

Guest editorial

# Home free

By Constance Irving

I have spent much of the past few weeks either at home or commuting between home and school. It has been tiring, not only physically, but emotionally as well. My own family is a fairly compatible one, but as a friend observed, it is much easier to get along with one's family by long distance.

"Home," said Robert Frost, "is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." That sums up so well the problems and benefits of family and home: one is forced to deal, whether one likes it or not, with a set of inexorable ties. (I can just hear my own father interjecting at this point that his relatives are always giving him ugly ties. But I digress.) The idea of something so permanent and ponderous would be difficult to deal with in any case, but it is downright paradoxical in a society that values individuality, independence, and novelty to the disparagement of loyalty, co-operation, duty, and stability. We are supposed to be looking out for number one, but still there are all those inconvenient people who are so very like us and with whom it is difficult to avoid being close. It is an undeniable bond in a society that prefers lack of commitment, casualness, and rapid changes. Most of us do not know what to do with our families.

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Someone once advised me that if my family had traumatized, inconvenienced, or annoyed me, I should disown them. Sometimes this appears a convenient solution. But where and how does one cut the ties? There has to be some sense of independence, but it is hard to know where the family stops and the self begins. We may reject our family members as individuals, but we inevitably share many of their traits, especially those traits we most dislike. To deny these traits would be dishonest; to reject the individuals would be to reject a part of one's self. "I hate my family" too easily translates into "I hate myself"; such is hardly a sane reason for disowning one's family.

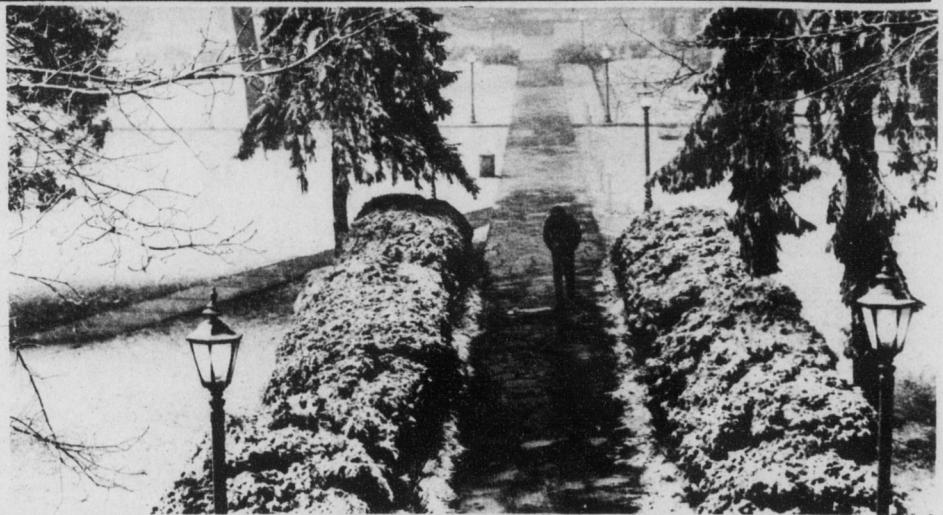
And so we are left facing homeward again, loving maybe, accepting certainly. After all, the family has endured for longer than we have as individuals, and we as individuals are not so very different from the individuals of the past. Out of a lack of anything else, perhaps, the family continues with its dead end arguments, hostilities, mutations, and, somewhat incredibly, love. No matter which way we move, we still have to look back on the direction from which we have come.

One is reminded of the scene in the Marx Brothers' film, *Go West*. Chico and Harpo play brothers, and Groucho plays a stranger who harasses Harpo. Chico staunchly defends his sibling, and Groucho is greatly impressed by his loyalty. "You really love your brother, don't you?" he asks Chico.

"Nope," Chico replies, "but I'm used to him."

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Guilford students were stunned Sunday when migrating callipygians stopped at the campus on their northern migration, depositing abundant quantities of guano everywhere. Students were particularly astounded when President Rogers announced a "snow" sculpture contest. Nonetheless, several hardy souls did accept the challenge, and began heaping piles into shapes vaguely resembling dragons, restrooms, and agricultural apparatuses.



