

Guilford urges individuals to help reduce global warming

By Amanda Pressley
STAFF WRITER

Multi-colored chalk writings across campus, numerous Buzz postings, and concern for the state of the environment brought Guilford community members together in hopes of making change.

Approximately 30 people gathered Jan. 31 in the Walnut Room to recognize a nationally organized global warming teach-in day.

The teach-in was orchestrated by environmental group Focus the Nation to educate the American populace about causes, dangers, and solutions of global warming. Over 1,750 other institutions, ranging from colleges to churches to K-12 schools, participated in the teach-in effort nationwide.

Focus the Nation, a non-partisan member of the Green House Network, has set a brief time line of national events and goals to make rapid environmental change.

"In the next few years, we as a nation will make, or fail to make, critical decisions regarding global warming pollution and clean technology investments," said the organization's Web site, www.focusthenation.org. "These decisions will have far-reaching and irreversible impacts on the lives of today's students and the lives of their children."

The Web site offered templates and suggestions to organizations participating in the teach-in.

Guilford's Sustainability Council organized the campus's events, including a "lunch and learn" with food donated by So-dexo and a screening of Focus the Nations' web cast, "The 2 Percent Solution."

The 2 percent solution is a pollution-limiting concept created by environmental experts.

If greenhouse gas emissions continue at their current rate, by 2050 the temperature of Earth will raise by 5-10 degrees Fahrenheit.

According to leading climate scientist James Hansen, that much of a climate change "will guarantee disintegration of West Antarctica and parts of Greenland."

The 2 percent solution involves an 80 percent cut, approximately 2 percent a year, in emissions by the year 2050 in order to keep global warming to only 3-4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Following the Web cast viewing, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator Jim Dees and Project Sustainability Manager Rex Harrell facilitated a discussion that included information about Guilford conservationism.

"One goal at a time, one step at a time," Harrell said.

Guilford's recent environmental efforts include last year's installation of solar panels to heat the water in Shore Hall, aerators on faucets, and waterless urinals that save 48,000 gallons of water apiece.

In 2007, President Chabotar signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. By signing the commitment, Chabotar pledged to develop a plan to make Guilford carbon neutral.

Beyond Guilford's accomplishments, the day's events were heavily focused on personal contributions.

"We're trying to get people to understand that this is a change that must come from the individual," Dees said. "This isn't insti-

tutional change; it's got to come from everyone."

Throughout the luncheon, attendants were asked to sign a personal commitment board, promising to make individual environmental efforts. Commitments ranged from taking shorter showers, composting, and riding a bike to using the cloth shopping bags that were available at the event.

Personal commitments allowed people to see the ease with which they can lessen their impact on the environment.

"The impression I had was you have to be a lawyer or a senator to make any change, but then I came to Guilford," said senior Elizabeth Vachon, the sustainability coordinator intern. "There's a national community and it's important to write to your senators, but it's also important to affect your own personal community with your personal commitments."

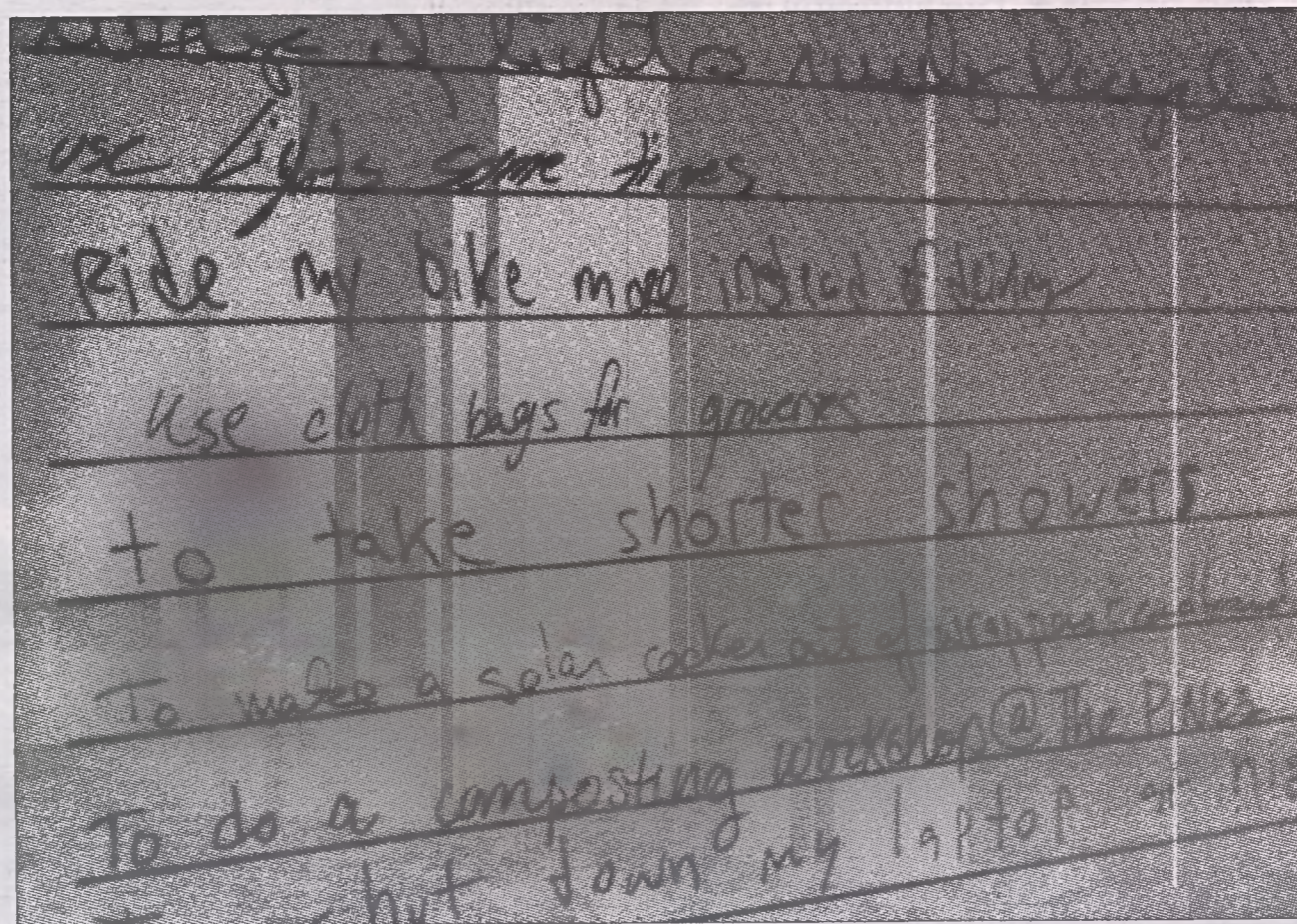
Beyond the National Teach-In Day, Focus the Nation has long-term programs including Future Vote and Green Democracy. Both encourage individuals to make environmental change through the government.

