

The Gothic Guardian

at Duke University

What does

CONSERVATISM

mean to you?



PLUS

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Conservatism:

What is it?



by **Trent Serwetz**

Intoning the phrase “political conservatism,” depending on the audience, might conjure up images of the bygone Reagan era and the laissez faire policies associated with it. On the other hand, to some people “conservative” is symbolic of a horned devil with a pitchfork and a can of Budweiser.

For a couple of reasons, identifying the meaning of the word conservatism while sifting through all the spin surrounding it is no easy task. The modern media is so polarized that we are constantly bombarded with negative images of both conservatives and liberals, obscuring the reality of the issues. Additionally, conservatism has carried for decades the specters of famous politicians who broke the public’s trust in conservatives: the most exemplary case is Richard Nixon.

We should not equate conservatives with conservatism. We should not evaluate the ideology based on the actions of specific Presidents and politicians who have claimed to be conservative, any more than we should judge liberalism based on the actions of any half-baked reformer who gains political prestige. With these obstacles to an objective picture of conservatism in mind, I’ll enumerate what it means to me to be a libertarian conservative.

Conservatism means non-interventionist government. If government intervention in one particular discipline is unnecessary or potentially counterproductive, a conservative approach will limit the actions of government as much as possible. Health care, for example, is the crown jewel of government intervention that doesn’t need to

EDITOR’S NOTE:

Conservative politics has reached a crossroads, splintered between a number of factions that either fail to adhere to traditional conservative principles or fail to gain traction with mainstream America. The confusion within the Republican party itself invites the question: what exactly is modern conservatism and what does it stand for? In this issue of The Gothic Guardian, we let Duke students define what conservatism means to them and explain why they choose to identify with conservative principles. It is my hope that these stories offer discourse on different opinions within the conservative ideology and an idea of where conservatism and the Republican party should move towards in the future.

happen, for conservatives. The ability of the government to effectively administer universal healthcare is in such question that conservatives argue against instituting it at all. “Laissez faire” policies, characteristic of a traditional conservative position, require government presence in the people’s daily lives to be as unobtrusive as is necessary for their basic well-being.

Conservative ideology isn’t incapable of ushering in proactive change; a great example comes from Ronald Reagan, the epitome of twentieth century conservatism. Charged with the sexism and racism accusations that normally follow from the conservative stigma, Reagan appointed the first female Supreme Court justice, Sandra Day O’Connor. Ultimately however, conservatism identifies with most deregulation issues like gun control and the federal income tax. Conservatism means restricting government power in order to prevent the state from becoming a pervasive, potentially coercive force on our daily lives.

Conservatism means an absence of reverse discrimination. One

characteristic of progressive, liberal ideology is that it supports blatantly unequal social practices as long as they are to the benefit of the disadvantaged. For liberals, it is acceptable to tax the rich more than the poor, or to give scholarships to some students but not others on the basis of skin color. To a conservative, two wrongs don’t make a right; unequal treatment is unfair even if its beneficiaries are the “good guys.” The conservative goal of limiting government intrusion on our lives excludes the construction of deliberately unequal policies.

Too often political debates boil down to South Park style name-calling matches between a “Pissed-Off White Trash Redneck Conservative” and an “Aging Hippie Liberal Douche.” As a result, many people who identify with conservative ideology never see past the stigma surrounding it. We need not be hardliners to fit in with the Right side of the political spectrum. To me, political conservatism really means having the policies we need, and not the ones we don’t.

Debunking myths

Addressing common misconceptions

by Lingfeng Li

I often encounter more liberally-minded peers keen to attack my own political views, even if they don't fully understand what these views are.

Just the other day, when I talked about how this country cannot afford the kind of spending President Obama has undertaken, I was quickly asked "why is it that we could afford the war on Iraq?" The truth is, we couldn't. That's why I didn't support the war on Iraq either. In fact, when the United States first declared war on Iraq, I wanted to skip my middle school classes and join fellow protesters in Washington, D.C.

Other popular misconceptions of my political beliefs as a conservative to debunk: I was not for the financial industry bailout, or for costly tax cuts. Nor am I adamantly against gay marriage.

I am proud to be a conservative, even if my brand of conservatism differs from mainstream Republican politics. While I am a registered Republican, I have a number of disagreements with popular "conservative" stances on important contemporary issues.

In fact, I think many young adults that identify themselves as liberal could identify with my beliefs, even if they are still considered "conservative" (if not necessarily terribly "Republican"). My greatest concern is for the state of the American people's liberty and how this liberty can be sustained without fiscal responsibility and restraint. Recent leadership has led to a degradation of individual freedoms, potentially leading America down a path of socialist-authoritarianism. Legislation like the



Patriot Act and potential health care bills forcing all Americans to pay for coverage threaten both civil liberties and financial solvency. We certainly do seem destined for bankruptcy at the very least. While I respect the good intentions behind health care reforms and bailouts, we simply cannot afford to pay for them with government coffers or our personal freedoms. Our country should not spend money it doesn't have — a policy I believe both liberals and conservatives need to adhere to.

