

TSA measures are ineffective, invasive



By Adrienne Mattson-Perdue
STAFF WRITER

I had not heard about the Times Square car bomb incident, which occurred while I was on the train to New York City, and did not expect what I found at Penn Station: armed men in military uniforms with bomb-sniffing dogs patrolling the station.

I did not find that nearly as intimidating as going through airport security, though.

"The Transportation Security Administration has been one of the largest, most expensive and most visible blunders of the post-9/11 homeland security reformation," reads a WhiteHouse.gov petition created by Eran C. of Philomath, Ore. "It has violated countless constitutional rights of average Americans, caused miserable and expensive delays in an already-overburdened air travel system, and

allowed multiple known instances of harassment, theft, extortion and sexual abuse by its employees. It has failed approximately 70 percent of undercover efficacy tests, and for all its excesses, has been unable to catch even a single terrorist since its creation."

The fickle measures taken to secure airports in the U.S. limits use of air travel. It is far less time-consuming and invasive to step onto a train with a

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suitcase than to stand in line with a backpack for 45 minutes only to have your undergarments searched, your toothpaste examined, and your body scanned.

These measures are inconsistent across airlines and airports. TSA guidelines are not the final say on what is allowed in an

airport or on a plane; the airline and the airport itself are. The lack of uniformity makes the presence of the TSA even more confusing.

Given the security measures with other forms of mass transportation, the TSA's presence is even more questionable.

The train route I take when I travel home runs directly through Washington, D.C., where there is an hour-long layover. This stop is made at Union Station, a major transportation hub in our nation's capital. Passengers are allowed to step off the train to smoke at this station.

After Union Station, the train's final destination — New York's Penn Station — is only a few hours away. This same station had a military presence in the wake of Sept. 11 and following the Times Square car-bombing incident, but apparently is not deemed worthy of protection by the TSA.

The inconsistencies in regulations make air travel frustrating and confusing, and make the TSA's protection less effective. Moreover, the lack of TSA protection in modes of transportation besides air travel makes the complicated protection of airports seem meaningless.

Protecting only one form of transportation ineffectively undermines the entire system.

Letter to the Editor

Student expresses concern about student behavior and safety on campus

First off, I'd like to say that I understand college is college. Unfortunately, there is this stigma that it's a place to get drunk and high because now you're on your own and away from your parents — party it up. However, that's not what college is about. Yes, having fun is important, but we're all here to learn so we can earn degrees and go on with our lives. From the perspective of a Resident Advisor and student, of course I would like to be loud, have fun, party, and things of that nature. However, I would not like to be charged with a \$500 fine for being out in the forest, hanging around a fire. I'd prefer not to be sneaking around a dark forest, anyway, in which I don't know half of the paths, broken glass is everywhere, and possible psychopaths and rapists could be hiding out in the bushes.

Once you go out in that forest, alone or in a group, Campus Life and Public Safety can't necessarily

help you or look out for you. Of course, underage people are going to drink; if they have someone who can buy the alcohol for them and if they can get away with it, then

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that situation is inevitable. I would just prefer not to be in that kind of environment, where there are underage people drinking or I'm drinking, if I know for a fact there

is a possibility of being caught. I'm not hurt because I can't chill out in the woods, sitting on dirt, grass, and rocks while listening to drums and drunken conversations. I'm not upset with the Campus Life department or Public Safety for doing their jobs by following protocol and doing what they can to keep us safe. However, I do believe that, until we traditional students find a "tradition" that's safe, smart, yet still fun, there's nothing we can do about Campus Life breaking up unauthorized bonfires or banning them completely.

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Milner R.A.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HERE ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHOR. THE GUILFORDIAN CANNOT CONFIRM ANYTHING WRITTEN IN THIS LETTER.

Staff Editorial

Celebrate every heritage, no matter the month

Every February the United States celebrates Black History Month. There is special attention paid to commemorate the many noteworthy accomplishments of African Americans, which is extremely important.

However, many of us may not realize that the celebration of heritage does not stop there.

There are five other months that have been named for various groups in American society, which gives everyone a chance to learn so much more about diverse cultures. The five:

March: National Women's History Month.

May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and Older Americans Month.

June: Gay and Lesbian Pride Month.

October: National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

November: National American Indian Heritage Month.

It is wonderful that the United States has dedicated so many months to heritage and awareness, but do many of us recognize these national tributes? The opportunity to learn should never be passed up.

The past month of September has been dedicated to celebrating National Hispanic-Latino Heritage.

The Guilford College community may have realized this when the Hispanos Unidos de Guilford (HUG) planned activities and brought a mariachi band to play for students in the cafeteria. Or you may have seen the article about Hispanic Heritage Month in The Guilfordian last week. However, there are also many people who still don't know that there is a Hispanic-Latino Heritage month on our calendar.

During September there was no mention of people like Lucrezia Bori, the first Hispanic opera diva in the United States, or Nilo Cruz, the first Hispanic playwright to win the Pulitzer Prize. These are the kind of people that should be celebrated much more than four weeks of the year.

What does it say about the U.S. that we have to name national calendar events in order to celebrate our country's diversity when we can celebrate each other every day?

If we were all able to honor those that came before us and those that will come after us on a regular basis it would be much more than an opportunity to learn. It would build a new connection to community that is so often missing in American society.

However, in the meantime, there are six months of the year that Americans can raise national awareness and celebrate the rich and diverse heritage of so many people in our country.

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