

# Features



Casey Creel  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Well, maybe it was neither.

Queer life at Guilford seemed below the periphery this year, featuring several fantastic opportunities for everyone to enhance their own relationships with the queer community, most of them severely underutilized. The college also faced a number of not-so-friendly incidents that no one seemed willing to acknowledge or address.

Which means for some people, being queer at Guilford is no big deal at all (whether or not they want it to be). For others, it's much harder than it looks.

Pride, our Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Ally, Androgynous, Asexual student club, faced the debilitating problem all year of attracting non-queer people to its events. At the lowest point of the year, its biggest problem was attracting *anyone* to events besides its own officers.

This might be due to our failure to publicize happenings or to offer many compelling reasons for people other than our friends to attend them. Next year's president, junior Cindy Holloway, will be Pride's first-ever non-gay leader. Hopefully this will open the group up to other people who

don't necessarily feel the need to join "the Gay Club."

The most frustrating part was when the events *were* compelling, and nobody came; everyone loves the Coming Out Ball, sure, but when each member of Amanda Bailey's senior course on Gay and Lesbian studies presented a public tackling of some sort of queer issue, where was everyone?

I know you've seen the white flyer of the butch girl in a dress raising her hands to the title "Queer Consortium." If you're a professor in Archdale, you probably have one on your door. But with shamefully few exceptions, each event was grossly underattended, some with only one or two lesbians and other students from the course present.

You know, one of the most offensive absences from our curriculum is a viable course load in queer studies (Guilford seems perpetually 20 years behind most aspects of its mission statement). And here we have an excellent resource in Bailey's course projects, but few support them in both mind *and* practice.

One presentation, which only 20 people witnessed (laudably, two of them were Don and Britta McNemar), left me shivering from its passion and precision. Alex Wilson's superb examination of his own "privilege of silence" on homophobia and the oppressive heteronormativity of society should be a requirement of every FYE. Hopefully he will donate a recording or at least a script of his 30-minute monologue-with-drawals to the library. It's something everyone needs to hear.

Speaking of underused resources, the GLBTQA Resource Center, abeyantly hidden in an outgrown closet in Dana, recently came into a stupendous addition to its library. William MacDonald, gay emeritus professor at the University of Toledo and mentor to English professor Jeff Jeske, has donated a massive collection in several installments. These books are an enormous asset to both the struggling Resource Center and to the entire community.

Another outstanding project was the QLSP Third Year Conference on Quakers and issues of gender and sexuality. The three-day seminar featured four guests, all addressing Quakerism and their own experience: a feminist from Earlham; an African American lesbian who developed a literacy program in Belize; a gay man who worked for passage of the Vermont Civil Unions Law; and a transgendered professor at Florida State University.

The seminar, enormously informative and entirely relevant, was the largest instance in my experience of the Quaker principle of seeing that of God in everyone.

Plus, those who went got to hear Max Carter discussing "transgendered folk."

Not every instance of queer life here has been so flowery and progressive. In March of this semester, "Homo" was spray painted on the walkway in front of Duke with a ghost-buster symbol on top of it. A rainbow already painted on the pavement was blacked out, and two overlapping women signs (a symbol of lesbianism) were also defaced. Outside Founders, "Jesus Saves" was painted in the same incident.

Most of the painted bricks have since been replaced, but Jerry Godard was the only administrator to publicly decry the hate crime. Roll your eyes if you like, but that's what it was. If "nigger" were similarly painted and marred, what would the response have been? Security has not yet discovered who did it, and queer students on campus aren't sure how safe they are.

That's the problem; homophobia doesn't seem to exist on the surface. One can manage not to run into it except for sporadic echoes in the caf or funny looks outside Milner.

Unless, of course, something big happens like the spray paint, when it gets swept under the car-

pet of apathy, with glossy new bricks and not a word about it in our voice mails, no public pressure to discover who did it, and no coverage in *The Guilfordian*.

Alex Wilson was right on target when he spoke of the "privilege of silence." Most of us have it good enough here not to care about those who might not. Pride held a forum on homophobia to correspond with the Day of Silence, where Shavon Andrews, one of the only out black lesbians on campus, spoke of homophobia in the African American community.

She and the friend she brought were the only African Americans in the audience.

Too many events addressing queer issues on campus leave us preaching to the converted. With athletics the final frontier in acknowledging homophobia and actually dealing with it, multiculturalism a much emphasized but rarely realized ideal in too many facets of Guilford life, and an incoming president of a religious denomination notoriously bigoted against queer people (let's hope Max can emphasize to "Catholic folk" that Guilford respects the rights of "queer folk"), there's much to be done before we whip out the rainbows and celebrate.

## My first (and last) words

I have never written for the Guilfordian.

There, I said it, I admit. I have been Editor-in-Chief of this newspaper for two years and aside from two articles in which I was quoted (the first of which announced my becoming Editor-in-Chief), I have not composed one word that has appeared on these pages.

But in the past two years, the Guilfordian has been my life. I have eaten meals in the Pub Suite, done my homework there, and even slept there. And as I sit here on the very last day that I will be Editor-in-Chief, I cannot help but think about all of the wonderful and not-so-wonderful ways that this publication has impacted my life.

When I first took on this job, I had no idea how important the Guilfordian is to so many people. And as the figurehead for this organization, I was the one who got the glory and took the heat. Britta McNemar never failed to commend me on the paper each time she saw me, as did Mona Olds.

Yet, if there was ever a misquote (or an entirely fabricated article for that matter) or even a squashed picture of the new president on the front page, I was the one to call as well. I received a particularly memorable voicemail alerting me to the fact that ultimate frisbee is not a sport, and therefore should not be in the "sports" section, as well as commenting on my alleged sexual promiscuity and my likeness to a female dog.

I do not tell you this so that you can feel sorry for me, but just to remind you that there are many people behind this paper. It is not just an entity that produces itself each week. This is not a job; no one is paid for it. It is simply something that interested students do for fun or to just be involved. While we strive to be as professional as possible, there are time, space, and budgetary limitations that we must contend with.

This year, the Editorial Board has been an extended family to me, and I will miss them. As I head off to Arizona in the fall, I will continue to be an avid reader of the Guilfordian, and I encourage you to check it out as well. Just try not to forget all the students that put their time and energy into its production ... even though their name may never appear on the page.

Alison M. Goss, Editor-in-Chief 2000-2002