

# NO MORE BIG BAD WOLVES

By Sari Schutrum-Boward  
STAFF WRITER

Students go to college believing they are going to finally have a chance to be on their own, until they reach college and the reality hits them that there are still rules. They then tend to believe that Public Safety employees are the big bad wolves of the campus.

However, I had a chance to ride with a Public Safety employee and I saw that they are just trying to maintain a safe environment.

I bundled up, grabbed my notebook and pen, and ran out of my dorm for my Friday-night

run with Public Safety employee Staci Doolittle. Honestly, I was not sure what to expect. Since these employees have a lot of enforcement power, I was interested in observing whether they abuse it. However, through first hand experience, I learned that Public Safety officers don't.

As I ventured to the Public Safety office, Public Safety Coordinator Keifer Bradshaw welcomed me, and informed me that I was going to do the run with Doolittle. On our way to meet Doolittle, Bradshaw shared with me some information about Public Safety. For example, there are only two employees on duty every

night and three when the nights are busy, such as homecoming and Serendipity.

Bradshaw introduced me to Doolittle, a bubbly woman who seemed excited to have me along. I hopped into the golf cart and we ventured to Frank Family Science Center. We walked around Frank while she locked the doors and turned off the lights.

While she showed me what her job entails, we talked, and not once did I believe she became a Public Safety employee to write people up. Instead, I saw her doing her job helping students stay safe and keeping our community secure.

When Doolittle needs to write a student up, she explains to the student the reasons why. She compares this job to being a parent, which gave me a better understanding of why students get written up. Parents set guidelines to keep their children safe. Public Safety officers want to protect students as if the students were their own children.

Doolittle graduated from Guilford in May and has worked here for two months. She has two sons who are 14 and 17. She understands that students are going to experiment with alcohol and drugs and she wants to make sure that everyone stays safe.

College is a time for students to discover themselves. I am glad Doolittle – and, I hope, the other Public Safety employees – understand and keep that in mind.

The last few minutes of my ride with Doolittle, we drove through the parking lot of Binford Hall and came upon a box, inside of it a paper bag with some foil and other trash. Doolittle picked up the trash and put it into the back of the cart. This is what she does: she and the other Public Safety employees keep this community clean. They make sure that the students they serve do not end up like abandoned trash in the middle of a parking lot.

## FEMA, something's missing

By Tim Cox  
STAFF WRITER

Recently, we here at The Guilfordian received the following letter:

Dear Guilfordian,

First of all, as an impartial reader, I would like to congratulate you on the consistent quality of your publication. Your articles are all clearly well-researched and written. I especially admire the authenticity and trustworthiness of The Guilfordian. Anyway, I was wondering, could one of the fine young writers at The Guilfordian share their thoughts on FEMA's recent press conference at which employees posed as reporters?

Sincerely

An anonymous reader who has no connection with the paper

That's a great question, Josh Cohen. For those who don't know, on Tuesday, Oct. 23, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), held a press conference to take questions relating to their handling of the California wildfires.

Considering how busy FEMA was at the time, it was very gracious of them to organize a last-minute press conference at which Vice Adm. Harvey E. Johnson, FEMA's deputy administrator, answered questions.

Those present asked the usual questions, "Are you happy with FEMA's response?" "Can you address a little bit what it means to have the president issue an emergency declaration as opposed to a major-disaster

declaration?" "What's it like to be the head of such an awesome government agency?" "Will you go out with me?"

You know, the important questions. Johnson took these hard-hitting inquiries in stride, giving the people the information they wanted to know. He gave complete disclosure about how FEMA didn't screw up this time.

It all went really well, so imagine Johnson's surprise when journalists starting complaining about it.

It's not really FEMA's fault that 15 min-

utes' notice wasn't enough for the lazy Washington media. Granted, it is a little unusual to hold a press conference without any press, but they got the conference part down, right?

When no reporters showed up after 15 minutes, FEMA really didn't have a choice. Having FEMA employees pretend to be reporters and ask their boss questions was the only thing to do. They couldn't just cancel the press conference, not after making a promise.

A lot of people, such as FEMA head David Paulison, had a problem with this press conference. They claim there is something wrong with giving the press fifteen minutes notice and a phone number at which they can listen to the conference, but not ask questions.

