

KEN BURNS

Burns, baby, Burns: The Bryan Series continues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

packed with personal anecdotes, calls to action and lyrical poetic passages.

"We get a lot of comments about our speakers' deliveries and their content," said Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing Ty Buckner. "In the case of Ken Burns, what I've read so far is that his speech was almost 'poetic.' That's a first. We have had authors and actors speak, but no one's ever described a speech as poetic."

Burns' speech had a similar effect on new Associate Director of Communications and Marketing Dan Nonte.

"He's an eloquent man, even offstage," said Nonte. "I heard him speak extemporaneously afterward with the alums who are making the movie. He could have left at anytime, but he talked with them for a good hour."

The National Parks project, 10 years in the making, was an idea "we kept bumping up against" according to Burns, while criss-crossing the country filming other projects.

Burns spoke of the tireless efforts of people who devoted their lives' work to preserving sacred spaces and documenting those places. Speaking of the parks' transforming and restorative nature, Burns shared his own personal experience.

He said he felt he belonged to something that transcended time and space, a larger spiritual initiative, where "we were all hearing the same great symphony."

Well, not all of us. Assistant Professor of History Damon Akins maintains that while Burns is a great filmmaker, students should be made aware that Burns is a storyteller and sometimes leaves out, whether intentionally or not, part of the bigger picture of historical accounts.

"I wish that there had been more of a conversation at Guilford around Ken Burns and his work, so that we could help our students think more critically about media in order to be more critical consumers of media," said Akins. "By positioning one specific story as the story of the nation, Burns' films marginalize those who don't quite 'fit.'"

"For example: almost every national park in the United States was carved out of land taken from Native Americans, much of it still contested. Native peoples have complicated relationships to the national parks, which is well-covered in the existing historical literature, but in (Burns') film, 'The National Parks: America's Best Idea,' Native Americans really only appear in the first episode when it describes the Ahwahnechee's early possession of the Yosemite valley.

"By rendering native possession as only a

thing of the past, it naturalizes U.S. theft of native land and renders recent and ongoing disputes over indigenous land claims (trivial)."

Nearing the end of his sweep through the National Parks, Burns revealed how a lost bittersweet memory of Shenandoah National Park cascaded back to him on his first trip to Yosemite. Burns then concluded:

"But the narrative of the parks is not just their spectacular scenery, or even the sagas of the complicated charismatic individuals who save these spaces," said Burns. "It is also about who you see these sacred places with, whose hand we are holding at the rim of the Grand Canyon or in Shenandoah National Park.

"What are these 'intimate transgressions' (historian) William Cronon would say occur between generations as we distill the lives of the parks to our posterity?

"We are beset with discontinuity. We do quarrel, get sick and die. Rarely does the momentum of things permit repairs, or reconciliation.

"But I have found the places where the narratives of human lives and those of their brotherly rocks seem just as important as some inexpressible something. Something is retained.

"Repairs are made and we are all of us as (author) John Muir fervently wished us to be, 'kindred spirits.'"



TOM CLEMENT/GUILFORDIAN

Opponents say "I do not" to N.C. marriage amendment

By Justyn Melrose
STAFF WRITER

Through one amendment to the North Carolina constitution, the ever-broadening spectrum of what can be considered a legal union could be shrunk down to one shape and one phrase: "marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State."

The May 8 ballot will include the North Carolina Same-Sex Marriage Amendment.

As suggested by the wording of the amendment, same-sex marriages would not be constitutionally recognized in North Carolina.

All civil unions, domestic partnerships and other forms of legal relationships would not be recognized, as well.

On March 28 Guilford College Women's Gender and Sexuality

Studies Program held an event entitled "The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage: The Case of North Carolina" to inform the public of the implications of the implementation of Amendment One.

"I am a resident of North Carolina," said Justin Shreve '11, current Binford Hall director, advisor for Pride and self-identified gay man. "I've lived here my whole life. ... not only would (Amendment One) prevent me from having any kind of legal relationship status when I get older if I decide to live here ... it's going to affect so many other families that I know who are in common-law marriages or students who have been adopted who are my friends."

According to the panel, the numbers suggest that it is a close battle over the passing or defeat of the amendment, with many against the amendment, but

nevertheless many still in support.

"We must preserve marriage in our state constitution to protect marriage from radical activists who are willing to do everything in their power to change marriage and make it genderless," said Tami Fitzgerald, chairwoman of Vote For Marriage NC, to The Christian Post.

Some fear that a lack of an anti-gay marriage law would leave the law up to a judge's opinion, so that judges in favor of gay marriage would allow these marriages to occur. This law is intended to formalize marriage as between a man and a woman.

One important aspect of this amendment is that, though it is called the Same-Sex Marriage Amendment, it affects all couples who are not legally married, but rather in another form of legal union.

For such individuals, this can complicate many aspects of life

from insurance to adoption to who are legally one's parents.

"I have two moms who are living currently in what I guess is a domestic partnership and are married in their own relationship, in their own way," said Hannah Early, senior and event attendee, "(Their relationship is) not recognized by the state of North Carolina and I think that, not only is this going to harm lots and lots and lots of other people — not just same sex couples — but it is specifically very much going to harm my family."

Event panelist and Assistant Professor of Political Science Maria Rosales said, "Right now, my partner is actually — we've been together for 12 years — she's actually a graduate student at Duke. So, she does not need my health insurance right now, but when she graduates, there's a good chance she will. ... that would not even be a possibility probably (if

Amendment One passes). ... the other thing is that we're planning to adopt and we're starting the process this coming summer. We talked to a lawyer who said that this could make it more difficult to guarantee that if one of us dies that the child wouldn't just go to whoever the state considers to be our nearest relative."

The panelists expressed the many fears the LGBTQ community and the straight community have in regards to the amendment.

This heated debate will likely remain unresolved until the final vote.

Still, opponents of Amendment One are hopeful.

Event panelist and first-year D'vorah Nadel said, "(The defeat of this amendment would) be something where the ... queer community and allies and the straight community got together, rallied and (together) we made our voices heard."