



THE GUILFORDIAN

Greensboro, NC

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Pope House evacuated

By Tom Gallagher
STAFF WRITER

If you can't take the heat...move to Pope House.

It was round 4 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 30th when Mica Gwendyn was awakened by the smell of kerosene. Soon others were risen by what Pope house residents later described as "a loud banging, clanging sound." A ruptured jacket, which stored water for the basement boiler, caused the noise and odor.

Fumes came through the heating vents, causing many to question their safety. "It smelled so bad that I thought I would pass out," said sophomore Sera Cleaver. "We just went outside and sat in the cold."

Freezing rain had covered the campus in a layer of ice over night, adding a degree of hazard to any attempt to repair the broken boiler. Road conditions were dangerous, and given the early hour, maintenance workers would not be available until mid-morning.

Sophomore Alex Wilson, who had spent the night at the house, decided to call the fire department.

Unfortunately, the door to the basement was locked and no one at the house had a key. "[The firemen] had an axe and they were about to bust the door down, but then someone from security came and let them in," said Senior Dan Blocker.

The floor of the basement was flooded by water that had spilled from the boiler. As a precaution, the firemen decided to turn off the boiler, which left most rooms in the house without heat.

"There was no real danger with the boiler itself. I guess [residents] thought there was oil on the floor, and that's why they called the fire department," said head of maintenance Mark Miller.

The coming day would bring more mayhem to the scene. A tree fell within a few feet of the house, damaging a car in the gravel parking lot nearby. "It was like the apocalypse; we had to get out of there," recalled resident Kate

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Greensboro sit-ins marked



A member of the original sit-in and Mayor Holliday speak to the crowd of about 75 people.

By Rebecca Muller
STAFF WRITER

The crowd stood in a circle across from W. Friendly avenue, waiting patiently for the great milestone that was about to occur: the unveiling of a site donated by Guilford College to commemorate the Greensboro sit-ins that occurred on Feb. 1st, 1960.

Forty years ago, African American young men decided to sit in a segregated area of a local Woolworth to eat. This event and the events that followed eventually helped lead to the desegregation of the South, changing the lives of millions of people.

"Twenty years ago, there was a marker on Elm Street," said Alex Stoesen, History Professor Emeritus. "Ten years ago, Sycamore Street was changed to February 1st street." Now, Guilford is doing its part to honor this event. The marker is also intended to honor those who were liberators and liberated before this time period by the Underground Railroad,

which reportedly had a stop on campus.

"Fugitives fled through Guilford County, eventually getting to Canada," Adrienne Israel, Professor of African American Studies, informed the crowd. "In 1826, Levi Coffin moved to Richmond, Indiana, where he continued his dangerous work."

Keith Holliday, Mayor of Greensboro and a Guilford alum, recalls visiting Richmond many times as a Quaker youth. "This rich heritage is shared between Greensboro and Richmond," he said. "The unveiling here signifies unforgettable events."

Jib-Reel Khazan (a.k.a.

Ezeil Blair, Jr.), who attended the Tuesday ceremony, was one of the four men to participate in the sit-in movement. "We set a date to do this because we had nowhere else to go," he said. "Genetically and culturally, I belong here. I'm an American by ancestry." He pointed out that America is an Arabic word "Amer" meaning "commander" and "ica" standing for "icon." The words are Arabic for "sacred portrait," one who keeps peace.

Khazan expressed his initial hesitation at participating in the sit-in. "I didn't want to go," he said. "I didn't even like the cooking of Woolworth. It was more than getting a hamburger and coffee—we wanted to test whether we really hold all these truths self evident."

Khazan believes that the Bill of Rights should guide our lives. "America is your oyster — you can make it what you want it to be."

After reading a poem entitled "The Potter's Clay," Khazan stated, "You should continue to mold and shape democracy so it will be pleasing to you."

Finally, the time all were waiting for arrived. Several children grabbed the string to the cover, and George Black, Guilford's choir conductor, led the crowd in an old gospel song, "Steal Away to Jesus."

Reverend David Bills, leader of a Greensboro Baptist church, gave a final benediction: "For those who've gathered to keep the world the way it was designed — to have freedom for all."

Khazan firmly believes that one should always be willing to share what one has with others to make society better. "Let's keep the tree of life growing. Don't be afraid to test the truth or stand up for your rights. There's one million people who want to put their foot right where we are today."

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