Paulison said the press conference, arranged by FEMA's director of external affairs, Pat Philbin, was "a breach of ethical practice that tore at the credibility of FEMA, the deputy administrator and that of their own office."

It's easy to focus on the negative aspects of this, like the dishonesty and deceit. Sure, you could claim that it shows complete contempt for the media and maybe even the American people. But look at the positive aspects.

In a traditional press conference, one at which the press is present, all kinds of things could go wrong. Some reporter might ask a question that the official is not prepared for. That just makes everyone look bad. The official holding the conference looks either uninformed or dishonest, and the reporter looks like a big bully. Or they might ruin the mood

by asking some real downer question, one without an uplifting answer.

"I think it's a great idea," said Jeff Jeske, Dana professor of English and certainly not the faculty advisor to The Guilfordian. "I wish I'd thought of it. Classes would go much smoother without any students."

A press-less conference is easier to organize, can be held within a few minutes of being announced, and leaves everyone feeling much better about the way things are going. I wouldn't be surprised if it caught on in other branches of government.

## Doomed to selfishness

By Jake Blumgart  
SENIOR WRITER

No one wants to be called selfish. This is too bad, because according to an increasingly large segment of the scientific-intellectual community, selfishness is an unchangeable part of human nature. We are doomed to it, by the very nature of evolution.

The significance of evolution is widely misunderstood in our culture and the fault lies with the overzealous attitudes and language of some of our most prominent and well-respected science writers.

The unclear and overconfident prose used by these ultra-Darwinists has created a welter of cultural misconceptions about the implications of evolutionary theory. The most pernicious of these myths is the idea that human beings are inherently, and unchangeably, selfish.

"(Humans), and all other animals, are machines created by our genes," said Richard Dawkins in "The Selfish Gene," a seminal text for ultra-Darwinists. "A successful gene is ruthless(ly) selfish ... gene selfishness ... give(s) rise to selfishness in individual behavior."

Evolutionary psychology takes this ethos to its logical conclusion: all behavior is just a way for our genes to propagate themselves. According to this theory, altruism and love are actually unconscious selfish motives.

"Our generosity and affection have a narrow underlying purpose," said Robert Wright in "The Moral Animal." "They're aimed either at kin, who share our genes, at non-kin of the opposite sex who can help us package our genes for shipment to the next generation, or at non-kin of either sex who seem likely to return the favor."

The idea that humanity is irredeemably selfish has been a part of Western culture for centuries, from the earliest Christian theologians to Thomas Hobbes. St. Augustine wrote, "there is none free from sin, not even the infant who has lived but a day upon this earth."

But those who would scoff at original

sin take the idea that their genes have programmed them to be selfish very seriously because it is "scientific." This isn't an exaggeration — just look at the Aug. 2 issue of *The Economist*, which claimed that altruism was merely an advertisement for the high quality of one's genes.

Scientists hold great sway in our society. Their word is trusted above what is perceived as the mystifying relativism of the humanities. Accordingly, scientists have a great responsibility to write clearly and carefully. But the ultra-Darwinists instead misuse language, and create a desperately bleak view of human life in the process.

This is because ultra-Darwinists use words like "selfish" and "manipulation" incorrectly. There has to be intentional purpose behind an action for it to be selfish or manipulative. But the ultra-Darwinists' writing seems to insist that "selfish" evolutionary motives underlie (and, it is implied, falsify) behaviors such as altruism and love.

Language shapes the way we look at the world and the way we understand abstract concepts. Dawkins could just as easily write of genes cooperating and helping humans. But he doesn't, and the ultra-Darwinists draw conclusions from his selfish gene theory that they attempt to apply to the real world. Dawkins' metaphorically selfish genes result in the Augustinian belief that we are born selfish.

The non-intentional forces of evolution have shaped our bodies, and yes, our minds, through hereditary units known as genes (which are also non-intentional). There is no such thing as an evolutionary motive or an evolutionary perspective — there is just the way evolution works. How we got here is not the same as what we are. Humans are intentional. We can choose to act selfishly, altruistically, or anywhere in between.

Evolution doesn't need to be frightening or disturbing. It has given us a greater understanding of the origins of life than anything penned before 1859, and we need writers who can do Darwin's theory justice.

**Human beings are inherently, and unchangeably, selfish.**

**He gave complete disclosure about how FEMA didn't screw up this time.**