## Letters to the Editor

All Letters must be submitted to the Guilfordian at Box 17717 by Friday night, and should be no longer than 200 words. Names may be withheld if requested by the author in person or in writing.

### Nuclear war?

Dear Editor:

Michael Novak's talk Thursday night started me thinking about the long-term implications of a nuclear building by the U.S. to decline what he calls "parity" with the Soviet Union.

There are only two things a country can do with nuclear weapons: use them or threaten to use them. Mr. Novak did not advocate using them, so I presume he advocates that the U.S. threaten to use them. (That is what it usually means to advocate deterring the Soviets from aggression, at least large-scale aggression.)

If the U.S. threatens to use nuclear weapons, it must make that threat credible. That means the U.S. must convince the Soviets that, if the Soviets do certain things the U.S. is more willing than the Soviet Union to use its nuclear weapons. Otherwise the U.S. would be backing down.

In the long run the only way to make a threat credible is to make it true. Otherwise the U.S. would have to fool the Soviet Union into believing that the U.S. would do something it has no intention of doing, and it would have to do this for decades, even centuries. As soon as the Soviets call the U.S.'s bluff, the threat loses credibility. Thus the U.S. must become in reality more willing than the Soviet Union to use nuclear weapons.

To the extent that the U.S. thus becomes more willing than the Soviet Union to use its nuclear weapons, to that extent it is insuring that the probability is greater than zero that a nuclear war will occur. Most people believe that the Soviets themselves are willing to start a nuclear war under some circumstances. Thus for two reasons (the U.S.'s willingness and the Soviet's willingness) there is a built-in probability, how-

ever small, that a nuclear war will occur in the international system.

No matter how small the probability, however, over a long enough period of time, the odds are very strong that at least one nuclear war will occur. For example, if the probability is one in a hundred (on the average) that a nuclear war will occur in any given year, then there is roughly a two-to-one chance that it will occur at least once in the next century, and a ninety-nine-to-one chance that it will occur over the next 400 years.

Thus the deterrence strategy advocated by Mr. Novak turns out not to be a way of eliminating war (which was not the reason he stated for supporting it) but rather it is a way of virtually insuring that at least one nuclear war will occur. Of course, as a friend of mine once said, if you've seen one nuclear war you've seen them all.

One of Mr. Novak's last remarks of the evening was that he believed that our actions will ultimately be judged not by their intentions alone, but also by their consequences. What will be the judgement on a policy that leads to nuclear destruction?

Scott Gassler

### Atlanta murders

Dear Editor:

Recently, I have been asked why I am wearing a ribbon on my shirt. I am doing so for the twenty-two dead and missing children in Atlanta. The ribbons are a way to express pain and sorrow caused by the senseless slaughter of innocent children, and to show support and compassion for the families of the victims. Wearing the ribbons also symbolize the anger and frustration I feel because of the lack of any police breakthrough in ending this inhumane ordeal.

It is extremely distressing to consider the profound implications of the killing of children.

Apparently this society has degenerated to such a level that there is no concern for the future of the society; the child.

Tears trickle through my defense when I imagine the grief and despair the mothers of the children feel. Many of these women are the sole provider of the household who have sacrificed and struggled to provide their children with a chance for a better life, only to see their child killed.

I am angry and frustrated because I cannot understand how an allegedly competent police force with the help of the FBI and a special task force have been unable to uncover any leads in this case. I am perplexed that the concentrated effort in Atlanta has turned up no significant clues on the twenty murders.

The one bright spot in this tragedy (if it could be called "bright") has been the way the country has come to the aid of the stricken families and the Atlanta community. There have been numerous activities around the country to show support and concern for those more directly affected. Activities such as demonstrations, parades, and fund-raising events have helped to show support. The Reagan administration also contributed 1.5 million dollars to help pay for the investigation.

It is in this spirit of positiveness that a group of concerned students, faculty, and administrators here at Guilford would like to participate. We have organized the selling of ribbons to show concern for the situation and to raise money for the cause. Incidentally, the colors are red for blood, green for life, black for the children, and white for the purity of the soul. There will also be a vigil this Thursday night at 9:00, to mourn the deaths of these children. Interested persons meet in Founders' lobby at 8:30. Please join us.

David Davenport