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Happy Holidays

Editorial:

Insight into Bryan Incident

By Damon Hickey

What does the "Bryan Incident" really mean? The participants and onlooker will have their own answers, which may change over time. As a member of the Judicial Board that heard the cases growing out of this incident I have reached some answers too.

First I am terrified by the rapid escalation of violence and by the assumptions that brought it about. A pair of strangers (black students from another school) show up in a dorm at four in the morning. Words are exchanged with a group of (white) Guilford students. They feel threatened, and one of the strangers is shoved or kicked. The strangers now feel threatened, and one pulls a gun. A bystander then goes after his own gun. Racial slurs fly. A car window is smashed and the first gun is destroyed. A fight ensues in which miraculously no one is seriously injured. The second gun is put away. Security and the police arrive.

Why did it happen? Racial feeling undoubtedly played a part on both sides. But I am struck by the degree to which violence exploded because no one was willing to back down and simply walk

away from a confrontation, racial or not. Each successive escalation was justified automatically as a defensive response to a perceived greater threat. It takes very little imagination to see frightening parallels in the arena of international relations.

The parallels are even more frightening when it comes to guns. As someone who has never handled, fired, or owned a gun, I am terrified by the quick recourse to deadly weapons, loaded or not. (An unloaded gun is just as frightening as a loaded one if the target does not know it is unloaded. And an unloaded gun is just as likely to be countered by another gun that is loaded.) We can be very thankful that no one was seriously injured or killed.

On the positive side, I am heartened by the quick and strong response from students, college officials, and faculty to the racial discomfort, hurt, and fear that followed the incident. Some students have been accused of overemphasizing the racial character of the incident. On the contrary they should be thanked for their sensitivity to the racial disunity, justified or not, which the incident produced, and for trying to overcome it.

I am also thankful that with some exceptions, Guilford

students seem to have acted to restrain violence and restore order. One gun was smashed, not fired, and the other was put away at the insistence of Guilford students. A jack handle was used as a restraint, not as a club. When one student lost his control, his friends held him back. The stranger who had pulled a gun was released, not beaten, by those whom he had threatened.

Most of the participants in the Judicial Board hearings would probably agree that the accused students have been treated fairly, and that both they and the community have received justice. Despite premature protests about negative pretrial publicity, most of us know not to believe everything we read in the newspaper, and are able to render relatively open, unbiased judgements.

I was particularly struck during the proceedings, and in reading letters to the paper, by the different ways Euro and Afroamericans view racial name calling. A white student may use a racial epithet in the heat of intense confrontation and see it as directed only at the immediate adversary. But a black bystander immediately identifies with the person at whom it is directed because it is based on race, and feels dehumanized and threaten-

ed by it. And, like it or not, fair or unfair, racial epithets are not all equal.

We whites have always held the balance of real power in this society and our resort to those words conveys a threat that "white trash" and "honkie" can never match. Nor is my use of an epithet aimed at blacks the same as a black person's use of the same epithet toward another black. That is why this incident was so widely perceived as racial and racist. I hope that white Guilfordians will cease to use or tolerate those words in fun, in anger, or in any other context.

But beyond all these lessons I have seen something that is really wonderful. It is the miracle of unity and reconciliation, of love, emerging from hatred and confrontation. At the interracial meeting following the incident, one of the Guilford students involved in the violence was shocked to discover that his actions had produced fear and alienation among his black friends.

His courage and caring in coming to the meeting then led him to approach one of the black students who had witnessed the incident. He began to learn from her how racial epithets hurt all

black people, not just the ones at whom they are directed. And she began to realize that he had not meant to hurt her.

Although she signed the complaint against him, she also spoke on his behalf at the hearing. These two students are exceptional people who reached out to each other across a chasm of fear, anger, and hurt. But their action helped to release the same potential in others, helping to transform an experience of community division into one of healing and growth.

We have far yet to go, and should not rush to congratulate ourselves on having reached a happy ending. Racism is real on our campus. Black students still fear being forced to live in a mental world of blacks versus whites. Old wounds have been opened that are not yet closed. But we have had an example here in our midst of how we can bring about positive change, through frank, open, deep, sharing discussion, in the courage to labor with those who seem to be our enemies in order to transform them and ourselves into friends. I hope that is what in the end the "Bryan Incident" really means.

What is Biofeedback

By Barbara Ruby

Are you sitting there asking yourself, "What in the world is biofeedback?" According to Robert M. Stern and William J. Ray, authors of *Biofeedback: Potential and Limits*, "Biofeedback can be defined as the use of monitoring instruments (usually electrical) to detect and amplify internal physiological processes within the body, in order to make this ordinarily unavailable information available to the individual and literally to feed it back to him in some form." (P. 5).

What this means is that it is possible to register body func-

tions through the use of feedback (which in our case is usually audio feedback).

Next semester, the biofeedback clinic will be staffed by six students. Claire Morse, a psychology professor, is the faculty advisor. The clinic will be a professional service that is free and open to all Guilford College students and residents in the surrounding community. Confidentiality is maintained.

There are three pieces of biofeedback equipment that are used in the clinic. The EMG (electromyogram) is used in order to monitor muscle tension.

The EEG (electroencephalogram) is used to

measure the frequency and amplitude of brain wave activity. And the third piece of equipment measures temperature and allows learning to change temperature of the extremities.

In the past, clients have come to the clinic to learn how to control teeth grinding, tension headaches, cold hands and to achieve overall relaxation. Of course just plain curiosity has also brought people on to try out the equipment.

The clinic will be opening on January 29th and the hours will be posted on the door of King 224. If you would like more information, you can contact Steve Saltzgeber at Box 17466, or Claire Morse at ext. 208. Hope to see you next semester!



"Kasha Viets" speaks while Mark Kramer, Abbey Donahower and Spencer Diggs listen in *The Hairy Falsetto*. The cast also included Amy Zubl, Revelers and the Drama Department also presented *The Actors Nightmare*. Photo by Andrew Stuart