Perhaps my conservative ideals simply go back to my inherent distrust for concentrated power and my respect for individual liberty. Many liberals seem to believe that all Republicans are old, rich white men that care nothing for the welfare of others. As a Republican, I simply want to respect the Founding Fathers' constitution and human rights,

I believe that people should have the opportunity to demonstrate their honor, charity, and morality without authoritarian or socialist coercion.

ths

conceptions about conservatism



“Conservatism therefore looks upon the enhancements of man’s spiritual nature as the primary concern of political philosophy”

*- Barry Goldwater
in The Conscience of
a Conservative*

most important of which is liberty. Liberty and a greater well-being for the general population are hardly mutually exclusive — if anything, it is my opinion that society would collectively be better off if individuals were allowed more freedoms.

There are a number of reasons why I think we would all benefit from greater freedom. The first is simply a matter of efficiency — cutting government bureaucracy will reduce spending (and the deficit) and red tape, not to mention lower taxes for all.

Second, the government is not necessarily better able to handle private citizens’ well-being. Take for example social security: American taxpayers surrender their valuable earnings to the government for safekeeping, and to provide for hard-working Americans before them. The government has done

an excellent job of “borrowing” money from the social security fund, spending it on whatever seems necessary at the time, and depending on more Americans to pay into the fund to make up the difference. In the financial industry, this kind of activity is called a “Ponzi scheme” and can result in jail sentences. While there are often arguments presented about how individuals need a government to make sure they are financially responsible, I believe our own government and its legislators have hardly set an example worth copying or depending on given the \$10 trillion national debt. We hear a lot about regulating the financial markets these days, but not nearly enough about curbing runaway government spending.

But the most significant reason for my identification as a conservative, particularly a Barry Goldwater

conservative, is my respect for individual liberty and the importance of freedom. I believe that individual Americans know best how to allocate their money, and should be given that opportunity without government taking a third of their earnings. Likewise, I believe that individuals should be able to get “married” and attain the same legal rights, but I believe that other individuals don’t necessary have to recognize the union as marriage. And people should be able to decide whether they would rather pay for health insurance or buy a new computer, not be forced to pay into another government program doomed to mismanagement.

Perhaps it’s the optimist in me, but I think that the more trust government shows in its people — essentially, the more Americans trust each other — the more trustworthy its people will be. I believe that people should have the opportunity to demonstrate their honor, charity, and morality without authoritarian or socialist coercion.

In this regard, I echo the words of Barry Goldwater in *The Conscience of a Conservative*. Goldwater wrote that “conservatism therefore looks upon the enhancements of man’s spiritual nature as the primary concern of political philosophy” while liberals “regard the satisfaction of economic wants as the dominant mission of society” (Goldwater 5). True equality, in my mind, is not measured by barrels of material “stuff.” True equality should be measured by the strength of personal freedom and the quality of personal character.

Goldwater, Barry. *The Conscience of a Conservative*. 1960. United States: BN Publishing, 2007. Print.

Conservatism: The Elusive Ideal

by **Aaron McGuire**

There are a lot of different definitions of the word “conservative.” I agree with some of them. I disagree with many more. In this writer’s view, though, real conservatism is a philosophy best encapsulated in two key words. Responsibility and restraint.

Conservatism means a government that takes its responsibility to preserve the individual liberties of its citizens as a sacred vow, not an empty promise. A government that understands that, truly, its own value is in the freedom it gives its citizens.

Conservatism means a government committed to fiscal restraint, a government that recognizes its responsibility to tomorrow’s citizens to keep a reasonable, balanced budget. A government that understands that the freedom of the checkbook is – while perhaps not as well-defended by its citizens as freedom of speech and freedom of expression – as essential to a free and productive society as the air we breathe.

Conservatism means a government that sees itself not as the leader of its people, but as the servant of its citizens. A government that understands and sees the truth in Mark Twain’s famous quote; “the government is merely a servant -- merely a temporary servant; it cannot be its prerogative to determine what is right and what is wrong, and decide who is a patriot and who isn’t. Its function is to obey orders, not originate them.”

Conservatism is a government free of tyranny – neither that of the majority nor that of the minority. A conservative government acts in the face of pressing need, and not a moment sooner. A government that practices restraint



chiefly and action judiciously, one that allows neither undue favor nor an injustice of disfavor.

And while these all hold in the broad political sense, on the individual level, conservatives should understand themselves the personal value of these two concepts. A conservative shouldn’t expect others to do that which they’ve agreed to do – a conservative should know their responsibilities, and attend to them with the utmost care. A conservative should avoid preaching governmental fiscal restraint if they can’t restrain their own checkbook – hypocrisy is a dangerous road.

Conservatives should as well take note that as citizens of the United States of America, there’s a certain responsibility we share to our country. Though it is oftentimes difficult, it is the responsibility of a citizen to recognize that it’s possible to appreciate what we have while disagreeing with the people who run the institution. Far be it from us to back down on our principles. In fact, we do have a responsibility to speak out against that with which we disagree.

