

The FORUM

editorial board

Keir Bickerstaffe
Lindsay Oldenski
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statement of purpose

The Forum exists to facilitate dialogue and expression on matters of importance to Guilford College and its mission. Toward this end, active community participation in these pages is vital.

editorial policy

Every effort will be made to print appropriate submissions of editorials, cartoons and letters to the editor. They must be signed, with the phone number of the author or artist included. Editorials must be no longer than 400 words and letters to the editor must be no more than 250 words. The Guilfordian reserves the right to edit submissions for grammatical correctness and brevity.

Crimes against the community

Last Sunday night the women of Guilford slept with their doors locked, many of them for the first time all year.

At six a.m. Sunday morning a man in a ski mask entered a woman's unlocked dorm room and sexually assaulted her. But when he attacked his victim, he did more than violate her rights; he committed a crime against the community.

Certainly the victim was harmed greatly and her suffering should in no way be trivialized, but it is necessary to consider the implications that such an act has on Guilford as a whole.

We are not the safe community that many students would like to think we are. The sexual assault, along with the armed robbery that occurred early Wednesday morning spurred a great deal of discussion among the student body. Two main sentiments were voiced over and over in

these discussions: Ours is not a safe environment, and something should be done to make it safer.

But how do we act cautiously without living in a state of fear or paranoia? How do we protect ourselves without jeopardizing our freedom? How do we improve security without feeling like we live in a police state?

How do we act cautiously without living in a state of fear or paranoia?

These are difficult questions and their answers are far from simple. Some of the suggestions that have been made are to

get electronic key cards for all of the dorms. This may help some, but it still will not prevent the propping open of doors or ease the fears that some students, especially those with first floor rooms, have about outsiders breaking into windows.

Security has stressed the importance of locking individual room doors and not letting strangers into the dorms. Despite the seeming common sense of these suggestions, many students have not followed them, perhaps because they feel safe or at least *want* to believe that Guilford is a safe environment.

Maybe the severity of these two incidents will be enough to get people to actually follow security's suggestions. Unfortunately, it often takes a serious event to cause individual change.

Letters

Military values not consistent with Quakerism

Any time the religious and social testimonies of the Friends get ink, I count it as a gain; we Quakers don't attract much attention. But the Guilfordian article "militant about pacifism" (12/6/96) inadequately addresses the reasons Friends have an active peace testimony and why there is much opposition to military recruitment on campus. . . . opposition that far exceeds the 10% of the student body who are Quakers.

The Quaker peace testimony is not rooted in a lack of patriotism, as implied in the article. Friends have not separated from the world, but rather are committed to perfecting the world in accordance their understanding and experience of the teachings of Jesus and the guidance of the Inward Light of Christ. We are naive enough to believe that Jesus meant what he said about peacemaking! That is confirmed by our ongoing experience of Christ.

Nor is Guilford's denial of access to military recruiters an issue of free speech or a chance to learn about military careers. Members of the military are free to speak on campus and have been included in symposia on issues such as the Gulf War and recruitment on campus. Our career development center has ample information about military careers. The last time I checked, the print and electronic media seemed to provide adequate exposure to the military services.

A college has to base much of its decision-making on core principle. As Guilford revises its curriculum, for example, we have to ask what our mission is, what we do best, and how we can make maximum use of our resources, knowing we can't do "everything." Neither can we invite every career option to be represented on campus. We

must choose which ones are consistent with our focus—rational Quaker principles.

When held against the light of Quaker testimony on the sacredness of each human being, Jesus's clear teaching about loving our enemies, and concern for equality, simplicity, and integrity, military careers seem less than consistent with these central commitments. A decision to allow active military recruitment on campus would be inconsistent with Guilford's spiritual heritage and guiding principle, further blurring the line between the college and any other "fine, top 25% national liberal arts college."

And if you don't agree with me, I'll break your knee caps! Nonviolently, of course!

Pax,
Max L. Carter
Friends Center director

In defense of the military

Disgust. Shock and disgust are the two words that came to my mind when I read the latest piece by Lindsay Oldenski, concerning the military and recent allegations of harassment. Oldenski's statements display her extreme ignorance of the military in regards to their overall mission.

To start with, Oldenski's statements unfairly portray the military as evil murderers and rapists. Evidently, Oldenski believes that the actions of a few are enough to judge the whole. Not a single person I know could defend the crime of rape in any circumstance. Yet, that doesn't stop its commission. But to lay the responsibility on the entire armed forces of the United States is to paint with a

rather wide brush. Oldenski uses that brush with evident skill as she splashes this institution with such statements as, ". . . soldiers are stripped of their identities and rebuilt as aggressive fighters. . . not afraid to die. . . or to kill." If Oldenski knew anything about, or anyone in, the military she would know that they are not fearless, that, in fact, no one is more aware of the risks and their own mortality than the men and women in the armed forces.

Oldenski serves up more ignorance when she states that "These assaults would not occur unless the commanding officers at least appeared to tolerate them." Life in the military is very strict. There are rules governing every aspect of life. Failure to comply with rules and regulations is punished swiftly. As for supporting rape, that's just not true. The military has tried to do everything possible to accommodate the inclusion of women in the military, no matter how much they may have disagreed at the time.

I suspect that there have been many more instances of rape on college campuses than in the armed forces. Yet I don't hear Oldenski accusing admissions office staffers and professors of fostering a climate where rape is permitted.

In the end I think Oldenski's writing has served some good. Her articles have no doubt provoked many people to write in and voice their sentiments. Still, I would encourage Lindsay Oldenski to research her topics and information more thoroughly in the future. I can neither force Oldenski to change her views, nor retract her column, but I must remind her that her accusations fall not only on the soldiers of the United States military, but on a sizable group of women who proudly serve with the men as specialists and officers.

Lauren Keranen