



I'm dreaming of a green Christmas

By James Williamson
STAFF WRITER

Because of the wastefulness inherent in the holidays, it's important to celebrate sustainably in order to save money and reduce your environmental impact. In addition to giving, throughout the holidays we consume and waste a great deal, so consider these tips, save some cash and invest greenly.

- Bust out the awkward sweaters, turn down the heat and reduce your energy bill.
- Create your own gifts, cards and ornaments to save money and packaging. "Homemade gifts are more sentimental," said senior Peter King. "Making something special for someone becomes more about the gift than the money."
- Be your own decorator: reuse old greeting cards or make garlands from strung popcorn or cranberries. Make pretty wreaths with artificial greenery and festive potpourri containing kitchen spices like cinnamon and cloves.
- Let baking cookies fill your apartment or house with a delicious holiday aroma. After baking, leave the oven door open to warm up the house.
- Tote your own reusable bags from home when going to the store to reduce paper and plastic waste.
- Stir up some warm chili for a winter meal. Include earth-friendly local and organic vegetables like tomatoes, corn, black beans, carrots, garlic and spices. Substitute veggie crumbles for ground beef to have a vegetarian delight.
- Local animals are more environmentally-friendly than conventional meats; try free-range turkey or pasture-raised beef or pork.
- Wrap gifts in recycled wrapping paper from other holidays or in old newspaper, or use bags instead of wrapping paper. "My family uses the funnies for gifts and we only give each other things we make by hand like scarves or quilts," said junior Ailey Greig. "For Christmas, we put our presents in bags rather than wrapping paper," said Sustainability Engagement Consultant Bryce Bjornson.
- Turn off and unplug lights during the day to prolong light bulb life expectancy, reduce energy use and cut your electricity bill.
- Recognize the long-term value of a gift by its durability. Give presents that can be reused or recycled, not gifts that will be thrown away.
- Regifting is cheap, easy and reduces waste. Just be careful not to give a gift back to the same person who gave it to you.
- Be sure to recycle beverage containers, from cans to bottles.
- Reduce tree disposal: buy a potted tree so that you can plant it after the holidays.
- Be aware that having friends and relatives over can increase water waste. Use water consciously. Practice these tips and enjoy the warmth of chili, awkward sweaters and family. Having a green holiday brings in new traditions and saves money. May you, dear reader, have a merry one.

Meg Holden contributed to this article

FEATURES

Leaving home ain't easy: international students adjust to life on campus

By Benjamin Sepsenwol
STAFF WRITER

Imagine if, one day, you traveled across the world and attended a college where everyone spoke a different language from your native tongue. How would you feel? Excited? Anxious? Welcome to the life of an international student at Guilford College.

Less than one percent of the total student population at Guilford is international. According to Randy Doss, vice president for enrollment services, of the 1,331 traditional students enrolled, only 14 are international. Of the 1,307 CCE students enrolled, only six are international. Students come from countries ranging from Japan to Rwanda to Brazil.

Kunga Denzongpa, a first-year student from Sikkim, India, said that a major challenge she had in adjusting to life at Guilford was the shift of academics from her life in India. Denzongpa said that at the college she attended in India, the average class had over 150 students.

"In some ways, (Guilford) is easier because I don't have memorize everything," said Denzongpa. "But in some ways, it is harder because I'm required to say what I think. I have to be proactive and ask teachers for help instead of just listening to what the teacher says."

However, Denzongpa said that despite the "academic shock" she felt at first, the change in her overall academic experience has been rewarding.

"(One of) the best things about Guilford is that I'm actually learning things," said Denzongpa. "(In India,) the professor would lecture to us and we would never get to ask questions. I

would cheat off of people next to me."

Although academics was an area of adjustment for Denzongpa, a common challenge for other international students is being immersed in a foreign language. Jorge Zeballos, Latino Community program coordinator and international student advisor, said that, even though students who come here are required to have a certain level of English proficiency, reading academic writings can sometimes be challenging for international students.

"An article that could take you 30 minutes to read could take (an international student) 2 hours," said Zeballos. "They would have to look up words they don't know and reread selections they don't understand multiple times."

Dominique Crespo Mijares, a first-year from Quito, Ecuador, said that, at first, speaking English regularly was a major challenge for her. Any trouble she had talking would make her feel self-conscious.

"I used to feel very insecure with my speaking, and, for me, communicating and interaction is what determines who you are," said Crespo Mijares in an email interview. "(Eventually,) I just stopped caring whether my pronunciation was okay or not and decided to overcome those fears by participating more in class (and) socializing more with friends instead of being just the listener."

Language is just one of many aspects highlighting international students as "different." Rather than blending in with everyone else, Denzongpa said she stands out as someone foreign and feels she is sometimes treated differently as a result.

"(People treat me as if) I've been living

out in the jungle," said Denzongpa. "I've been asked 'Oh, have you ever heard of McDonald's? Do you know what a burger is?' Of course I have."

Canna Zheng, a junior from China, said she had difficulty connecting to other students because of their contrasting life experiences.

"Since I was raised in a different culture and a different country, a lot of my friends here don't share common growing-up experiences with me, which makes us have different perspectives and understandings toward everything," said Zheng in an email interview.

Zeballos said that as part of his job as international student advisor, he tries to build a strong sense of community among international students so they can rely on each for support. He often holds group activities such as taking students out to dinner. Both Crespo Mijares and Lesley Manuh, a first-year from Ghana, said the Multicultural Resource Center has been a great help to them.

"The great friends I've made here (at Guilford) are like family for me," said Crespo Mijares.

Despite the challenges in adjusting to a new environment, studying abroad provides invaluable lessons for many international students, from discovering who they are as a person to how to be independent.

"I have learnt to live in a whole new, different environment and be happy, and I am learning about a whole different culture," said Manuh in an email interview. "I believe Guilford has this warm and friendly environment where anyone can come and feel welcome. I cannot describe what it is, but I feel one has to have an open mind and heart to experience it."

GMMG

New campus group gives voice to multiracial experience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have come up a lot ... Terminology, that is one that we're still grappling with."

The question of multiracial identity is a tough one to undertake, but this group is assuredly finding out what their experiences are and how to articulate them.

"Where we are at the moment, we can't really express our experience," said junior Nigel Espy. "Everywhere I live, it's really complicated and people don't exactly see me as who I actually am. It's mostly frustrating, and over time I just learn to ignore it."

GMMG is actively trying to help multiracial Guilford community members find a voice for their experiences and to help the greater community understand their experiences.

"My main intention for starting the group was that safe place ... for people who are multiracial or multiethnic to talk about these things," said Holmes. "(I wanted) to bring it further to the outside community and talk in an open

discussion about what it means to be multiracial, especially at Guilford, and to let them know that we are here."

The creation of this safe place reflects a greater cultural shift in the United States, as reported by the New York Times. Many people, students in particular, are stepping out of the box and identifying as bi- or multiracial instead of just marking themselves as one race or another. People do not fit into predetermined, limiting groups, and that is why GMMG is so important.

"I noticed when I was interviewing people that they had similar issues (to mine)," said Holmes. "If they came together, they would be like 'Finally, someone understands me.'"

Multiracial students are happy that they finally have this space where they can grapple with issues and

simply find others that they can relate to.

"It's really nice to have a place to talk about it," said sophomore Samantha Derr. "It's really nice to have a place where I can talk about those issues and I can relate to other people."

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Junior Olivia Holmes, founder of Guilford Multiracial and Multiethnic Group

Meg Holden contributed to this article