

opinion

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BROADSIDE

George Mason University's Student Newspaper

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Removing the "Tramp Stamp"

SABRA HAYES
Staff Writer

Placing a tattoo on the small of a woman's back carries a large amount of sexual innuendo. A tattoo in this area is discriminately referred to as a "tramp stamp." It seems this tattoo area is especially popular among women born from the late '70s to the late '80s. As Jeremy Gray said in *Wedding Crashers*, "See that tattoo on the lower back? It might as well be a bull's eye." This widely accepted cultural ignorance is manipulating how women feel about their tattoos. It's time to remove the stigma of the tramp stamp and let women be free to tattoo their bodies where they choose to without the fear of preconceived notions of their sexuality.

According to a study in the Archives of Dermatology, about 25 percent of people ages 18 to 30 have tattoos. The study followed people having their tattoos removed and the study concluded that many women were having their tattoos removed due to the stigma that had been attached to their personalities because of them. Roughly 93 percent of the women said that having to hide the tattoos on occasion was a factor in the removal compared with 20 percent of men. About 40 percent of women endured negative comments at work, in public or in school compared with only five percent of men.

The results of this study say it all. The discrimination placed on women with tattoos is harming the lives of countless females. Equality needs to be achieved in regards to this art form. The whole idea of prejudices due to the location of a tattoo is absolutely ridiculous. The lower back area is a popular area for tattoos because the wide area offers a canvas for tattoo artists. Women can get a large tattoo that stretches horizontally across this area of the body, plus the tattoos don't tend to lose their shape when the body goes through certain weight changes. Being an ideal location to place a tattoo, people looking at a woman's lower back

and assume that women are sexually promiscuous instead of using common sense.

There is no way to judge if women who wear lower back tattoos are more promiscuous than those without it—just as there is no way to tell if women with long hair are more promiscuous than those with short hair and some women with blue eyes are more likely to do drugs than women with brown eyes. But that doesn't mean there isn't any connection between lower back tattoos and sexuality. I believe that it's fair to say that women who get tattoos on the sensual lower curvature of their back are expressing sensuality and sexual confidence and are not advertising themselves as targets.

Women have long been oppressed whenever they have attempted to assert themselves sexually. Showing a little lower back, with or without ink, is no different than showing skin on other sensual areas of the body. However, women are still confined by preconceived notions set forth about modesty when regarding their lower back tattoos. The time has come for these notions of sexual ambiguity to be tossed aside for the sake of equality.

Being restrained and cautious with self-expression in case someone you don't even know doesn't like your tattoo is an unacceptable situation that women are put in. Whatever reason a person chooses to get a tattoo for, they should not feel bad about such a decision merely on their gender and placement. It is the nature of lower-rising clothing like low-rise and hip-hugger jeans that make these tattoos more and more noticeable, and therefore since they can be seen and are regarded in a derogatory way, girls are getting reputations that are not rightfully earned because of a stigma of a lower back tattoo. People fight for equality based on action and not appearances, let us end this battle against lower back tattoos on women by ending the usage of the phrase "tramp stamp" for the sake of this ideal.

Farewell, Gunston Mason Abandoning a Winning Image



As a young university establishing traditions, it is extremely important to give a sense of belonging to one's Alma Mater. Knowing that as an alumnus, I'll be able to come back and almost instantly know the campus I will have left so long ago is the same in spirit. However, over the past year, many George Mason University "traditions" have changed. Most recently, this has meant the changing of our mascot Gunston. Mason's mascot has changed numerous times over our history of existence as a university. From the Mason Maniac to the "Puffy Patriot,"

our mascot has changed numerous times to in one way or another to better represent our team name, The Patriots, and the Mason student body as a whole. We were finally at a place where our mascot had become loved by much of the school's student body, and easily one of the most entertaining spectacles to see at the sporting events here a Mason.

However, while Gunston may not be the fiercest mascot Mason has had, nor compared to other universities, what about Mason is conventional? Our school's administration touts the fact, and I admire it, that Mason is unconventional. We have done things as a school that some universities would not dare to do and would not have ever dreamed possible. In half a century, Mason has grown from a satellite college of the University of Virginia into a full-fledged research institution, complete with award-winning colleges and schools covering the Northern Virginia area and extending its prowess overseas to the United Arab Emirates. We have established a tradition of being excellent and challenging the traditions of education, with numerous interdisciplinary programs, mixed use library and student center space, and a diverse

campus filled with new opportunities for learning on a daily basis. While we challenge the normal role of education and are constantly trying to innovate, we are trying to be like other universities by changing our mascot to something more mainstream, breaking down a tradition that followed us to the Final Four three years ago and CAA championships last year. If we, as a university, ever want to have traditions, we need to stop changing them whenever we stick our neck out beyond the norm. Traditions are not easy, but they come with time, hardened by criticism and strengthened by success.

