

Security in alternative housing requires drastic improvement

Laurel Nesbitt
Editorials Editor

After the recent Hildebrande break-in, it would seem that some attention should be given to the quality of Guilford's vacation security procedures, and particularly to the security of alternative housing.

Even when classes are in session, the alternative houses are at a disadvantage security-wise. In most of the houses, locks are in poor condition, glass panes in doors scream to be shattered, and the key system leaves much to be desired. So far, the college has not deemed it necessary to replace all old keys with ones stamped, "Do not duplicate." Therefore, some students can still have copies of their keys made in order to have access to their rooms later on down the road. Just this year Guilford security has set up a policy whereby a person's lock is replaced if the key to that lock is lost or stolen, but all-in-all the sloppiness of the key system is somewhat alarming.

To add to all of the structural security weaknesses of the alternative houses, there

is the fact that houses like Hildebrande House and the Pines are easy targets by virtue of their being so far removed from the main campus. This is, of course, made worse during breaks when people are not perpetually in and out of the houses. Security drives by Hildebrande House once every hour when classes are in session. They check the house once every eight hours during vacation time. The reasoning here seems somewhat off:

1. Hildebrande House is somewhat remote, therefore a prime target for burglary.

2. Vacation time means that there are no people around the house and that it would be even easier to break into it during this time.

3. Therefore, security should check Hildebrande House less frequently than they normally do.

What is even more unbelievable is that Guilford managed to do such a tremendous service for the burglars in the Hildebrande incident by marking the door with the standard fluorescent orange "no trespassing" sign announcing the dates of the vacation period. The message might as well have been, "Come on in, boys.

Everyone's gone and there are stereos aplenty." One wonders what the purpose for the sign could possibly have been in the first place. Was Guilford concerned that the Girl Scouts might miss an opportunity for cookie sales? Why does the public need to know that we are not around?

As was pointed out in David Simpson's article (The Guilfordian, January 15) on the Hildebrande break-in, the burglars entered the house through the kitchen window, which had no lock but was normally impossible to open since it had an internally bent frame. But stuck is not locked, as the burglars easily discovered with the help of a crowbar. It is certainly

believable that security would not know that the window had no lock, but it seems utterly ridiculous to imagine that maintenance would not be aware of this, particularly since the house was painted and worked on extensively last summer.

Perhaps it could be said that students resign themselves to this security gamble when they decide to move into alternative housing. But alternative housing is still Guilford housing; the same amount of money changes hands. Alternative houses should enjoy the same security standards as residential hall housing. If these standards are not met, it would seem that the college should be at least in part responsible for stolen property in incidents like the Hildebrande break-in.

Image has its place

Statements of diversity set a goal of improved reality

Martha Lang
Staff Writer

One hundred people bathed in candlelight singing "We Shall Overcome." Sam Schuman, looking shocked and confused as a student described a recent, horrifying racial incident. Both took place at the same event. I would suggest to you that the image and the reality of Guilford were never more apparent or dichotomous than on the evening of January 15 in Sternberger Auditorium.

We are all familiar with the image of Guilford College; it is sold to us when we apply here. Quakerly history. Celebration of diversity. Tolerance. Flowering dogwoods. A true community. Wonderfully written affirmations with titles like "Respect for Persons."

But what about the reality of Guilford College? Three black faculty members. A tiny minority student enrollment. Gay baiting and gay bashing. Serious problems of faculty intolerance toward all kinds of folk. No clear-cut policy for safely reporting incidences of discrimination and harassment. Homogeny. Intolerance.

I will stop here; I am tired of being the shouting sociologist. I would like to comment, though, on the image and the reality of Guilford as they relate to the evening activities for Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

In my four years here I have attended so many of these do-we-have-a-problem-with-racism/sexism/homophobia-and-what-should-we-say-and-maybe-we-

should-do-something-events that I have lost count of them. In many ways this event was a lot like the others that preceded it. But then again, it wasn't. Sam Schuman and I said heartfelt things about racism/sexism/homophobia/anti-semitism at Guilford in our "Update on Guilford." The audience responded with the normal concern and made many keen observations.

The usual pattern was broken, though, when a student brought up the ugly racial incident of Jan. 12 that we know all know about. Sam Schuman said that this was the first time he had heard of it. Many expressed amazement. Members of the Student Development office spoke reassuring words and tried to soothe us. With a communal sigh of relief we moved on to "Twisted Dream," a play by Joe Studivant. Toiya Hodge, Paul Coscia, Joe Studivant and Eric Thomas performed and stated the reality of Guilford more eloquently than Sam or I could ever hope to. However, the play addressed the image of Guilford too; Joe Studivant transformed himself into Martin Luther King Jr. and spoke those famous lines again. We heard words like "intergration," "justice" and "tolerance."

It occurred to me then that if King holds up the image, I shouldn't dismiss it as easily as I do. That thought came to me again as Ed Lowe led the community sing. We ended with a candlelit version of "We Shall Overcome." As I sang I looked at the faces around me. There were people I loved, people I cared about and people

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