

## Staff Editorial

## In the Guilford classroom, first names are first rate

Consider the following: At colleges and universities across the country, professors are a name that appear on the top of a class syllabus. Attendance is taken by the downward swipe of a student I.D. and a bustle of dutiful graduate students, not professors, hold office hours and grade your assignments.

At Guilford, students are on a first-name basis with professors from day one.

Here, we students are not a number among thousands or another subdued face in a crowd, but rather a hive of curious, independent minds who actively seek to share insights and listen (most of the time) to those of others.

We require attention but more importantly seek approval from our professors; we want to flex our intellectual muscles and be patted on the heads, seeking positive reinforcement whether it is deserved or not.

Yet, what is most often taken for granted is that we have professors who care to see us or speak with us at all, much less take walks or listen as we bombard them with query after query.

At most other institutes of higher learning, professors reside in the world of academia, but can choose to disengage themselves from their roles as educators. Instead, professors travel the world, seek to complete their own research, and publish their findings for the betterment of themselves and the institution where they are employed.

For many professors, students and teaching are secondary to these primary goals.

While a number of Guilford professors, both past and current, have published books, presented papers at conferences, and satisfied curiosities within their specific field, this is not their main objective.

First and foremost, they are educators, who value and seek to uphold the importance placed upon student-teacher relationships. If not, they wouldn't be here.

On Feb. 9, in light of the recent string of revolutions across Tunisia, Egypt, and now Iran, a panel titled "Revolutions in North Africa and the Arab World" was held. Initiated by Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen, the goal was to create a forum in which a variety of perspectives, insights, questions, and answers could simultaneously be presented.

This desire to engage in open dialogue is an intrinsic aspect of education; here, the professors take this a step further and seek to not only engage the student body but also the greater Guilford and Greensboro community.

At the heart of a Guilford education must be a willingness — from both professors and students — to expose one's questions and uncertainties as well as provide answers. Community forums and panels initiated by professors or students and attended by both provide a setting in which Guilford allows all of its working parts to flourish.

## Open doors and full mugs at the Greenleaf



By Amanda Dahill-Moore  
STAFF WRITER

The Greenleaf Coffee Co-op might not be what you think it is. Many people around campus have the idea that this student-run organization in the basement of Mary Hobbs is an exclusive hang-out spot for a specific clique of friends. I am here to tell you this just isn't true.

When I transferred to Guilford last fall, I was excited to find a place to drink good coffee and do my homework on comfy couches. Oblivious to any negative rumors, I walked into the Greenleaf and found it to be exactly what I had hoped for: a place to study as well as socialize, or just grab a convenient cup of coffee on my way to class.

Although I knew hardly anyone at Guilford, I found that the Greenleaf had an inviting atmosphere, and it quickly became my favorite spot to do homework on campus. I didn't have to know anyone to feel welcome there.

As I have become more immersed in Guilford, old stigmas that underlie the social dynamics here have become apparent. At this Quaker school, we are sometimes more divided than our ideals would suggest. One of the tensions I have picked up on is this idea that the Greenleaf is exclusive.

The members of the co-op are the first to admit that not all of these rumors are unfounded.

"The Greenleaf used to be painted dark green," said senior and co-op member Zak Wear. "It felt like a dungeon."

Apparently another syndrome of the

the not-so-distant past, but that isn't the case now.

"This is a community space," said Austin Shriner, a senior and co-op member. "This is not the Greenleaf's personal hang-out spot. It belongs to everyone on campus."

Shriner attested to the fact that the co-op spends a significant percentage of its meeting times discussing ways that the Greenleaf can become more approachable to the community.

Recently, the Greenleaf space has accommodated several events which aim to involve the community. The Greenleaf has hosted a PostSecret discussion, the annual Bad Feminist Poetry contest, monthly cooking club dinners, and more recently, the first ever Dubious Poetry competition.

Plans are in the works for the Greenleaf to start accepting credit cards, which members hope will make the Greenleaf much more accessible.

But change is a two-way street. The Greenleaf has made significant strides in becoming an inviting space — and hopefully will continue to do so — but it is up to the rest of the community to meet it halfway. In this case, the solution might be as simple as getting your next cup of coffee on campus instead of some nearby chain.

The idea that only a certain group of people frequent the Greenleaf is self-perpetuating: if no new people try it, then the space runs the risk of becoming a clique by default. Just go. Bring your friends. See what happens.

**"This is a community space. This is not the Greenleaf's personal hang-out spot. It belongs to everyone on campus."**

Austin Shriner, senior

old Greenleaf was that when someone walked in, everyone stared at them.

It seems that the co-op was a clique in

## Bryan speaker writes memoir from colorful past



By Emily Cooper  
STAFF WRITER

Jeannette Walls is a woman with a colorful story. During her childhood alone, she went through more than most people face during their entire lives.

Most of the audience at her Bryan lecture and student session had read her books "The Glass Castle" and "Half Broke Horses." But for those who have not, her unusual story is a complete mystery.

Walls grew up with nomadic family: a free-spirited mother, an ambitious father with a drinking problem, and three siblings.

Her parents — however loving and supportive — were not nurturing. From a young age, Walls learned to fend for herself.

Walls eventually created a life for herself in New York City as a writer. She cut ties with her parents once they, too, moved to New York and became squatters in an abandoned building.

On her way to a fancy event, Walls looked out the taxi window and saw a homeless woman — who happened to be her mother.

The rest of her story unfolds in her memoir, "The Glass Castle."

As Walls started to speak, one of the first things that came out of her mouth was "I'm just a woman with a weird story." She is completely modest and was quick to encourage the

audience to not be afraid to be who they are.

"Shame is an isolating emotion," said Walls as she told everyone how afraid she was to write "The Glass Castle."

After the book was published, she was pleasantly surprised by people's reactions.

"I learned how good and kind people are," said Walls.

"The reason we tell our stories is to explain why we are the way we are," Walls said. By learning other people's stories, we learn of the obstacles they have faced.

Walls refers to the past as scars. Everyone has a past, and everyone has scars. Walls explained that all of our scars give us texture, and while some may be smoother than others, everyone has them.

Walls furthers that idea that what does not kill you makes you stronger. From every unfortunate event in life you survive, you gain experience and build character.

This may be something you have heard from your grandmother. Everyone wise and knowledgeable seems to say it, because it's true.

Learning from past mistakes makes you wiser. The same concept goes for things you did not put upon yourself. If you survive obstacles, you gain new skills, be it just a new way of thinking. In some way or another, you will grow from it.

As a child, Walls was ridiculed and ostracized by her peers. She turned to journalism as an outlet.

Walls felt like she had a purpose when she had her notepad and camera at hand. Journalism gave her the confidence to go out to events, because she had a reason to be there — to observe and report.

If Walls was accepted and popular as a child, she may have never gone on to become a successful writer.

Walls' message — it is okay to be yourself — is relatable to students. When you first meet friends, you share happy and fun stories. What people don't realize is that it's okay to share your embarrassing moments and hardships, too.

No one is flawless, and by sharing our flaws, we become closer.