

Life Before Guilford: George Guo

By Aardra Rajendran
STAFF WRITER

"Every morning — 5:00 a.m. in the morning — my father would take me to the river bank and we would do Tai Chi ... it nurtures the spirit."

George Guo, associate professor of political science, fondly shared glimpses of his childhood growing up in China. He is from a populous southwestern province in China that was also home to the legendary Deng Xiaoping, who reformed China's economic and social sectors after the death of Mao Zedong. The 1960's and 1970's were restless times in Chinese history with the spread of communist and Marxist ideals.

"Nine years old and I joined the Red Guard," said Guo. "The Cultural Revolution was a new way of thinking."

When asked what he wanted to be while growing up, the



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(Above) **George Guo**, associate professor of political science, enjoys a spring day at Guilford. (Right) A younger Guo poses for the camera.

response was sure but not without a trace of laughter.

"I didn't," said Guo, sipping something that looked like tea from his mug. "Such self-interest — that wasn't the way. The atmosphere and environment was all-encompassing. The country came first."

Soon after, Guo and his sister were sent to the countryside for "re-education" — efforts that advocated self-sacrifice, respect for authority, and idealism. Guo became a teacher there before the age of 17 and was lecturing students who were only one or two years younger than him.

"I used to teach everything," said Guo. "Math, physics, music, Chinese ... everything. And I was then promoted to teach music at the county level."

Guo remembers how useful his violin playing was to the propaganda efforts during the time. The Communist Party used music, sports, and other activities to draw crowds and attract attention. However, Guo never became a member of the party because of the massive commitment it required.

"The Party called me a liberal intellectual," said Guo. "I was not the sort of person they wanted, because while I had the skills, I did not believe or think like them."

Meanwhile, the colleges of China were nationally closed. The Cultural Revolution took a toll on the educational progress of the nation and for six years, students graduated high school but could never move beyond that. When Deng Xiaoping came into power, he instituted the National Entrance Examination.

"I scored very well on the examination," said Guo. "I got into one of the top colleges in China — one of the best. In my class there were students from the age of 15 to 35. I was 22."

Guo then went on to major in ship engineering, and was later chosen to work for the Transportation Ministry. However, all this time, one might assume his heart was not completely in sync with the government's ideals and actions.

"I began to read all sorts of things ... forbidden at the time," Guo said. "My peers would be happy to listen to the government. I did not want to be a slave of the government."

Guo kept these views to himself for quite a while. Later, Guo was sent to various countries like Japan to learn about transportation advances. Guo was in Germany on one of these trips when the Tiananmen Square Massacre occurred. He was unhappy with the government's actions and participated in protests outside the Chinese Embassy in Germany. After that, Guo realized he would be in an unstable position



COURTESY OF GEORGE GUO

upon his return to China with regards to his work.

Some of the European nations offered a sort of political status for those like Guo and he was able to settle down there for a while before deciding to further his studies in the United States. Guo joined the University of Virginia for his graduate studies in public administration and then continued his research in international politics. In 2002, he became a part of the Guilford College community and has been teaching here ever since.

When asked what Guo would do if he was not teaching at Guilford, he didn't miss a beat.

"I'm a good cook — eggrolls," said Guo. "I'll open my own restaurant."

'Enacting queerness' through art: local group sheds light on LGBTQ issues

By Zachary Morgan
STAFF WRITER

The queer movement of the 21st century is alive and well. For one to recognize that, all you have to do is open your eyes. From television shows such as "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" to the popularity of "RuPaul's Drag Race," the culture is growing rapidly in the media.

It thrives in large cities on the West Coast as well as in the South on the East Coast. But what is "queer"?

It isn't a derogatory term any longer, as many in the LGBTQ community use it to describe themselves or their group. Enter stage right — team members Alekander Babic '07, Nechelle and Anna Grey of the queer-transgendered collective — the Omni Proje[q]t.

Founded in October 2010, the Omni Proje[q]t is a staff that is completely "queer-based," according to Babic. The team consists of eight core queer and transgendered members and a street team, but welcomes anyone that identifies with the community.

"Our staff is basically a very eclectic mix of races, ideas and diversity, from graduate students to staff members with no college education at all," said Babic. "We welcomed

all that desired to be part of the group."

The Street Team performs the advertising, public relations, and promotion for the group's launch parties in the streets.

"The Street Team are the ones that grind for us and promote our group and launch parties," said Babic. "We would be lost without them."

The group's first project was the Queer Women's Calendar. After countless hours

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Alekander Babic '07

of work, research, and photography, they produced a 14-month spread that was completed in one and one-half months and launched in December 2010.

"We wanted the calendar to be a melting-pot of ideas from high fashion to everyday couples shown in their home element," Grey said. "We worked to produce three shoots every weekend to get it done."

With a focus on the Triad, the Proje[q]t

recruited local LGBTQ models. The group felt this calendar would be a unique outlet to empower the models and community members who often don't see themselves represented in the media.

"People were very surprised by the calendar, and word spread fast throughout the community," Babic said.

Next on the agenda for the group is the "Enacting Queerness" art show. The

show will focus on three different types of submissions: performance-based art, painting and photography installations, and film submissions.

All submissions must pertain to the theme of "Enacting Queerness." The deadline for digital image submissions is May 15, 2011, with final selections being made and announced by May 26, 2011.

"Our aim is to have the art show on the

first Friday of June, 2011, in downtown Greensboro," said Babic. "We want to be a part of the thriving First Friday celebration that downtown is known for. Our staff will thrive in that environment."

Accountability, efficiency, and vision are the pistons that keep the motor of the Omni Proje[q]t running and steadily getting stronger.

"Our entire group always works in tandem so there is accountability to all," said Babic. "Some of the staff has particular strengths that others do not, so it is best to allow each member to work at what they do best, partnered with another. From collecting donation funds, recruiting, planning and launch parties, we all work as one."

Circle June 3, 2011, on your calendars and go out and support this collective. They are setting the standard for the community as a whole as they carry the cornerstone of diversity as a beacon of their work.

"Our desire is to bring about a certain awareness to the community to show that queer artists are comfortable expressing their art," Nechelle said. "We hope to inspire many people to do the same."

Visit Omni Project website at
<http://www.wix.com/theomniprojeqt#>