But disagreement does not necessitate boorishness, or rude, childish outbursts. And though we disagree, a conservative should realize that the goal – a better tomorrow – isn’t a controversial one.

We may disagree with progressives and centrists all we want. We all know that policy disagreements are the mother’s milk of a healthy democracy. But it does a stark injustice to our philosophy to disrespect our debating partners. We all want what’s best for society – disagreements can be had in good faith, and in our culture of personal restraint, we should aspire to do so.

Will a government of this nature – or a person of perfect conservative form – ever exist? I doubt it. Conservatism, to me, is an ideal. It’s a faraway concept, one of a perfect unity of ordinarily disparate concepts. But, much as we can’t truly use infinity in our mathematical computations, sometimes the limit approaching your ideal is just as good as the ideal itself.

And in my view, it’s always good to have something to work towards.

The Creme of the Crop



by **Amanda Auerbach**

When Ada Gregory, the director of the Duke University Women's Center claimed in the Chronicle article on the new rape policy that the Duke sex offenders are the "crème of the crop" due to the high intelligence of Duke students and their consequent "cunning" and "manipulative" powers, she assumes that the female victims of sexual offenses have been out-smarted by their male offenders. She has since apologized for the implications of her claim, but she did offer statistics to back her claim up in the same article. For this reason, I would like to explore the implications of her comments without necessarily pinning them to her. Aren't Duke women also the crème of the crop? Should it be taken for granted that the leading cause of rape is women being led into danger unawares by superiorly equipped men?

The young men I met at the last party I attended (it was a prep school themed party à la Gossip Girl) may have been bright, or even calculating in the light of day, but the artfulness of their pick-up lines could hardly delude me as to their intentions or their levels of intoxication.

As I danced with them (if it can really be called dancing anymore), both of these dashing young gents asked where I lived and how far that was from the party before they remembered to ask for my name. As I had my wits about me, I told them that I lived so far away, that chances were, they would get lost before they ever found their way to my dorm. After these men had finally got my not-so-subtle hints, they decided to move onto less prepared prep school girls, preferably freshmen in short pleated skirts and fishnets.

Like most of the girls at the party, I was dressed in a way that might have suggested intentions I didn't have, and I started to wonder why. For my own part, I dressed up for fun and because I was going with my friends, who know my intentions. While the majority of girls probably dressed up for similar reasons, I couldn't help but wonder after my experience dancing with those men, who seemed nice, but that I didn't know. I realized it was highly possible that many of these girls didn't dress up solely in the spirit of camaraderie and

fun, but perhaps because they wanted to be asked to their dance partners' room for the night. As I considered this possibility, I started to feel sick. I felt not only sick, but also angry, not at these drunken boys, but at the fact that these women felt like they had to be the victims of the Duke party scene. While it is undeniable that the freshman orientation presentation sponsored by Duke Student Health (now called True Blue) depicts the manifest reality of the Duke dating scene, does the presentation promote the ideal lifestyle of most Duke students? According to the Duke Women's Initiative, the answer is no. Even though many students participate in a party scene that reinforces the campus hook-up culture, both men and women regret Duke's lack of a more traditional dating scene. Although the presentation may attempt to be student-friendly in its refusal to dog the Duke party culture that many of its viewers have already become immersed in, the premise of the presentation is to "[equip] students with the information and proper resources they need to guide good decision-making" (Lindsay Bickers Block, a Duke sexual health educator). If the university's goal is to guide freshmen and help them to lead more successful personal lives, then it seems that these programs should focus on the shared goals of the student body, as opposed to catering to a normative culture that makes many "uninitiated" students feel uncomfortable.

When I was a freshman, the orientation presentation then called the Real Deal bombarded me with renditions of the sexual scenes and party scenes that I had striven for the rest of orientation to avoid in real life. On watching the vulgar skits that were supposed to represent typical Duke experiences, I could feel my expectations sink as the crowd laughed. To amend the program, the women's center decided that they should eliminate party boy Chad, who represented a humorous party boy, who walked around a party trying to get girls drunk (in other words,



Party Boy Chad represented a humorous potential date rapist). The women's center decided to eliminate him because according to reports, Duke's men were emulating Party Boy Chad humorously or otherwise. According to Sheila Broderick, the sexual assault services coordinator for the Women's Center, Duke's young men weren't the only ones that took to Party Boy Chad. She states in the Chronicle article that she has had "victims come to [her] crying and say, 'I went to The Real Deal, they told me about Party Boy Chad and I fell for it anyway. I should have known better.'"

Frankly, I believe that these women are selling themselves short if they genuinely believe that they fell for Party Boy Chad. More likely, I believe that they might not have thought they could do better than the intoxicated, sexually opportunistic partygoer that Party Boy Chad represents. When I watched the Real Deal presentation, I remember being more struck by the women in the skit than by its star. Were Duke women really supposed to act so stupid? Now, I realize that the women in the skit weren't actually stupid if they should be taken to represent their real-life counterparts; they were probably only jaded and afraid to expect more from a culture that they

had been told had nothing more to offer them. Although Student Health tried to arm Duke students with realistic expectations and strategies to avoid the common party pitfalls, I remember being afraid, even during my first week of freshman year, that my standards for romantic relationships would drop soon after my expectations.

