

Preserving tradition

Congress should implement constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages

Tradition. This word along with culture has no meaning or relevance in today's America, where now, anything goes. Nowadays, if some new belief, desire or behavior surfaces, contradictory to the desires of the majority, the socially accepted response has become simple: offend no one, make concessions to ensure inclusion.

To avoid bursting into a song about tradition like the father from the play "Fiddler on the Roof," it should be clarified that times do change and people and some venerated practices must change as well. But one area where capitulation should never transpire pertains to that institution, practiced by man almost from the beginning of existence: marriage.

Today, marriage is under assault by a minority that desires to alter the definition to feel accepted. Meanwhile, the majority, opposed to such alteration, remains passive, paralyzed by the fear of being labeled such frightening terms as "bigot," "closed-minded," or even "conservative," which now in many media outlets bares a negative connotation.

Recently, as many are aware of, the push for a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage made its debut in the Senate, where for days debates loomed on, but ultimately all efforts to pass the bill proved futile.

This is surprising because, according to Fox News and other media outlets, most polls claim more than half of the nation wants marriage to have constitutional protection defining it as a union between a man and a woman.

In response, The New York Times, seizing on this "right-wing failure," has printed a slew of opinion articles blasting the protection of the marriage amendment, claiming that this whole ordeal was just an attempt to throw culture into the election and force John Kerry and John Edwards to publicly take a stand on the issue.

Now one cannot help but wonder why any of these assertions by the Times would be considered as a bad thing. To those who love traditional values, why would it be negative to see which candidates support sustaining those values?

Here's the deal. President Bush was right to support the amendment for as he stated "a few activist judges and local officials have taken it on themselves to change the meaning of marriage."

This can't be allowed to happen.

Consider other implications other than tradition. If concessions are made here where else will ultra-liberal judges attempt to implement their agendas in the future? Judges were never meant to make the laws and that is

precisely what they are doing now.

Recall the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial court's reference to marriage as an, "evolving paradigm."

Commendably, Bush chided the court by stating, "that sends a message to the next generation that marriage has no enduring meaning, and that ages of moral teaching and human experi-

ence have nothing to teach us about this institution."

Still some people might say, "big deal, allowing gays to marry doesn't affect me personally." While this statement bares some validity, such an ignorant outlook fails to consider the many cultural repercussions lurking off in the distance in wait to unleash their deviant influence on future generations.

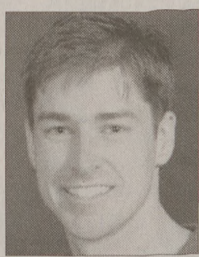
Moreover, whether secularists want to admit it or not, marriage has deep religious roots and these roots do not sanction marriage to same sex partners, no matter how much they love each other.

American values of tolerance and inclusion have now trickled down to small segments of the population, such as homosexuals. But just because of tolerance, one should not hastily conclude that the institution of marriage should be changed to address these values.