While the identity of our new mascot is shrouded in mystery until tonight's game, another point is worth mentioning. The women's basketball team had its home opener last Friday. Why didn't the new mascot get premiered then? I am sure the women's team would have appreciated the care and support the university would have been about to front had they decided to make their opening game just as important as the men's. Yes, the program is not the most popular, but having a solid audience to watch them perform for the first time this year along

with celebrating the change of our new mascot could surely have made a difference and really made their Friday night game a real event for students to attend. Instead, the new mascot will be premiering on a Monday, when many of us have class to attend and cannot afford to stay out too late even if we do not have class because it is a Monday night. While I do understand that men's basketball is a big deal at this school, and our most profitable sport, it can be seen as selective programming or even sexist on the school's part to go about the unveiling of the mascot at the first men's home game and not the women's.

This school is innovative, different and above all, the number one up-and-coming school in the nation, and it seems that the things that have been propelling Mason forward are the things that set us apart. Why marginalize that by trying to be like everyone else and changing one of the most identifiable symbols of our school, our fuzzy, green, strange, goofy mascot Gunston. This time, innovation may not be the right thing for the university to do, especially if it is to only conform to normalcy.

JOIN THE GOLD RUSH



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- The Patriot Center

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Does Mason Support Anti-Israeli Propaganda?

The GMU Law School hosted an event called "Separate is Never Equal: Stories of Apartheid from South Africa to Palestine" last week. The very title of the event speaks volumes as to the falsehood of its premise, and the guests for the event were an unfortunate selection.

The first speaker at the event was Eddie Makue, a prominent South African reverend, called the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence "six decades of catastrophe." The second speaker was Diana Buttu, former spokesperson for the paramilitary Palestine Liberation Organization, "the richest of all terrorist organizations" according to UK law enforcement. In 2002, while in the Palestine Liberation Organization, Buttu likened the state of Israel and its negotiators to rapists. These two are hardly the most reputable choices to address Mason's Arlington campus.

Of course, the two speakers neglected to mention that, unlike any sensible definition of apartheid, Palestinians can travel from one side of the wall to another, and are free to enter, work and pray in Israel. They must have forgotten that there are Arab members of Israel's governing body, the Knesset. They forgot the clause in UN Resolution 242 that guaranteed Israel the "right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." They forgot to mention how the freedom of press and economic competition in Israel which is internationally recognized.

The list of lies perpetrated by these two speakers is extensive and it appears that their understanding of history is non-existent. They forget why it is that Israel came into being and why it not only deserves to, but must, exist.

In 1939, nearly 1,000 Jews fled Germany on the boat the St. Louis. They had paid to disembark in Cuba, and eventually were to make their way into the United States just a year before the Nazis had burned down every synagogue in Germany, shattered the

windows of every Jewish business and hauled away 25,000 innocent people to concentration camps. Then, the Nazis forced the remaining Jewish population to pay 1,000,000,000 Marks for the damage.

Unfortunately, most Jews were met by a hostile American public, 83 percent of which opposed aiding Jewish refugees by modifying immigration law. Many met the fate of the Jews aboard the St. Louis in 1939, whose arrival had been anticipated by a 40,000 member anti-Semitic mob that came to hear a former Cuban president declare that they should "fight the Jews until the last one is driven out." Of almost 1000 Jewish passengers, 22 were allowed to disembark. The St. Louis was turned around and the U.S. Coast Guard pinned the ship with spotlights to ensure that no Jew would attempt to swim to America's shore. The boat eventually docked in Belgium. Most of the passengers would be sent to Nazi concentration camps when World War II began less than three months later.

In the period leading up to World War II, no one would take in the Jewish refugees. The US population fell in line with the anti-Semitic sentiment that was popular at the time: Charles Lindbergh, a popular non-interventionist, said "we must limit to a reasonable amount the Jewish influence," and was often heard preaching Aryan. Henry Ford published a well known anti-Semitic newspaper. In 1939, the US government rejected the Wagner-Rogers bill, which would have admitted 20,000 Jewish immigrants under 18 from Nazi Germany. Effectively, Congress turned many children to their deaths.