To people who hold the view that Duke rapists typically operate by manipulating clueless women who are looking for true love, I would say that all too often, Duke's sexual offenders are not masterminds that lure women unawares into dangerous situations. For the most part, Duke women are perfectly aware of the dangers accompanying Duke parties, alcohol, and the catastrophic misunderstandings that often come after. The drunken men I danced with the party sidled up to the women in fishnets and garters after I had shaken them off not because they wanted to rape them, but because they felt themselves immune from the possibility of rejection by these girls that looked impossible to violate. Sometimes, whether the night ends in sexual assault depends on when these women realize that they are capable of being violated: before or after the events of the night unfolded.

In Defense of Israel

by **Sabrina McCutchan**

Over the course of the past few years a trend has been forming with regards to expressed international opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This trend manifested itself visibly during the last major bout of fighting in the Gaza Strip, from December of 2008 through January of this year, and has curiously undergone little to no rigorous scrutiny.

Headlines from January first to January 30 in major newspapers worldwide read “Israel denies killing fleeing Gazans,” “Sue Israel for Genocide,” and “Rights groups review Gaza conflict for war crimes;

International initiatives focusing predominantly on Israel, but Hamas actions also coming under scrutiny.”

The last headline sums up the trend well: blame Israel for the severity of conflict in the Middle East.

This anti-Israeli sentiment is partly a response to previous views. Critics of Israel argue that Palestinians should not bear all of the blame for the fighting. But efforts to lay equal blame have been made from the beginning; there have been calls for a bilateral peace agreement since Israel’s founding in 1948.

Desires to distance current talk on the issue from previous perceptions, however, cause sentiment to swing well past the mark of fair judgment, towards ascribing Israel liability. If Palestine is not wholly responsible for the conflict, then Israel is not wholly responsible either.

If there are any doubts concerning this trend, one need only look to an incident related in late September of 2009 concerning the language used to describe Gaza. The Australian broadcasting station SBS directed its writers to stop using the term “Palestinian land” when referring to Gaza and other disputed

territories, because it indicated a bias in their reports towards the Palestinian side of the conflict.

This decision has received harsh criticism. Some Australian scholars have described the land in question, namely Gaza, as being indisputably Palestinian (which is, of course, not the case, given the degree of dispute that constantly surrounds the issue).

Whether or not the land actually is Palestinian is another issue entirely. What the above story should convey is that there is a very definite double-standard regarding how the media reports the issue. Referring to the Gaza strip as “Israeli land” would spark international outrage at the lack of consideration given to the Palestinian view, but there is international criticism when one fails to refer to the land as Palestinian, with no impetus to acknowledge Israel’s claim (valid or no) in the region.

With regards to the fighting in Gaza, we should not oversimplify the issue by stating that “Israel” and “Palestine” are the only two possible actors on which to lay blame.

Israel invaded Gaza in response to incessant firing of mortars and rockets across its border from the Gaza strip, which is inhabited by Israelis and Palestinians alike. Critics of Israel’s actions rightfully point out that not every Palestinian in Gaza is firing such rockets, and then argue that Israeli reprisals are unjustified because they harm innocent civilians in the strip.

I ask these critics whether they believe Israel wants to engage in combat in Gaza. Does the Israeli government benefit from such a conflict? Not only are counterattacks directed at a region

populated with Israelis, but awareness of the prevalent attitude in journalism informs Israel’s government that such an action will result in international criticism. Does Israel benefit from either of these conditions?

Surely it does not. We are then led to ask: what would prompt Israel to take such an action if it would have such negative consequences?

The answer is simple: Israel did not have a choice. The government was forced to take action in response to the incessant firing from Gaza. No agreement could be reached that was mutually acceptable to both Israel and Palestine, and when it became clear that diplomacy would have no effect, Israel took the necessary step to ensure the safety of its citizens.

Countries have a right to defend themselves. It is a gross exaggeration to call Israel’s actions genocide; the country was faced with aggression, and it responded with force. The international community did not label Kosovo’s actions against Serbia genocide when the former struggled for independence, on the grounds that a right to use force exists when diplomacy has been exhausted as an option and there is a clear need to take action.

The situations are far from synonymous, but the general principle holds. Condemnation of Israeli actions violates the international media’s claim of impartiality and is ascribed without regard for Israel’s situation.

Nobody will argue that the persistent fighting in Gaza is anything short of terrible. There is a severe discontinuity, however, in how we view the conflict, and how we decide who is to blame for it.