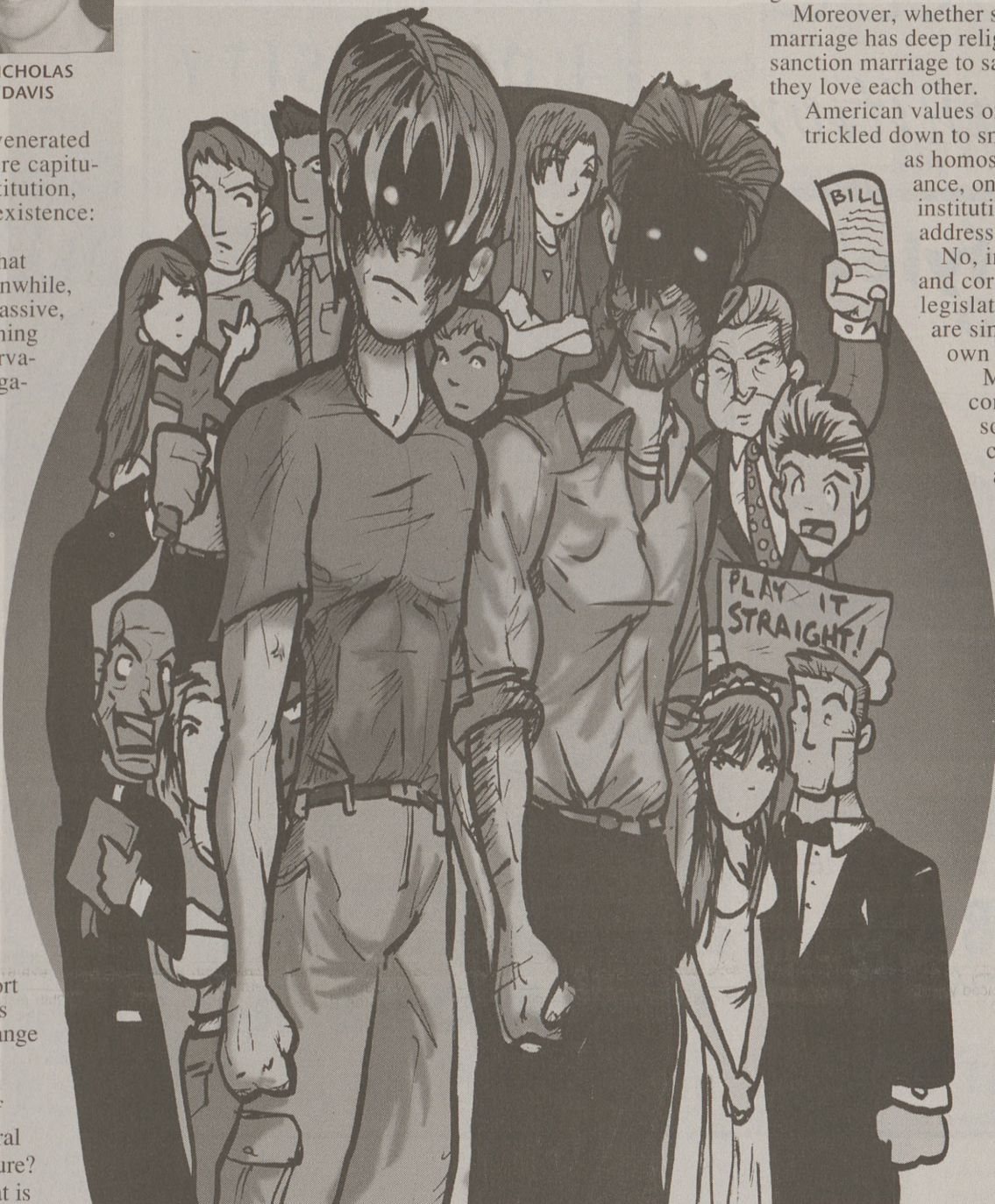
No, instead these values can be satisfied and core traditions can remain intact if state legislators would enact Civil Unions, which are similar to marriage, yet distinct in their own way.

More than ever, Americans need congressmen in office with backbones, someone with the courage to address controversial issues even if it means appearing callous. These individuals must truly desire to be a public servants, willing to risk losing voters to do what is in harmony with the will of the people and what is flat out right in some instances.

Mark these words: if these events remain unchanged, if America continues on this same twisted "politically correct" path, there will come a time when the traditions and values in this country have become unrecognizable and younger generations will long for the good ol' days when things seemed a bit clearer, when traditions, responsibilities, roles, standards and expectations were not impossible to guess.



NICHOLAS DAVIS



Nicholas Davis is a senior political science major. Graphic by Will Lloyd

United Nations should allow Israel to keep wall

Modern man has a hatred of walls,

perhaps because he thinks that they divide rather than join in an age of unification, or that they symbolize imbalance in an age of equality and tolerance or that they are just plain barbaric.

In any case, he remembers the Berlin Wall — that Iron Curtain of Communist oppression. He remembers how the world rejoiced when it fell.

Ancient man, however, lived and died by the wall. Barbaric times called for barbaric measures; ancient man was constantly threatened by sudden, violent attack. There was no mediator for ancient man. The wall was justice. It fortified cities and protected civilizations.

Ancient man has become modern, but there is a nation that still faces that same barbarism. Palestinian terrorists flood Israeli cities, destroying buses, store fronts and innocent life with inhuman acts of cowardice. Two years ago, seeing it as the only nonviolent solution, Israel started construction on a 425-mile wall of cement, barbed wire and watchtowers in the West Bank region meant to accomplish nothing less than those of the ancients' — to protect its people and provide a life free from fear.

But modern man sees a wall, and he hates it: though it stands one-quarter complete, the United Nations International Court of Justice (IJC)

says it must go. On July 9, the court claimed that the wall causes "unjustifiable suffering" and infringes on the rights of the Palestinian farmers living there by "dividing the territory," sometimes halving farmer's lands and splitting towns. The court said, despite whatever Israel's true intentions are, and despite whose land it really is, this action is a de facto annexation of the territory by Israel. The court said this is unlawful, and if these were all the facts, most would agree to the illegality.

Of course, it's not. Neither does the court think bombings and murders to be unlawful, at least not enough to mention them in the 60-page ICJ opinion. A case about a wall built to combat senseless acts of terrorism and no mention of bombs or murders?

The ICJ has failed by taking a stolid stand in reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense and by condemning Israel for protecting its citizens. But more disconcerting is the possibility that the court never intended to handle the case fairly: Addressing the real issue would be advantageous to Israel, and history shows that the United Nations tries at all costs not to do that. The United Nations is a dangerous place, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former ambassador to the organization, once warned. If one were Israeli, he would probably agree.

