

opinion

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Want to share your opinion? Submit your letter to the editor or artwork to:

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BROADSIDE

George Mason University's Student Newspaper

NICOLE OCRAN, *Editor-in-Chief*

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am writing in reference to Monday, Feb. 9's issue containing the article, "On-Screen Romance: Best Valentine's Day Movies."

I think it is disheartening that *Broadside* described *Brokeback Mountain* as follows: "This film has been pigeon-holed as 'that gay cowboy film.' But at its core, the story is simply about unattainable love and how love can appear in the most unlikely of places."

Putting the entire gay lifestyle debate aside, it's important to remember what this movie truly entails. It is a movie about love, but it is also a story of two married men going behind their wives' backs in order to fulfill their own selfish pleasures. In what age did it become okay for two men to regularly cheat on their wives? Since when should a school newspaper come out in support of such an immoral lifestyle? Would *Broadside* show the same support to a movie with two men who regularly meet up with their mistresses? Would that movie also be described as a story of "unattainable love?" I would venture to say no, at least

I hope not, simply because cheating on your spouse is wrong no matter what form it is done in.

Obviously, *Broadside* may view it in a different way in order to push its liberal agenda on to the student body. After all, this is the same newspaper that devoted more words describing why students should watch *Brokeback Mountain* than it did to the visit of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich. I guess students should simply expect to read the liberal viewpoint in this newspaper, and that is unfortunate at an institution that should promote varied and open viewpoints.

I guess those who would rather promote values will have to keep the writing staff in perspective by writing letters to the editor unless they wish to join the writing staff themselves.

Sincerely,
Jonathan T. Tallman
History

‘Abeunt studia in mores’ An Adult Student Comments

I'm a 62-year-old pediatrician, auditing History 120 and Astronomy 113 this semester at George Mason University. The quote above is from Ovid. Essentially, it means "from your devotions, pursuits, and studies your character is molded." I believe those words, and I want to share my opinions on the character of Mason's student body.

First off, you may ask how I got to Mason. Well, after 30 years of practicing primary care pediatrics, leukemia struck in 2002.

I survived five hospitalizations, each about four weeks, receiving chemotherapy and being treated for frequent, infectious complications. It seemed that I had recovered, but then my bone marrow began failing, in a condition called Myelodysplasia.

Taking some leap of faith, I received a less-than-complete match bone marrow transplant and survived a four-month stay at the Seattle Cancer Alliance in 2005. Besides the dedicated staff there, I owe my life to an anonymous French woman whose bone marrow and immune system I now carry.

For those of you biologically-inclined, I am a living "chimera." But this new immune system carries its own complications, being imperfectly

matched and resistant to its new host. So, it requires some restraint with medications, making me vulnerable to infections and keeping me from practicing pediatrics, where the germs run rampant.

That's my story in a nutshell.

So then, why did I come to Mason?

Mainly because I love to learn, and I enjoy the stimulation of young inquisitive minds. I like to be "where it's at," in the best sense of the word. In my student years, I did things like writing Governor George Wallace in 1963, bitterly protesting his attempt to block integration of Alabama public schools.

I protested the Vietnam War. I was stunned and sobered as a high school student when President Kennedy was shot. Then, as a physician, with illness keeping me from an active practice, I volunteered my time to get to know and educate the high-risk youth of Covenant House in northeast D.C. (As a result, I was their volunteer of the year and the 2003 Washington Redskins Community Quarterback.)

At Mason currently, I have spoken, and will speak again, at the Alpha Epsilon Delta pre-med honor club, to encourage diligent pre-med students on

their challenging path.

In my college years (Amherst '68, cum laude, biology), being "Greek" to me meant little more than residence and partying. In your August 2008 welcome week, I saw that fraternities and sororities stand for public service for your school and your community.

I saw legitimate pride in each student with whom I spoke, as they invited others to step outside themselves for greater purposes, creating defined communities of self-help and caring.

I see your continual political engagement and your excitement about the change which President Barack Obama is bringing to our country. You live in a pivotal time of American history, a history that you need to know well. Particularly at Mason, you need to know and even be amazed by George Mason's statement of unlimited faith in free men, the earliest of such colonial declarations, and the model for most subsequent declarations: the Virginia Declaration of Rights from May, 1776.