The Bridge

by **Justin Robinette**

I get renewed amusement every year our campus erupts in reference to anything unpleasant which appears on the East Campus bridge. Each time, participants always include a) the Honor Council, b) any given angry race or sex-oriented advocacy group, and c) any given administrator with the power of email blast, most recently Dr. Airall. Unfortunately, the vandal himself is almost entirely ignored in favor of condemning, rather, the symbolic nature of the message itself. The vandal is also somehow conflated each time not with a random criminal act or a pervert with too much time on his hands, but with a universal message of hate waged at a group in its entirety, and almost always connected somehow to Duke itself. Bridge vandalism is always considered

Duke-on-Duke crime, when we know very well by experience that frequent (and almost exclusive) violent crime at Duke is waged Durham-on-Duke. This precedent should suggest that vandalism (a form of property crime) which appears on the bridge not be applied in knee-jerk fashion to Duke students, but instead to those who are most often waging violent crime against us. I would not bet my life, but possibly my lunch money, that a non-Duke affiliated student vandalized the East Campus bridge following the Pride parade in September.

Secondarily, what is so offensive about what was written that it deserves this much notice? We forget all the lewd messages and images left publicly on dorm door whiteboards, the posters week after week that advertise themed parties, sex toy exhibitions, sex worker shows, and we should not downplay finally recent porn in the privacy of our own library—with images standardized



A controversial art display in the Perkins Library.

as art that adorn what I now refer to as “Perkins Library’s Porno Wing” at the entrance to my Major department.

My favorite line during the most recent Bridge shenanigans was from Random Student XYZ’s October 7th letter to the editor in *The Chronicle*, entitled “Hate speech should not be tolerated.” This statement sums up the misinformation and disjunct which exists for those who foamed at the mouth over the most recent bridge vandalism; I laughed out loud. The very definition of tolerance is predicated on hate; for me to be tolerant, I must necessarily hate your way of life or the very thing that you are doing. If I do not hate it, I cannot tolerate it. If I do not hate it, I have accepted it instead. I must hate it, but willfully choose to permit it for the greater purpose of free speech, in order to “tolerate” it. Post hoc ergo propter hoc, hate speech should be tolerated, but never labeled as

acceptable.

There is something innately wrong with putting such garbage up that appeared on the bridge following Gay Pride, and also in taking it down. It is thoroughly un-American to, as a recognized campus group, be seen censoring (read: actively covering up) speech that should by definition be “tolerated.” What is especially offensive on this front is the fact that the bridge was painted over, and marketed so by Duke administration, by a recognized student group to the tune of blast-email support of the university against the wishes of the Honor Council.

Graffiti and vandalism: the ancient Greeks did it, so did the Egyptians, so do bored Duke students or angry Durhamites. What do we have in the painting over of hateful words to the tune of university displeasure? Cowards validating the work of other cowards.

Krueger Speaks

by Ari Ruffer

Former Texas senator and United States ambassador Robert Krueger spoke to a crowd of nearly 40 students on September 23 for the Duke Political Union's fourth installment of its Super Tuesday speaker series. Krueger was also a Duke professor and the dean of Trinity College.

Krueger spoke mostly about his experience as ambassador to Burundi, a position that President Clinton appointed him to after losing his 1994 Senate bid. He vividly described the situation in the nation. He explained that Burundi — one of the 10 poorest nations in the world — had barely 10 college graduates upon independence. War has raged between the ethnic Hutus and Tutsi's for much of recent history. Krueger explained that when he arrived in Burundi, roughly 100 murders were being committed each day mostly by the nation's army.

Although he often inquired, Burundi's army commanders would not explain the mysterious deaths to Ambassador Krueger. They often brushed killings aside by claiming they were accidents. Krueger told his audience of a time he ventured to the countryside. He saw firsthand atrocities including a 5-year-old child whose head had been split open by an axe, and 70 hastily buried bodies on a hillside. He exclaimed that these were no mere accidents.

After this experience, Krueger held a press conference and released the names of the 70 dead. When a reporter asked who was responsible, he replied "men in uniform." Front page articles of 2 Burundian newspapers reported soon after, "Krueger a man who needs to be assassinated."

A few weeks later Krueger survived an assassination attempt on a narrow mountain road, which prompted the

State Department to try to remove him from the war-torn country. Krueger objected stating, "In Texas, when you fall off of a horse you get right back on the horse...so the worst thing that you could do is to pull the U.S. ambassador out of here. If I remained silent, who would speak?"

The theme of American responsibility to poorer nations encompassed much of the Ambassador's speech. "The US knew slaughter was going on but we didn't give a damn because they were

"I think the US, as the largest democracy in the world, has a responsibility to other nations. However, that doesn't necessarily mean sending in troops or forcing democracy on people."

- Robert Krueger

poor, unimportant to us, and black," Krueger argued daringly. "The notion that it isn't racism is naïve. We sent troops into Bosnia but not Africa." Although his attack on US foreign policy may be contentious, Krueger raises an interesting question: To what extent do we as the United States have a duty to protect other nations?