Since then, the United Nations has made other decisions, such as the withdrawal of U.N. peace-keeping forces from the Gaza Strip in 1967; bringing in Palestinian terrorist Yasser Arafat to speak to the General Assembly in 1974; and

sponsoring the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, which accused Israel of "racist laws" and "genocidal behavior" but failed to denounce nations or people groups who were anti-Semitic.

But the United Nations is sneaky. It realizes how few know this history, so it has said a few things to make it appear sympathetic to the Israeli cause, one of which includes the assurance that it would "support a right to self-protection" if Israel would alter the wall pathway.

But, Israel has already altered the pathway and corrected itself for the division of Palestinian villages. Even though the state claims that the wall only displaces one percent of the Palestinians who are affected by its route, the country has taken measures to be irreproachable. It ruled that the wall must be removed in areas that drastically altered Palestinians lives before the wall's incipience.

The only reason the wall even enters the disputed territory is because there are Israelis living there. An attempt to grant all of its citizens the right to life has ironically brought humanitarian condemnation down on Israel.

But this is still not the point; it's not about displaced persons. A displaced person is a sad, but rectifiable, story. A dead person is a tragic story, and it has no remedy.

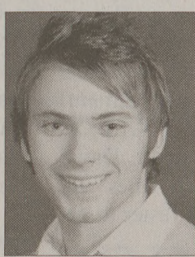
Israel says it will rectify the situation and change the route to respect the rights of the peaceful Palestinians. It says the remedy is the discontinuation of terrorist activity by Palestine.

The moment the deadly attacks on its citizens stop, Israel says it will tear down the wall. Until that day, Israel is content with its wall. A wall that is to thank for the slump in terrorist acts from the Gaza area, where there has been almost a 100 percent drop. In the last four years, Palestinian terrorists murdered 1,000 Israelis. So far this year, there has been only one.

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu makes Israel's point clear in an editorial in The New York Times: "Because the court's decision makes a mockery of Israel's right to defend itself, the government of Israel will ignore it. Israel will never sacrifice Jewish life on the debased altar of 'international justice.'"

The United Nations should not be a dangerous place for Israeli interests, but for Palestinian terrorist activity. For now, Israel is being forced to live and die by the wall because the United Nations seems content to watch the Israelis surrounded and preyed upon rather than the cleansing of international justice's soiled altar, which is barbaric by any standard, whether that of history or just today.

Clint Rainey is a sophomore general studies major.



CLINT RAINEY

MAIL CALL

Column was misinterpreted

In response to a July 15 mail call section:

After reading Thursday's mail calls, which all spoke out against Nicholas Davis' June 30 article, I couldn't help but wonder if the individuals who wrote these letters had read the same article as I did. Overall, they expressed anger towards Mr. Davis, accusing him of hatred of Muslims, and of inciting racial violence. One went so far as to say "the end of Mr. Davis' article expresses his malice towards the Muslim community, and suggests threatening a large group of innocent people." However, I could find nothing in his article that would substantiate such accusations.

Anyone who read the article could clearly see that it was terrorists, not peaceful people, whom he was suggesting should

be treated with intolerance. He expressed concern that so many Muslim individuals believe that the terrorists' actions are justifiable, or even commendable, but this is a far cry threatening anyone. In fact, I would sincerely hope that any peaceful Muslim would be equally outraged by hearing anyone applaud the terrorists for beheading innocent Americans! Mr. Davis' article correctly asserted that it is impossible to wage a successful war on terrorism while simultaneously tolerating the actions of terrorists and their supporters and sympathizers.

I applaud him for having the courage to state this politically incorrect, but still obvious fact, and I encourage anyone who disagrees with him to take a long, hard look at the facts. Who is the real threat here, the terrorists, or Mr. Davis?

Cindy McReynolds
Class of 2005

Democracy allows for debate on issues

After reading articles such as the one about disrespectful T-shirts and some opinion pieces, I am disheartened at the lack of respect for our American political process.

The freedom for lively discussion and political participation in an environment of common respect and civility is the foundation of American Democracy. When a group taints these values by spreading hatred and disrespect toward an opposing view, our democracy suffers.

I hope that everyone who has a stance on issues has the strength of character and spirit

to discuss the issues with civility and respect to all fellow Americans. To state your opinion truthfully, eloquently and respectfully is the truest sign of a patriot in a democracy.

If we are to be a beacon of democracy, I would hope that we can set an example of hearty democratic debate, not a country whose people attack each other when viewpoints vary.

Bush and Kerry are both public servants and statesmen trying to serve America. Let us respect all sides and play the political game with sportsmanship and honor. Now that's showing the true spirit of American Democracy!

James Lloyd
Class of 2006