

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

There was an error in last week's article about me that needs to be corrected. The statement made about the scholarship to University of Pennsylvania (i.e. awarded to one graduating chemistry senior from each school etc. and the listed prerequisites) applied to the American Institute of Chemists Award, not the University of Pennsylvania scholarship.

Thank you for allowing me to correct that statement.

Robin Ernest

Dear Editor,

A letter appeared in the last issue of *The Guilfordian* which raised the issue of the Student Union's commitment to all students. The letter was caused by the playing of "Dixie" during Serendipity. We would like to respond to several points of that letter.

First, we think that "Dixie" was heard in a variety of different ways by the audience. The way the song was introduced by the band was designed to get a response from the crowd. It pitted southern pride vs. northern pride. Many people understood "Dixie" as an expression of southern regionalism, not as the theme of belligerent racism that it was twenty years ago. We really think that it just did not occur to many people, especially to many whites, that the song would be heard in that way. This is not to say that one way is right and the other way is wrong; it is only to explain that the song was not heard or responded to in the same manner by everyone.

The band did not submit a list of songs to the Union before their performance for us to approve. The Union was simply not aware that they were going to play a song of such emotional potency. One step we will take in the future is to draft a statement of the College purposes and principles, which we would expect all performers to honor.

Once the event started, there was no way possible to stop it. It happened too quickly. Any attempt to interrupt it would have caused more complications than it would have solved.

This whole affair points to a more basic problem on campus; integration has failed in many ways here. In this way, at least, Guilford is like the real world. The Union has not gone out of its way to enlist black students this year on the basis of their being black. Our recruitment is aimed towards the general

student body. If students choose not to participate, there is not much that we can do.

We can see two partial solutions to the problem of lack of integrated participation.

One is that the Union make a stronger attempt to involve black students. However, it is hard to say how this is to be done. For at least the past three years, Union presidents have made appeals to BASIB members to participate on Union committees and decision-making bodies. There has not been very much response.

Another option is that the Union be promoted more specifically in the segments of the orientation program that are directed exclusively at black students.

Beyond this, what can we do to work upon changing the attitudes and ideas of the entire student body? For right now, the segregation is coming from both sides, white and black. We hope that this occurrence will be taken as an opportunity for evaluation and reaffirmation of commitment and action on the part of the institutions and individuals in the college to cooperate living.

Sincerely,

Dave Hurley,

College Union Pres.

Jim Shields,

College Union Vice-Pres.

Editor -

The winner of this year's Aaron Simon Award for Excellence in Teaching by a teaching assistant was awarded to Steve Wells, a TA for Ed Burrows in BHTC. Steve was nominated by Ed himself as well as a large number of students in the class. He was strongly complimented on his fairness, availability, patience, and contributions to class discussion. Students in particular stated that this class was highly successful due in large measure to Steve's contribution as TA.

The faculty who acted with me in making this decision, Ann Deagon, Paul Zopf, and Robert Bryden, were unanimous in praising Steve for his accomplishments as a TA, and I strongly concur myself.

Sheridan Simon

Assistant Professor of Physics  
To the Editor:

In reading Mr. Nnoka's serendipity '78 message last week, I was struck by the way he allowed one song during a week long festival to influence all of his feelings about serendipity, the student union, and in fact the entire community.

"Dixie" to many people, Black and White, is a revolting song. I doubt that a large percentage of those who do appreciate the tune are automatically thrust back 150 years every time they hear it to one of the most disgraceful periods in American history. I am also offended by those persons. Many Whites have fought and lost their lives alongside Blacks in the struggle to abolish the Old South and all she stood for.

It was distressing to read that Mr. Nnoka, a man with considerable status in the community, had let this one song influence him in making narrowminded generalizations about the community throughout his letter. Would your reaction be the same had it been a Black band striking up the tune? There are ranking Black and White members in the union that could have taken the stage to halt this activity.

Mr. Nnoka goes on to say that "the purpose of the student union is to provide activities for all students . . ." and . . . "recognize the needs of all students." He is clearly forgetting the fact that there are Black officers in the union, and that the union contributes a great deal towards Black entertainment, the Black organization, Brothers and Sisters in Blackness, (B.A.S.I.B.), and their annual festival Journey Into Blackness.

Earlier in his letter Mr. Nnoka stated that he was . . . in great doubt as to how far Guilford and its students have come in the area of integration and the inclusion of all members into the community." Guilford has come a long way in both areas. We were open enough to include the Gay Alliance as a charter organization, and also, to allow the Blacks to create an organization that makes no attempt to integrate itself. BASIB is the only truly racist organization on this campus. Its name, Brothers and Sisters in Blackness, and major event, Journey Into Blackness, acclaim its single coloredness. I have never been asked as a non-Black or fellow student to contribute anything to BASIB. As a fellow student I have never found a BASIB program that incorporated anything non-Black into it. As a White member of the community last year, I attended a BASIB meeting and asked to be put on their mailing list, I never again heard from them. I think that Mr. Nnoka should also look at these facts before

passing his judgement on the entire situation.

I agree with him in his wishes that "Dixie" not be played in the future if some are deeply offended by it. However, I do not agree that it is solely the unions responsibility to ensure it. Those offended must make their feelings public and try to include the entire community into the decision.

Finally, in response to his hopes for the entertainment at future serendipities, may I express my hope that " . . . in the future . . ." Journey into Blackness " . . . will offer entertainment for all the students because all of us contribute a portion of our activity fees to make it possible."

Respectfully,  
Peter Reichard

Dear Editor,

As I was reading the April 18, 1978 issue of the *Guilfordian* I came upon a letter that left me as totally speechless as the weekend's serendipity activities had left him. Of course, I am referring to Barrett Nnoka's letter concerning the playing of the traditional song entitled "Dixie."

I am very aware that slavery and the times of hardship in the Old South are difficult to accept. I, for one, am not proud and I am embarrassed at the injustices that were placed upon blacks and other minorities of the time. Yet I also feel that it is an injustice to me and other innocent Southerners to be denied the right and opportunity to listen to a traditional song which makes no mention of slavery at all. The meaning of the song was referring to times where life was not so fast paced. Similar to how an adult wishes for the trouble-free and careless times of his childhood.

childhood.

I also refuse to accept any blame for how the slave owning Southerners of the time acted. I have no responsibility in this area and refuse to accept any punishment or hinderance of my rights for their actions.

I will also add that if Mr. Nnoka is so sensitive and so taken back by this tune I suggest he buy some earplugs and refrain from listening to it. It might also be added that for some people the song would have the same bonds as old Irish tunes have to Irish, old English tunes have to British, and even old Negro spirituals have to Blacks.

In closing if Mr. Nnoka feels oppressed by a song that speaks of the old way of "easy living," and feels that such songs should never be played again, he should think twice. If all songs which perhaps might bring back bad memories should be banned, then I'm afraid we have to ban hymns also. Songs such as "That Old Rugged Cross" bring back terrible memories on how my savior Jesus Christ and my religion were persecuted and tortured and how he died on the cross. Yet at the same time I know that Jesus rose from the grave and therefore I hold no hard feelings.

Why should not Mr. Nnoka feel the same way? That 150 years ago is history. We can not change that in the least. And now, blacks are making tremendous strides in social, economic and political areas and will hopefully continue to do so.

From now on let us work together and strive for higher goals. But at the same time remember that each individual has their own history. And this fact about the difference in histories should not have a bearing in what each individual is entitled to enjoy. Let

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