In response to a question Krueger explained, "I think the US, as the largest democracy in the world, has a responsibility to other nations. However, this doesn't necessarily mean sending in troops or forcing democracy upon people." Although he did not approve of attempts at democratization, Krueger did express his belief that as the world's most powerful nation, the United States needs to maintain an active presence around the world. He concluded his speech by quoting the Bible, "To whom much is given much is required" (Luke 12:49).

Although many do believe we maintain a moral obligation to help those in the world less fortunate than ourselves, we also must look out for our own interests when conducting foreign policy. China is making loans all over Africa and locking up a good deal of the continent's vast mineral resources as well. Africa is a continent of immense deposits of natural resources, and it is certainly not in our best interest to allow China to exploit them. It is in our interest to foster a relationship with African nations beyond the basic goal of promoting human rights.

When I asked Ambassador Krueger if he was worried by China's recent presence in Africa, he explained, "Their influence there is going to be huge and their influence is not going to be democratic. We don't have the financial institutions that can lend in the same way. It ought to be on the radar screen of our government because it's going to be an issue in the near future." We must take Krueger's advice into account: not only because of a so-called moral duty we may have to the rest of the world, but also because our immediate presence in Africa is a necessity to maintaining our international hegemony. I have to ask, can we stand not to intervene in Africa?

Charting a New Course

by **Vikram Srinivasan**

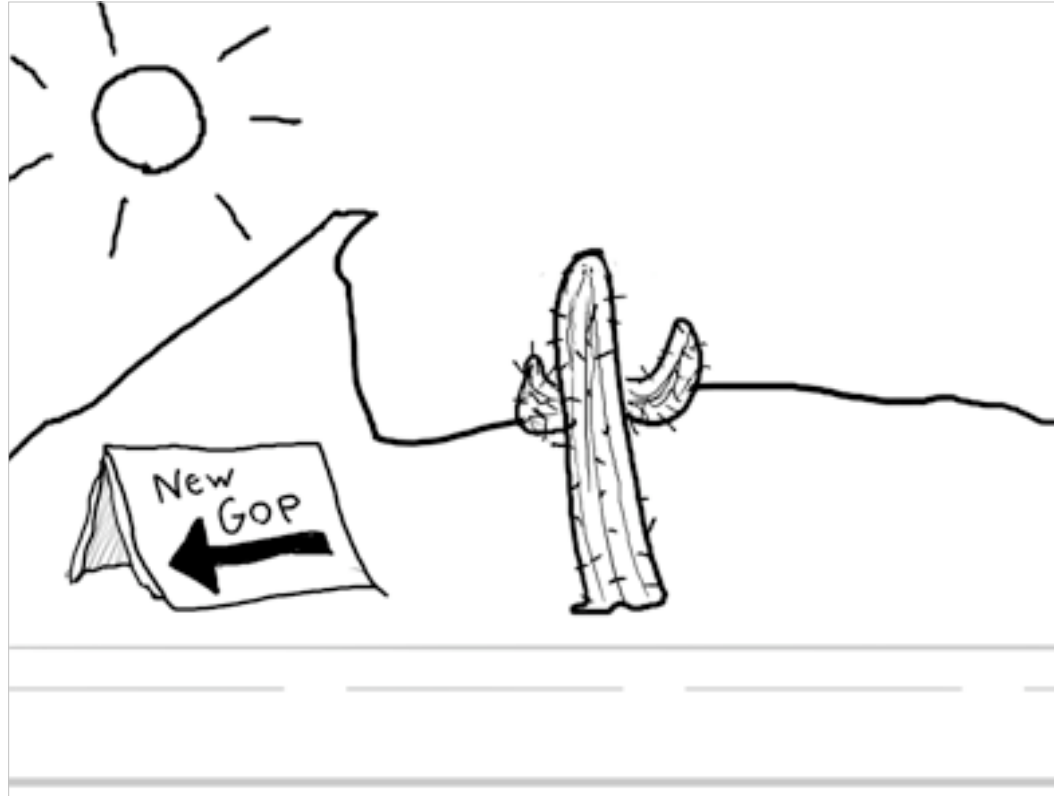
Just as tents can collapse from being too small, they can also fall apart from being too big.

That's a lesson the GOP should remember as it confronts the issue of what role moderates should play in rebuilding a "big tent" party. Answering that question will depend heavily on what we mean by "moderate."

As a conservative, I'm of the view that there should be a large role in the party for moderates. But only for one variety: the principled kind.

When a political party has shrunk to the small size the GOP has now in Congress, it can be tempting to rebuild the ranks with whatever candidates can be found. But, by rebuilding on the shoulders of unprincipled "moderates" the party risks diluting its message and undermining its own sell at a time when its core asset is its ability to offer a distinct vision from the Obama administration.

To be sure, the story of the GOP's decline over the last decade is a tale with many subplots. But prominent among them is a narrative of failed and ineffective candidate recruitment. Oftentimes, it seems like the only criteria national political heavyweights consider in encouraging Congressional candidates are the size of their pocketbook, their name recognition, and their electability.