"I can make decisions in my life personally, but if I vote I can influence government," Dees said.

Visiting Instructor of Business Management Vicki Foust sees the potential of Focus the Nation and other environmental efforts.

"The green revolution is going to happen," Foust said. "The change is already happening. You can't watch T.V. for an hour without seeing some sort of green advertising for an environmentally friendly product or something organic."

Dees claims that change will "take time" and be "hard to judge." The next few months and campaigns of large organizations like Focus the Nation and efforts of individual institutions such as Guilford will be what makes or breaks this "green revolution."



AMY DROLET/GUILFORDIAN

Guilford community members signed their commitments to help cut down global warming..

JOE VOLK

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Volk emphasized what he sees as the differing narratives of the United States and Iran is what makes dealing with the rivalry so tricky. The American narrative, haunted by the specter of the 1979 hostage crisis, focuses on the untrustworthiness of U.S.-hating Islamic theocrats.

The Iranian narrative dwells on the American-backed overthrow of the democratically elected government in 1953, the subsequent installation of the authoritarian Shah, and our funding of Saddam Hussein in the horrific Iran-Iraq war.

But Volk insists that these conflicting narratives mask powerful civil society connections between the two countries that could allow for dialogue. He noted that the delegation's commercial flight to the republic was full of Iranian-Americans, who spoke with affection for both nations. One woman told Volk that there were so many Iranians in Los Angeles that they called it Tehrangeles.

"(Volk's talk) gives us a better understanding of what we call 'track-two diplomacy,'" said Vernie Davis, director of the peace and conflict studies department and a longtime friend of Volk. "Citizens' groups becoming involved in diplomacy and working outside of official govern-

ment circles work on increasing the understanding."

Volk's group of citizen diplomats reached exceptionally high into the Iranian power structure. On one of their last nights, the delegation talked theology and politics with President Ahmadinejad. The discussion included what many see as the most troubling aspects of Ahmadinejad's presidency — his alleged support of terrorism and his anti-Semitic comments.

"He said nothing about Israel that will relieve anyone's concerns about him," Volk said. "But the Iranian president does not have the same powers that ours does. He isn't the commander and chief, he doesn't make foreign policy — it is the supreme leader who oversees the military."

"I noticed that his talk with the president was the only time (Volk) doubted what someone said," said Rania Campbell-Cobb, senior co-clerk of the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program. "He told us that he didn't know how much truth there was in that (conversation)."

Despite these cautionary words, Volk ended on the uplifting message that conflict could be avoided by quoting Abraham Lincoln's response to a suggestion that he destroy the South at the end of the Civil War. "Am I not destroying my enemies when I call them my friend?"

HERMAN BOONE

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against was that blacks and whites shared the same side of the playing field.

Boone dealt with harsh judgments and racial tension because he took the job of Bill Youst, a respected white coach in Alexandria, Va. Hiring Boone was said to be a gesture of good will, especially in the middle of the desegregation period in the south.

In 2000, Boone's story was made into the Disney film "Remember the Titans." According to Boone, "This movie is not about football. It's about an incredible group of young boys following Dr. Martin Luther King."

When Boone took over the T.C. Williams football team, white players refused to play for him. But because Bill Youst agreed to stay at T.C. Williams as a defensive coordinator, white players stayed, too.

Boone then took the team to camp where he congregated the segregated team. Because of racial tension among the team, players were forced to meet with teammates of different color and get to know them.

Jack Hicks, a graduate of T.C. Williams in 1975 and the chairman of the diversity committee at Womble Carlyle law firm, came to Guilford for the event.

"There was fight tension everywhere," Hicks said. "When walking down the hallway, seeing football players was comforting because they would break up fights."

Hicks later said, "The school rallied around the team." When referring to the football players getting along, Hicks said that students thought "If they can do it, so can we."

When Boone made his players interact off the field, he was supporting the same methods of integrating as

King. Just as King said, Boone wanted his players to be judged by their character, not by their color.

Boone praised King and talked about what he would say if he was with present that evening.

"Dr. King would say 'Tell your children they are the repairers of breaches,'" said Boone. "Put aside differences. Talk to each other instead of fight. Love rather than hate. Take away guns and give them books. Lead them into colleges and universities. We must do this because we care."

Boone addressed the audience about what students can do to carry out King's legacy.

"(King's) life was his real statement," Boone said. "What statement will your life make? A degree certifies you, a degree clarifies you, and a degree assists you to make a difference. Don't be afraid to stand up. Speak out for injustices of this world."