In 1942, three years before the end of World War II, the U.S. State Department suppressed a message that confirmed the Nazis' plans for the "total destruction of Europe's Jews."

In 1945, approximately one million Jews were expelled from Arab nations in the Middle East and North Africa. They were divested of their property, denationalized, and forced out of

their generations-old homes. During their departure they left behind assets worth billions of dollars.

In 1948 the war ended and Europe was faced with a huge population of Jewish refugees that no one wanted to take in. Then the UN set armistice lines as temporary definitions of Israel's borders. Over a million Jews had found a home.

At that time, 630,000 Palestinians voluntarily left Israel when Arab leaders in the surrounding nations promised that the Jewish presence would be cleaned by Jihad. These Arabs initiated a planned departure and left little of value behind. The day the British left, the newborn state was attacked by Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia simultaneously. That war, which started on the moment of Israel's birth and established its existence as a state, lasted over a year and is known by the Jewish people as the War of Israeli Independence. The Palestinians call it "al Nakba" or "the Catastrophe." At the end of the war, Israel granted those Arabs within its borders citizenship.

How dare Buttu and Makue accuse Israel of attempting ethnic cleansing and apartheid? The facts are before you. Take a look in the dictionary at the definition of apartheid. Israel has no structured legal framework to provide racial separation.

No, there is only Israel, a single Jewish country surrounded by Arab nations. Buttu and Makue are at best uninformed, at worst anti-Semites. Mason needs to ask itself, should students be exposed to their lies? This event was inappropriate in the extreme.

With a never-ending stream of accusations and attempts to delegitimize Israel as a state, I want to know: how much more blood must the Jews pay to gain the natural born rights of life, liberty and happiness?

Aram Zucker-Scharf
Information Technology
and English major

Cabinet of Change

How Will Obama Choose His Council?

JOHN KOBLAN
Staff Writer

America has a lot of issues to tackle, including two wars, a roller coaster economy, healthcare and global warming. With all of these problems, it is important that President-Elect Barack Obama chooses the best people for his cabinet positions. Obama indicated as much, saying, "I think America deserves the best person for every job and so we are going to be canvassing far and wide, if I am fortunate enough to be elected." Hopefully, our new president believes that Americans deserve cabinet members with more experience than running a horse show.

Obama's first pick was new Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel. Emmanuel is a Chicago native who has been in Congress since 2002. He was chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in 2005. The Democrats gained 30 congressional seats the next election. Nicknamed "Rahmbo" for his sharp remarks and uncompromising style, the choice of Emanuel indicated that Obama wanted a bad cop to balance his good cop routine. Emanuel is known to have a temper, reportedly telling Tony Blair before his first meeting with Former President Bill Clinton during the Monica Lewinsky scandal, "This is important, don't fuck it up." Obama clearly chose someone who, when necessary, can crack some heads to keep the Congressional Democrats working to accomplish Obama's agenda.

The Emmanuel pick also reveals that Obama has a healthy balance of optimism and pragmatism. So far, he seems to have more in common with President Abraham Lincoln than Former President Jimmy Carter or George W. Bush. Carter campaigned with the slogan, "a government as good as its people." However, he

picked a battle he couldn't win. He had a bitter and adversarial relationship with his fellow Democrats in Congress. Carter wanted to cut pork spending big time. This angered former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill and paved the way for Carter's ineffective presidency and Ted Kennedy's historic 1980 Democratic primary challenge of an incumbent President. Unlike Carter, Obama is coming from the United States Senate. This gives him an advantage in dealing with Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Carter ran as the Washington outsider Georgia governor, and simply wasn't prepared for the rough and tumble world of Washington D.C. politics.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was vying for the Republican nomination against former New York Governor William Seward and former Ohio governor Salmon Chase. Lincoln ended up appointing his Republican primary opponents to his cabinet. Lincoln wanted the best minds for the job to preserve the Union, and he didn't let political grudges or favors get in the way. Our national politics have become the total opposite of those feel-good credentials over cronyism type of leadership.