Certainly, all three are important. But they are not the only criteria that matter. Candidate recruitment at the local level cannot be divorced from a national strategy that controls the party's image and message.

This failure of a comprehensive approach is very much evident in the tarnishing of the Republican brand. The significant growth in non-discretionary spending under the last Bush administration, unchecked by a supposedly conservative Republican Congress, reflects a complete departure from core conservative philosophy. This story of failed congressional oversight can be explained as a classic case of parochial local interests overriding any core philosophical principles of elected officials.

Perhaps it is too idealistic to hope that the local instinct, the tendency for members of Congress to support

initiatives that benefit their own district at the expense of underlying philosophical principles, will ever be diminished. But that does not mean the party would not be able to assert at least some minimal control and provide some structure to otherwise potentially incoherent strands of conservatism within its ranks.

Some might very well have no issue with such ideological divergence. But the problem with being politically "moderate" is that too often it doesn't mean anything other than a lack of philosophical mooring — a sort of ideological cherry-picking that is all too often wholly inconsistent with itself. For our public officials being "moderate" melds all too comfortably with political opportunism. Ideological inconsistencies and support for pet projects can be too easily be rationalized on the basis of appealing to moderate voters



The bottom line, however, is that voters seldom support candidates purely on the basis of ideology — in fact, the appearance of being moderate or reasonable may be more important than what the facts say.

President Barack Obama is a prominent case in point. Obama was the most liberal member of the entire U. S. Senate according to the 2007 vote ranking of the non-partisan National Journal. Yet, Obama ran a campaign that stressed his post-partisan appeal—a sell sharply at odds with his own voting record and complete lack of bipartisan cooperation, either in Illinois or in the U.S. Senate.

In trying to rebuild a party on core conservative principles, Republicans should certainly shun shrill, divisive rhetoric that makes the party seem reactionary and parochial. Nonetheless, electing moderates for moderates' sake

is a deeply flawed strategy. Instead, the operating principle in candidate recruitment should be to elect the most conservative, thoughtful candidate electable for every seat.

This is not to say that the party should not court independent voters. Rather, it is to suggest that the best way to court such voters is to make a persuasive sell on the basis of presenting a clear contrast to the Obama administration and a coherent message and vision of its own.

A big part of the problem for Republicans in this past election was that they did not stand for anything, or at least anything worth voting for among broad sectors of the politically independent public. Republicans had deeply and seriously undercut themselves over the past several years and had no credibility to make a serious case for fiscal responsibility

or conservative economic policy. Moreover, Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) had so many serious departures from conservative ideology and was utterly unable to articulate a conservative policy worldview, from economic issues to any other area of policy.

The fact that the hyper-liberal Senator from Illinois was able to craft such a broad-based political campaign against a truly centrist candidate should sharply rebuke those who would suggest that only by “returning to the center” can the party reclaim its majorities. In fact, the party already was “in the center” when it lost in 2006 and 2008. Winning again will require reasserting conservative principles as underlying the core of the GOP.

On campus, that means encouraging the truism that being a Republican can mean many things to many people. But at the same time, we must remember that for it to mean anything at all, there really can be little compromising on core philosophy regarding the role of government. At end of the day, liberalism and conservatism are philosophies on the role of government, aligning with the Democratic and Republican parties respectively. For Republicans, that means being fundamentally skeptical of government action in any and every arena where private actors and individuals could suffice.

A strategy for rebuilding the party that emphasizes recruiting moderates to run in races where more conservative candidates could be successful is a failure to learn the lessons of recent history and a recipe for the big tent's eventual collapse. The GOP must return to core conservative principles and provide a clear alternative to Democratic policies if it is to ever indulge the hope of regaining a lasting majority.

Greenest Campus

by **Sabrina McCutchan**

Visitors who spend more than five minutes walking around Duke University are sure to encounter evidence of the campus's commitment to the environment. Buildings have motion-sensor triggers for their lighting systems to preserve energy. Where there's a trash bin, there are usually several recycle bins nearby. The buses that run between campuses have stickers on their sides declaring their commitment to use low-grade, high-efficiency fuel. And then, of course, there's the Smart Home.

Spend ten minutes walking around Duke University, however, and a few other things come to light, like empty computer labs, or showers in dorm bathrooms that run water without patrons because the handle has gotten stuck, or massage chairs in the basement of dorms.

The university is exceptionally conscientious, it seems, in terms of its spending on everything besides... well, spending.

Take, for instance, the vents outside of the Bryan Center. These

vents periodically emit a light mist, presumably with the intention of giving students a means to cool down on a hot day. While this is a nice idea, it leads one to wonder why these vents are a better investment than, say, installing air conditioning in dorms. Surely students spend more time in their own homes than they do on the plaza outside of the Bryan Center.

One might also reference the massage chairs in the basement of Bell Tower. They are available for use by all students, but the dorm in which they are housed is a fair distance from the main quad on East, making it inconvenient for most students to access them, and in any case a mere two chairs cannot possibly cater to the entire freshman class (that is, assuming we make the rather questionable assumption that massage chairs are needed to cater to students in the first place). The upshot of these considerations is to suggest that the chairs have far less utility than their installers expected.

