

## Diverse crowd gathers at vigil to protest intolerance, Senate Bill 106



By Haley Hawkins  
STAFF WRITER

Walking onto the Guilford Courthouse plaza on Sept. 12 to participate in the Greensboro Vigil for Equality revealed to me a certain energy. It was radiating along Greene St. along with the soft chords of a guitar solo echoing from courthouse steps.

This was not an energy of fed-up frustration, though frustration was present. Nor was it an energy of protest, though protest certainly played a vital role as well.

The assembled crowd

appeared instead to be more of a diverse but united family than anything else, a family consisting of both gay and straight opponents of Senate Bill 106. This bill seeks to further and more strictly define "marriage between a man and a woman" as the only recognized legal domestic union in North Carolina.

Most people are aware of how this bill will negatively affect the gay community.

However, when viewing the bill as a whole, one discovers it is not simply about obstructing gay rights, but also furthering conformity.

One Vigil for Equality speaker, Rabbi Fred Guttman, compared the origins of this amendment to those of the 9/11 attacks: "Both are acts of incredible intolerance, self-righteousness, closed-mind-

edness."

While the majority of the attention that the amendment has garnered centers on its unjust infringement on gay rights, it should also be considered significant that this amendment invalidates domestic partnerships.

### By pushing for this latest violation of civil rights, North Carolina lawmakers are not saying, "You can't be married because you're gay."

Most notably, this includes the potential for eliminating the possibility of benefits for unmarried couples.

How is it possible that in this day and age when change is welcomed and equality championed, lawmakers still revert back to the rules of traditional social conformity when faced with a decision affecting the free-

dom of choice for the entire population?

The answer is fear.

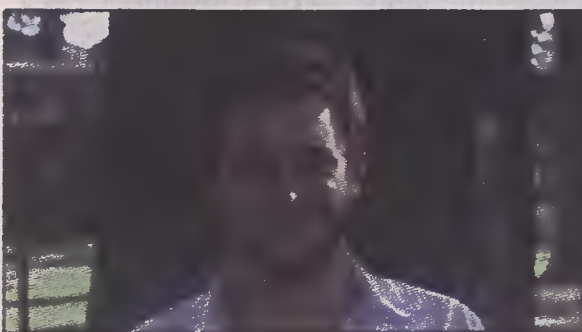
"Even harder to explain is the abject illogic of the pro-amendment arguments," said Allen Johnson in an editorial for News & Record. "And the bogus rhetorical trappings used to trump up this flimsy case, such as 'protecting' or 'defending' traditional marriage."

By pushing for this latest violation of civil rights, North Carolina

lawmakers are saying more than "You can't be married because you're gay." They are also asserting, "Your relationship doesn't mold to the traditional man-and-wife with a legal contract institution? Well, sorry, your validity as a union is subject to remain under question."

SEE "VIGIL" ON PAGE 10

## RAs and their residents: best frenemies



By James Williamson  
STAFF WRITER

Darkness swallows the evening. Sweating beers abound and enfolding smoke hovers in the night. Muffled verses blare from the bump of a corroding subwoofer.

Oh lord, here come the RAs. Walky-talkies on the hip, notebook in hand, pen at command. Hit the deck, put down your drink, extinguish your cigarette, get out of town. Quaker Cards out, G numbers taken, some short frustrated conversation, and now preparation for the incoming email next week.

But, such a case does not apply to all student-to-RA interactions or to all instances of documentation. Every RA has a different approach to the write-up process. Most students and RAs communicate well beneath the dimmed lights and echoing laughter. After the disorderly issue arrives at a resolution, the noise quiets and the RAs continue their rounds.

"There will always be tensions or animosity towards RAs by certain students, and we do acknowledge that," said senior RA Lamia Elgouacem in an email interview. "However, students do

understand that this is our job."

Yet, if noise persists and the RAs return, there are no more warnings. With no changes to the atmosphere, an RA will seek out the host and confront him or her. The write-up is somewhat painless. The assessment is complete. They move along and stumbling students exit the grounds. A few leave with expected citations for wayward conduct, and others walk away having had no documentation.

"There are cool RAs and some who take their job too seriously," said sophomore Stephanie Selijman.