Bush was certainly not following Abraham Lincoln's style of leadership when he appointed Michael Brown to run Federal Emergency Management Agency. What were Michael Brown's Emergency Management Credentials that would have prepared him for Hurricane Katrina? The man was the Judges and Stewards Commissioner of the Arabian Horse Association. Comedian Lewis Black said it best, "The job that prepared Michael Brown for FEMA was [that] he was the head of the Arabian Horse Association. You can see the connection there. Not even a great fiction writer could come up with that. He ran horse

shows and he was fired from that job . . . You could be drunk and be vomiting for three days and still run a horse show."

Ultimately, I feel that Obama needs to reach out to Republicans for leadership roles in his work for change. Several names have been mentioned as possible appointees. However, the Republicans I've talked to would say that these would be Republicans in name only. Have we really come to that point? Lincoln wouldn't even recognize his current party of Sarah Palin fanatics and Republicans measuring public servants to litmus tests to see how far to the right they are.

Lincoln believed in the best minds. Obama will need to work together with Democrats, Republicans and independents collectively to form an effective government. There are some interesting names being mentioned, including Senator Republican Chuck Hagel, Neb., 2004 Democratic nominee John Kerry and Gov. Tim Kaine (D). There probably won't be too many out-of-the-box picks like choosing Ron Paul, Tex., for Secretary of State. But, I think it goes back to Obama using optimism and pragmatism while selecting his cabinet.

"This is our time to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope," Obama said after winning the election. "And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."

Obama has lofty goals and great ambitions, but in order to fulfill them, he'll need to see beyond his political agenda. We need smart minds to address the issues.

LETTER FROM OUR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

Goals to Improve

How Student Government Will Help You



Student Government's main focus this year is to define our place in the George Mason University community so that students know what we do and how we can help. One of the ways that we are doing this is to let students know what exactly we are working on. We have created a plan that consists of broad goals and outlined specific projects to support these goals.

The inconvenience associated with the construction on campus has been a source of irritation among students for several years. One of our goals this year is to help students deal with those inconveniences. Our Gunston's Go-Bus project is one of the projects we have been working on to support this goal. Gunston's Go-Bus is a shuttle that will take students to restaurants, malls, shopping centers, and movie theaters around the

community for no charge. This shuttle is tentatively scheduled to begin running the first week of the spring semester, and hopefully it will make life easier for students who choose not to bring a car, allowing more residential students to leave their cars at home. Another project that we are working on is creating a craigslist-type website that allows students to find carpools with other students. This should also reduce the number of cars on campus and help open up more parking spots.

Another concern that we commonly hear among students is the quality of academic advising. Many students are not sure who their adviser is and feel that they don't do an adequate job making themselves available. Improving academic advising is another goal for Student Government this year. We have two projects to support this goal. First, we want to create an academic advising session. Around the time students are signing up for classes next semester, we would put on a program where each college had a table and where students could go to their college's table to ask questions about graduation requirements. If there was a specific department related question the college representative would refer the student to someone who could answer this question. This event would make it easier for students to get answers about which classes they need to take to graduate. The other project to support the goal of

improving advising is to work with our administration to create a policy where advisers reach out to the students they advise. This policy would require each individual adviser to send an email to all students that they advise once a year so that students would know who their adviser is, where their office is, and when their office hours are.

Our final goal addresses the most common source of frustration among college students across the country—affordability. Although there is nothing Student Government can do to lower tuition, we can advocate for policies that make it easier to cope with tuition increases. Right now, we are working with our university administration to give students an idea of what next year's tuition increase will look like. As tuition increases have become inevitable in this budget climate, we believe that it will be easier for students to plan for the increases if they are given notice of what to expect.

Over the last two weeks, I have outlined what Student Government's goals are for the rest of the year and how we hope to achieve them. If there is anything else you would like to see Student Government work on, or you have an idea for a project to improve our University, please feel free to contact me or any other member of Student Government.

Zack Golden
Student Body President

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

The home opener for the Mason Men's Basketball team is tonight against Brown University. Come join us at the Patriot Center to welcome home our team for a new season!



It's time to say goodbye to Gunston, our previous sports mascot, our mascot of 12 years. While a new version of him can still be seen at our "Go Green" events, he'll no longer be present at our sports events. Our new mascot we be unveiled tonight at the Men's Basketball home opener.



Broadside will not be publishing an issue next week. Check for us after the Thanksgiving break for our semester finale. Happy Thanksgiving!



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