pride for us at Mason. In order for us to continue our remarkable rise as a university, we have to be a leader in addressing modern student needs. One of the best ways that Mason can do this is to offer a 24-hour library.

Zack Golden
Student Body President

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Contribute to Mason's Climate Commitment

The paradox of sustainability at George Mason University is a microcosm of what's occurring worldwide: Over 25 years since I first came to the Fairfax campus, the Northern Virginia population explosion has consumed fields and forests while the information-service revolution transformed our region from one absorbed by 1980s material consumption into one perpetually hungry for more energy. On campus, I've witnessed a small colony of buildings in the woods emerge into a veritable city, its vitality fueled by more and more people, buildings, parking spots and dining options. In the early nineties, ex-hippie faculty drove to campus to teach Reagan youth part-timers about IT in Mason's first "smart classroom." Today, ubiquitous WiFi, electronic classrooms and plugs (lots and lots of plugs) make 24-7 access to information, and by extension, electric power, seem like a universal human right. Even as we consume ever greater natural resources and power, Internet at our fingertips has expanded our consciousness of the adverse effects of our voracious lifestyles.

While we "advance" on campus and beyond, we zoom towards an ecological brink: Ahead lies looming threats of dramatic climate change, genocidal pandemics, irreversible destruction of myriad unique life forms on land and sea, and catastrophic depletion and fouling of irreplaceable natural resources. Any one of these cataclysms would be enormously more disruptive than the global financial crisis now grabbing our immediate attention. In bad times, we hunker down to focus on the current crisis. In good times, we party. Most of us remain more or less oblivious to what hazards lie around the next curve.

But some have dedicated their extra-curricular activities, or even their whole careers to mitigating the adverse side-effects of our increasingly profound use (or abuse) of the life-supporting ecosystems upon which we depend. In recent years, we've started to study, teach and even tentatively practice gradually pressing down on the brakes (regenerative brakes?) before it's "too late." Still, tinkering around the edges of our accelerating transformation of our region and our planet will not avoid any cataclysm, merely postpone it (we hope). We have yet to noticeably steer the stampede away from the approaching cliff. And which direction should we turn?

We live in a unique moment when our power to change the world vastly exceeds our understanding of its complexity. A mere half century ago, only a few individuals—the United States President, the Soviet Premier and Chairman Mao—had the power to destroy

our civilization in nuclear war. Now, rogue individuals like A. Q. Khan peddle nuclear weapons technology around the world; a single scientist, Bruce E. Ivens, has injected weaponized anthrax into the arteries of our postal system; and any person could accidentally fly or ship a parasite from one region to another, annihilating a dominant species like the American chestnut tree across an entire continent. On the flip side, global heroes walk amongst us. Like Jonas Salk inventing the polio vaccine 60 years ago, these new heroes are creating new means to protect humanity and other life forms, to adapt to climate variability and natural disasters, to purify our food, water and waste, and to create sustainable and affordable energy infrastructure.

In Thomas Friedman's words, these people are "super-empowered individuals." Multiply their disruptive super-power times a tiny fraction of the almost seven billion people alive today, and its clear humanity is at an equipotential moment: From this generation forward, our species could either self-immolate or, hopefully, evolve into earth's next planetary keystone. Whether we become a species of self-absorbed eco-tumors or intentional gardeners of the earth, our collective destiny as super-empowered individuals will be made by countless tiny actions, both conscientious and haphazard.

With this awareness, I have signed my name to the Mason Climate Pledge and commit to "help Mason to provide an example of leadership in our region, in our nation and in our world." I invite you to do so too by visiting <http://green.gmu.edu/climate>

Would you also like to foster your own super-empowerment on campus? Want to help realize President Alan Merten's commitment to make Mason "climate neutral?" To do so, join Mason students, faculty, administrators and staff collaborating together this semester to develop Mason's first Climate Action Plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Contact Mason's Office of Sustainability or drop me a line via e-mail (dsklarew@gmu.edu) to contribute. Thanks!

Ecologically yours,
Dann Sklarew

Associate Director, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center
Associate Professor, Environmental Science and Policy

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