Students walk alternate pathways to avoid the "too serious RAs," as if they were high-schoolers lacking a hall pass trying to sneak by the stickler teacher. As the gaps of communication widen, the relationship shifts from friendly to strictly business. Students steer clear when in the wrong and the "too serious RAs" disregard discussion of those momentarily in the wrong. And mistrust becomes the communication, passive and non-confrontational. Time attests how the RA and student reform their relationship.

"The RA said: 'This is my job. It's in my job description for you to talk to me,'" said first-year James Missell. "Comes out the first day saying, 'I'll document you for this and that.' What a way to make enemies."

Missell hits on one of the largest attributes given to RAs: a position of leadership. Leading the community is not necessarily smooth sailing in the sea of youthful college students who are as oppositional as they are cooperative. But their leadership incorporates residential engagement. Missell has yet to experience

that open door policy — a policy that encompasses a friendship and an openness committed to influence peers as an effort to better the community.

"Being an RA is one of the hardest jobs on campus," said Aaron Fetrow, vice president for student affairs and dean of students. "RAs are required to lead fellow students while holding them accountable. It's a hard thing to ask."

Recognition on either side of the circumstance becomes a vital dialogue in the course of sustaining mutual respect between RAs and students.

"RAs need to accept that students are going to want to live a little bit," said sophomore Josh Rodriguez. "Though students have to know that letting things slide can put the RA in a difficult position."

The job entails more than write-ups. In fact, students consider most RAs as great friends, resources, or outlets. The differences between a student and an RA are few and far between.

"My RA is easy to talk to," said first year Noah Wernsted-Lynch. "He's helpful and I'll get a text about things going on. I definitely feel comfortable talking to him."

Befriending RAs helps students as much as it does the RAs. These individuals ensure student safety and monitor the Guilford wild child. Students are lucky to have people looking out for their wellbeing.

"It is really important for RAs and members of the student body to have mutual respect for one another," said senior and RA Rebekah Burlason. "If you want us to be jerks, we'll be jerks. If you want us to be nice, then we'll be nice."

## CAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

### There's a new Grinch in town

There are some people who support medical marijuana.

There is one politician who most certainly does not.

This politician hates medical marijuana.

He believes it's a lie.

Now, please don't ask why.

No one quite knows the reason.

It could be the nonsense in his head telling him he is a smarty. It could be, perhaps, in high school, he was never invited to a party.

But I think that the most likely reason of all, may have been that, during his political career, he has dropped the ball.

There's a new Grinch in town, and he has more on his agenda than stealing Christmas. If declared Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich were a fictional character, he too would have a reputation for having a heart two-sizes too small.

Gingrich — lets just call him The Grinch — declared his candidacy for the 2012 presidential election, in May of 2011, on Twitter at approximately 4:20 p.m. The Grinch is highly against medical marijuana and has zero tolerance for illegal substances, which makes his timing a rather strange coincidence.

"It is imperative that we win the Drug War in four years, or else the public will grow cynical, and the movement to legalize drugs will succeed," said The Grinch in 1989.

How's that drug war coming? I seem to recall hearing something about sixteen states and Washington, D.C., having legalized medical marijuana.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have shocking news for you; according to The Grinch, there is no such thing as medical marijuana. In fact, marijuana is a drug, and medical marijuana is just a clever advertisement for a terrible idea.

The Grinch feels so strongly against marijuana that he finds either a life sentence or the death penalty to be just for anyone found smuggling more than two ounces of marijuana into the United States. He made that painfully clear when he introduced H.R. 4170, the "Drug Importer Death Penalty Act of 1996" to Congress.

Surprisingly, The Grinch was able to attract a coalition of 26 other Republican co-sponsors for the bill. Not so surprisingly, the bill was shot down.

Generally murder and capital offenses are the type of crimes punishable by the death penalty. In most states, rape is not even punishable by death, which leads me to question The Grinch's sanity.

How is it justifiable to convict someone with a death sentence over marijuana when there are rapists and child sex offenders rotting in jail or even on parole walking the streets?

Mr. Grinch, you'll need to have your priorities in check if you actually plan on having a fighting chance in the presidential election. Maybe you should focus on something else that is green, which our entire country has been buzzing about. How about money? You know, the failing economy?

You're a conservative one, Mr. Grinch.

You really are a drag.

You're as liberal as Sarah Palin.

You're as appealing as a Wal-Mart knock off bag.

Just no, Mr. Grinch.

Emily Cooper  
STAFF WRITER