A basic massage chair model costs anywhere between \$2,000 and \$4,000. That money could have been invested elsewhere, perhaps in new temperature control handles in some dorm shower stalls. Sometimes these handles become stuck, and because Resident Life and Housing Services (RLHS) is not available 24 hours a day to perform maintenance, if this happens at night or on the weekend water might be left running continuously over the span of several hours. This incurs a sizable cost for the University, not to mention its environmentally-unfriendly effects.

Duke also does an exceptional job of providing its students with advanced technology and information access; for example, there are numerous computer

labs scattered around the campuses. Not all of these labs, however, are situated in accessible places. Lilly Library might boast highly visible media rooms and a regiment of desktop computers in its foyer, but fewer students know of the computer lab in the basement of the West Duke building, or the one situated in Brown.

Is it really beneficial to spend tens of thousands of dollars on a lab with twenty computers that, on average, is utilized at half of its capacity or less? Or, more importantly, is it really necessary to have two such labs?

The more time spent on campus, the longer the list grows: expensive projectors in classrooms that only host one or two classes a semester, sprinklers that don't shut off after it rains, Solo cups for Tailgate because the student body cannot manage to clean up after itself. Why is Duke spending money in these areas instead of, say, installing air conditioning in residence halls? Or offering more scholarship funds? Or investing in a dining plan that offers three meals a day?

News reports discussing financial difficulties at Duke have been appearing in various publications since at least as early as May of this year. The University has proposed several budget-cutting measures, many of which include reducing its number of employees.

Given the preceding observations, however, is it any wonder that Duke is in trouble? Global financial issues certainly have not improved the situation, but Duke's fiscal behavior is also responsible for issues currently facing the university. A little more fiscal responsibility would go a long way.

We can live without the massage chairs.

To the Board of Trustees:

by **Justin Robinette**

It was reported Wednesday that the Board of Trustees will soon be presented “a proposal...asking for \$75,000 to study the feasibility of a 150-bed addition to [Keohane] quad” by “several top administrators.” The article cited Dean and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education Steve Nowicki, and asserts that “adding residence space” and potential dining options to Keohane Quad will be funded in the following manner (Follow this logic!): “Duke would likely borrow money to construct the dorm and repay it over time using housing revenue, Nowicki said. If the project is paid for in this way, Duke’s moratorium on new construction projects will not apply. The construction moratorium only applies to building projects that require new money to be generated from sources such as the endowment or charitable giving.”

We are particularly confused by the notion that the moratorium on new building spending does not apply to projects such as this. Any new project is constrained by the moratorium; it is cheating to suggest otherwise. Repayment in the form of future “housing revenue” becomes the students’ burden—read: Board fees, quad dues and possible tuition hikes to offset discrepancies will, as Nowicki admits by prohibiting the use of donations for ambitious building projects, shoulder Keohane’s construction. Especially given the current state of affairs in Duke finance, and following the virtually coerced retirement of 295 employees as of June, we question the very suggestion that additions to one of the campus’s newest dorms is necessary in order to “really bring out the potential of McClendon Tower.” This is particularly



A new proposal would add beds to the Keohane quad, but at what expense?

offensive on a number of fronts: firstly, to any semblance of responsible budgeting. Secondly, any of those 295 “retired” employees (many of them housekeeping) would hardly agree with the compassionless claim that a space’s marginal “potential” comes at the expense of their job. Students forced to live without housekeeping on weekends would also question whether their campus’s future “potential” outweighs their campus’s daily upkeep. This is, finally, offensive to students forcibly shunted, year after year, to Central Campus’s ghetto-like atmosphere of disrepair, low police enforcement and shoddy facilities. 150 beds will not solve the problem of deplorable Central Campus living conditions for independents.

The only way Keohane construction will be paid for in the administration’s rationale, and by their own admission outside of charitable donations and endowment funding that are tenuous, unpredictable and on the decline, will be to hike tuition directly, or cut student services. For some reason it

is acceptable for the literal spending freeze on building to be overruled because students, and not benefactors, will be the ones ultimately footing the bill. Keohane construction is a direct violation of the moratorium on building. New spending on money borrowed, to be replaced by anticipated revenue, and on a campus dorm that needs no renovation is reprehensible Recession behavior—the building moratorium is in place for a reason, and Duke’s shameful commitment to coerced retirement of its employees, the cutting of weekend cleaning, and continued indifference to Central Campus’s disorder is an outright disservice to student welfare and campus life—we would little care for spending on McClendon Tower if we were to spend at all. We request that the university also investigate the nature of this new addition: If Keohane’s Memorial Grove—the six trees planted in memory of the six Duke alumni who died in the attacks of 9/11—will be built over, demolished or in any way bulldozed upon or around, this will be patently unacceptable to the student body.

The Gothic Guardian

at Duke University

a new generation on the right.

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