

Staff Editorial

Think global, act local

The world is a tumultuous place. Right now missiles are being fired in Libya, people are searching for their families and fearing radiation in Japan, and violence is increasing with drug cartels in Mexico.

The nature of the 24-hour news cycle is one of overwhelming heartache as images of death, destruction, and sorrow are played on a never-ending loop. After seeing so much sadness it is only normal to want to help.

More times than not, all of this destruction is happening in countries to which few people have connections. Without an actual connection to those in need, without a way to physically lend a hand, the desire to help too is often expressed through donating money, or even worse, not expressed at all. But there is more to helping than writing a check.

We may not always realize it, but a lot of what is on the news is also similarly affecting people a lot closer to home. And at times when the news is pushing us to think globally, we urge you to channel that urge to help local causes.

Contaminated water

Problems with a nuclear reactor that was damaged in the crisis in Japan is causing concern over the potential of radiation in the drinking water. Here in Greensboro there is also concern over contaminated water. Food and Water Watch has set up a chapter in Greensboro to address the potentially toxic run-off of feces and urine from factory hog farming.

Labor Conditions

The International Labor Organization has drawn attention to the over 2.4 million child workers in the Philippines, according to GMA News. While child labor isn't an issue in Greensboro, attention is being drawn to the plight of laborers in general through the Defend the Dream Rally. This rally, which was held downtown Monday, April 4, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death, was designed to remind people that King's goals of equal and decent working conditions has still not been realized.

Immigration

Poor economic conditions and increasing pressure on drug cartels has created a rash of drug-related violence in many Mexican cities. Effects of this are felt at the U.S.-Mexico border, as many people immigrate to the U.S. in hopes of finding stability only to find economic hardship and legal persecution. Groups such as No More Deaths work along the border to prevent immigrant deaths. Locally, The Dream Team is a group of immigrants and allies advocating for immigrant rights and the passage of the DREAM Act, which would provide citizenship opportunities to undocumented youth.

We don't have destruction like that of Japan's disaster. Nor do we have violence like the fighting in Libya. But there are powerful movements and worthwhile causes in our own community that need support. So rather than sit glued to your TV, helpless to stop the hardships overseas, why not do something local, something that will show to fruits of your labor and improve the lives of your neighbors.

And now "The Book of Mormon," the musical



By Andrew Glass
STAFF WRITER

Last summer I was expected to go on a mission to wherever the Mormon prophet wanted. I even expected myself to go. My father, my mother, and my older brother had all gone on missions.

When I chose not to go on a mission because I could not preach something I did not believe, it was a shock to my family. Since then I have been visiting ex-Mormon websites and blogs, trying to understand how the Mormon Church had, and still has to a certain extent, such control over my life.

But one musical may provide me some relief.

When I heard that Trey Parker and Matt Stone of South Park fame were making a musical about Mormon missionaries, I became excited. I hoped I would be able

to trade my bitterness in for laughs, at least for an hour or two.

Parker and Stone teamed up with Robert Lopez, co-writer of Broadway show "Avenue Q," to highlight Mormons in their musical "The Book of Mormon."

"Mormons are so Disney and Rodgers & Hammerstein to begin with that it makes perfect sense for them to break into song," Parker told Vogue. "That's why, in many ways, this feels like a traditional musical. You're being cheesy and corny and all — but that's who Mormons naturally are."

This is true to a certain extent. Mormons like to portray themselves as picture-perfect.

But the inner conflict is what makes Mormons ideal for musicals. Underneath the perfect Mormon family are doubts and feelings smothered to maintain harmony.

I have experienced this in my own broken family.

"The Book of Mormon" is a Broadway musical that takes its name from the sacred text of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

The musical follows the story of two young American missionaries and their trials as they attempt to convert an impoverished and AIDS-ridden tribe in Uganda.

There were fears among the Mormon community about what specifically the musical would criticize about Mormonism.

The only response my Mormon father gave when I mentioned the musical was a pessimistic, "We all know how that's going to turn out." And now we do.

Yes, the play is crude. One song includes the line "f**k you, God" and a scene has an enlarged x-ray of a copy of The Book of Mormon shoved up a character's rectum.

But the play is not too negative towards Mormonism.

"We love musicals, and we love Mormons," Parker said to Vogue. "I think if any Mormons come and stay all the way through, they'll end up liking the show. I mean, it rips on them a lot, but in the end their spirit of wanting to help wins the day."

I would say that the Mormon Church got off easy. That its members are good people is the only positive

thing that I am able to say.

The Mormon Church itself is not even worried too much about the impact of the play. In a press release they issued a simple one-liner:

"The production may attempt to entertain audiences for an evening, but the Book of Mormon as a volume of scripture will change people's lives forever by bringing them closer to Christ."

Despite their sarcastic response, the Mormon Church needs the musical "The Book of Mormon."

The public knows little about Mormon beliefs. The church tries to cover up bizarre and unpopular beliefs until you are a committed member. I discovered some of the doctrine only after I left.

With our information-rich world, the lies and true past of the Mormon Church is easily unveiled.

"The Book of Mormon" musical points out the good and bad in Mormons, the hypocrisy and the good intentions.

The Mormon Church needs to learn from this. It needs to face its past, because it is not staying buried.



By Ron Stowe
DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC SAFETY
GUEST ARTICLE

An averted tragedy reminds of the potential for danger

a speedy arrest — but the information learned afterwards about this incident is the scary part, and that we wish to impress upon our community.

First, there is no indication that either the victim or the suspect had any connection to Guilford students. From what we can gather, they had just heard about this party and decided to participate. That leads us to point number one: when large gatherings take place, especially non-sanctioned or approved ones like this was, there is little control over who attends, which often opens the door for unsavory and unwanted guests. It's also important to realize that it's often difficult, if not impossible, to single out these "unsavory guests" as they often look like us, dress like us, and otherwise appear just like us.

The second major concern about this incident is the suspect. The person arrested for this incident has quite a lengthy arrest history. He was just recently released from prison after having spent the majority of the last four years incarcerated for convictions of kidnapping and robbery. If that isn't concerning enough, he is also a registered sex offender. Clearly not a person we want mingling with our students and our community.

The Guilford community averted

tragedy in this case, in that our only connection to this incident was any negative impressions associated with the media reports of the incident having occurred on campus. Things could have been different, though, as the victim could just as easily have been a student.

Crowd dynamics are often such that a person driven to committing a violent act like this often isn't discriminatory, and the suspect could have just as easily lashed out at anyone at the time of his alleged provocation. Instead of what turned out to be an event of basically no consequences for our community, we could be dealing with a tragedy where a student, or worse yet multiple students, could have been injured or killed.

We beg the community to think about this, and remember how quickly things can get out of control. Be reminded that we have to be mindful of how big and how out of control gatherings can get when word travels about the event with no control over how the word is spread, or has no real target audience. Be aware of circumstances you find yourself in, and be aware of those around you. Unknown visitors can very quickly become unwanted visitors that can bring undesired and unexpected consequences; potentially dire consequences.