

# PERSPECTIVES

## Without Information, Complaints are Counterproductive

Lara Ramsey  
Staff Writer

When I heard that the Union spent \$1,000+ on renting the movie "The Hunt for Red October," I felt the acid of injustice stirring in my stomach. It costs \$2.50 to rent the same thing on video cassette, and \$1 if you catch it at Quaker Twin. I can't even fantasize about the things I would do with \$1,000, let alone what the Guilford community could accomplish with that much money.

I am further frustrated by monstrous movie fees because I know that I am partially responsible for that expenditure. While I continue to feel that spending hundreds and thousands of dollars on otherwise available movies each semester is a waste, and ethically escapes justification, I have to realize that I never once offered positive input to the film committee before

the decisions were made. The Union that I voted for exists to represent my views, but it would have to be telepathic to know them. However, since the fall 1990 semester has commenced, no student who is not an officer of the Union has attended the Wednesday meetings. And according to Scott Thornhill, director of the film committee, a single student has yet to offer a film suggestion.

Lack of communication leaves one individual in the precarious position predicting which movies will go over with success. Thornhill can research what movies were popular all summer, and that is the most solid criteria he has to go by. He can't know when he schedules movies three months ahead of time that the dollar theater will show the same flick during the same week (as happened with "Pretty Woman"). His best judgement tells him to take heed from past success: thus we end up with the most recent releases which are

consequently the most expensive.

Before I could write this article fairly, I talked to Thornhill for verification of my understandings. Our connection enlightened me on two levels.

First, I found the hear-say to be inaccurate. "The Hunt for Red October" will cost around \$700 in actuality. It is a \$1,000 movie but the rental company cooperates with Guilford's budgetary limitations and for every movie, we receive a discount. Most of the movies we watch in Sternberger are in the blue-light-special range of \$200.

Secondly, I took inventory of my personal attitude. I learned of the whole issue through someone else's idle complaining. I was quick to inform the next person I saw of my recent scandalous discovery. It wasn't even accurate information, yet I was willing to bum somebody else out by coaxing them to affirm my own negativity.

Complaining has a tendency to do that. "Doesn't it suck that..." and "Can you

believe..." are leading questions, literally asking the listener to join in the 'fun' of complaining. It's all fun and games until someone loses a positive outlook.

The way I see it, complaining usually brings more people down, or else it indirectly asks someone else to solve the problem for you. "Mom, I'm so hungry these days . . ." or "Gosh, Barnhill, I've got so much work this week you wouldn't believe" are requests masquerading as informative comments.

Sometimes complaining is constructive, therapeutic, even necessary. I just know that if it's not pure—if it's not researched, if it's to shirk responsibility, or if it's merely for the sake of being negative—then it's not worth the energy that could be spent elsewhere making a positive difference.

Constructive energy can begin with efficient communication.

## Deliberated Drug Policy: A Set Community Standard

Wayne Nash  
Guest Writer

Being in London, I must respond late to the letters regarding the new judicial policy. Though I know little of the actual judicial hearing as I write this letter, I helped to formulate policy and sat on the Judicial Board for two years. I read two main concerns in the September 17 issue.

First, Bill Covert implied that we on the Judicial Review Task Force did not seriously consider the social repercussions of the so-called "One-Strike" policy. Secondly, Jonathan Lawson and George Brand believe that the revised system favors the plaintiff. I stress that I am responding to policy decisions, and not to the actual case

involved.

To Mr. Covert, I ask if he ever attended a meeting of the Judicial Review Task Force. I also ask him if he attended the Senate meetings in which the Judicial proposal was analysed and critiqued. If he had, then he would know that we discussed the long-term social effects of a suspension/expulsion towards first-time convicted offenders. If Mr. Covert missed the meetings, then I am informing him now that we discussed penalties in the last four months of the two-year review process, both in the Task Force and in the Senate. And in making these decisions, we the student leaders/student government/administration formed policy in consideration of the common good, not in accordance with

popular opinion or popular desires. Our role forces us to defend the community's health from the few deviants who defy social standards. Judicial policy is not set by popular opinion and Guilford should not liberally deviate from that precedent.

To Mr. Lawson and Mr. Brand I judge their example in paragraph three to be weak. Just as they argue that more plaintiff witnesses will imbalance justice against the defendant, I retort that more witnesses for the defendant would seemingly then prove the defendant's innocence. Luckily for the students, judicial decisions are based on evidence and not the number of witnesses which a person brings to the hearing. Mr. Lawson and Mr. Brand further state that, ultimately, "students must be trusted." If students are to be fully trusted, then we would not need a testimonial system, only punitive measures given to those trustworthy students who, upon committing crimes, are willing report themselves to a college official. Do you really believe that all offenders report themselves? Students may only be trusted to a degree without incurring social damages. This includes both plaintiff and defendant. As evidence is presented to the Judicial Board, no group has priority evidence.

Furthermore, I want to address these policy issues as Senate and the Task Force debated them. For several years judicial penalties in drug/alcohol cases were little more than a slap on the wrist with non-restrictive probation and, occasionally, some community service (a penalty which developed in the last three years). For an RA, it is hard enough to actually catch a student using drugs. A judicial process which gives no substantial penalties to

convicted offenders turns an RA into an apathetic non-enforcer. Until this year, the penalty standard for drug use has not been enforced because the appellate process lessened judicial measures, turning the Judicial Board into non-enforcers through their experience of futility.

The Task Force quickly came to a consensus to enforce the old policy with the new process. Senate, however, debated the issue for two hours. We discussed whether we should represent our constituencies or set community standards. To represent our constituents would be to set lenient rules against drugs because drug users, of course, want no restrictions around their "recreational activities."

The Senate chose instead to set a community standard against drug use. We realize that drug/alcohol abuse is rampant on our campus as it is nationally. As Paige Mahaney said, to set a lenient penalty is saying, "It's OK to use drugs," and the student leaders agreed that this ideology is not the message which Guilford's community will promote.

To those who disagree with said policy, you should have participated in the decision-making process which openly asked for opinions. Ignorance is not an acceptable plea because anyone, at any time, could attend the meetings and voice their opinion. I myself did not join the Task Force until the last few months before Senate approved the judicial proposal. An argument of "Well, I didn't know about it" tells me "Well, I was apathetic about it until it was too late."

Every student decides upon enrolling to

see STANDARD on page 3 >

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