So, what do I see in student interactions and activities? As a pediatrician, I see upstanding "graduates" from pediatrics (actually, Mayor Adrian Fenty was one of my patients). I rejoice in your goal orientation, in your

energy, in your zeal and especially in your hopes.

I see much courtesy between students and also frequent politeness towards myself as an older student. I see decency. Not yet burdened with the cares of middle age, or the ailments of senior years, you press on to attain.

You strive to find a place in our complex and changing society. You want purpose and direction. All human beings need this to be the best models of truly "free men and women."

There are those on campus who are disabled, who gallantly proceed to class, who desire to make a future for themselves, by their own efforts. There are many who have much greater cares than me. Each one of us can only be grateful for the opportunities and blessings which we already have.

Your future? Hold your heads high, become engaged, do not be discouraged by worldwide events or financial gloom. The world . . . your world . . . is what you will make of it.

If anyone doubts the talent and potential of our youth, I would ask them to spend a day on the Mason campus and observe.

Students, do well.
Dr. Ron

LETTER FROM OUR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

Mason Police and Students Steps for Improving the Relationship



PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Last week's tailgate was a terrific example of how a good relationship between the Mason Police Department and students should work. The police were protecting our community, students were having fun and no one felt as though they were being watched or unfairly targeted. Unfortunately, this isn't always

the perception.

Rather than debating whether student criticisms of the Mason Police Department are valid, we should discuss steps that can be taken to improve students' perception of Mason Police. There should be two guiding principles in working to improve this perception: improving communication and encouraging positive interactions.

There are two specific steps that we can take to achieve these goals. To solve this perception problem, we must have both an advocate for students to the Mason Police and an advocate for the Mason Police to students. First, the university should establish a student advocate for campus safety who can advocate for students to the Mason Police Department. Second, the department ought to designate an officer as an official liaison between the police and students.

A student campus safety advocate would handle

complaints, concerns or suggestions that students have about the police department. Establishing this position would allow students to feel like they have a better chance at fair and equitable solutions when reporting actions or policies they feel are unfair. The advocate position would also show students how seriously Mason takes protecting their rights.

A community outreach officer would ensure that students know about the positive experiences students have had with Mason Police. A designated officer for this purpose would help us understand why it's necessary for officers to act in certain ways to keep us safe. Too many times, the first story that a student hears about a Mason Police officer is related to a negative, isolated and often exaggerated experience. Getting officers more involved with university life at Mason will also promote positive interactions between officers and students. Dining Services

and Office of Housing and Residence Life are both university services that do a great job participating in campus events in an effort to reach out to students. These efforts help them maintain a positive image among students. The Mason Police Department should also adopt this successful model for student outreach.

This discussion is difficult to have because the Mason Police Department provides such a valuable service to our community—keeping us safe. Asking for change can easily come across as seeming ungrateful for the great work that they do. Nevertheless, we need to help them understand the way students perceive their actions and that helping to change this perception will have a positive impact on everyone in the Mason community.

Zack Golden
Student Body President

Have something to say?

E-mail opinion@broadsideonline.com with your submission or letter to the editor!

Letters to the editor may not exceed 200 words and opinion submissions may not exceed 800 words.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down



REANN BALLSLEE CROWNED AS MS. MASON for Homecoming 2009 has received a lot of media coverage this past week. Even PerezHilton.com has picked up the story.

Congratulations to Ryan Allen for an amazing performance and being an outstanding representative of Mason.



IHOP FREE PANCAKE DAY is this Tuesday! Don't miss the opportunity to get your free stack of three buttermilk pancakes.

Any donations made go to The Children's Miracle Network. IHOP's goal this year is to reach \$1 million in fundraising that day.

No worries, the closest IHOP from campus is on Blake Lane, near Fairfax Circle Shopping Center. Go to ihoppancakeday.com for more details.



METRO BOARD MEMBERS are contemplating job and service cuts to help eliminate a \$29 million deficit. While fare increases have not yet been discussed, riders fear that bus and rail service cuts will be made. However, *The Washington Post* reports that several of the board members don't even use the system.



LIMITED DINING OPTIONS over the weekends. Yes, there is still food on campus, but no Damon's Express on Friday-Sunday, no Chick-Fil-A Saturday-Sunday, no Freshens, World of Greens, Sub Connection, or George's on Saturday-Sunday, and no Southside's Gold Rush on Saturday-Sunday.

Guess there's always Southside?