

Staff Editorial

A letter to the community from next year's Editor-in-Chief

The Guilfordian has made up the most significant moments of my college career; for the past three years I have lived and breathed Guilfordian. My life stopped revolving around classes or my social life and started rotating solely around the newspaper. I attended my first meeting on day one of freshman year and never looked back. I love this newspaper, I love this staff and most of all, I love the community that we work so hard for.

In our community, there is a large "Guilford identity," but each and every person also strives to be an individual. Collectively, we have a voice, and singularly we have strong, powerful ideas that could change the world we live in.

The Guilfordian wants those voices, both collective and individual, to be represented in each issue of The Guilfordian. We are a student newspaper, here to characterize the community that we all value so strongly. We work to supply you with information; information that we hope you will analyze, discuss, interpret and argue.

Next year, we plan on holding community forums and sending out surveys to learn from our readers. Our goal is to conceptualize Guilford, to bring to life the hopes, the dreams and the events that make up our reality. If we can understand what you want and need, we can better cater to the Guilford community.

The world of journalism is quickly changing. The inky fingers and fresh smell of a newspaper on a Sunday morning has been replaced with a few clicks of a mouse. And while this may be scary, I truly believe that the Web opens a whole new world, one filled with endless opportunities. Next year, we at The Guilfordian plan on expanding our website, social media and multimedia departments in order to provide faster, more up-to-date and accessible information.

We hope to update the website more often, provide slideshows from events and present videos more frequently. With technology comes power, and we feel that by expanding our website, we will be able to better represent our community and allow more voices to be heard.

While I am nervous to take on this position, I feel grateful for those who have stood before me and helped me get to this place. I look forward to working with the student body, the faculty and staff and The Guilfordian staff — really everyone in the community — in order to produce a paper that we can all be proud of.

Rebecca Gibian, Editor-in-Chief

Amendment One is an affront to all North Carolinians



By Aaron Hall
STAFF WRITER

Thomas Jefferson had a quote that summed up his views on other people's religious beliefs: "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are 20 gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."

However, combinations of religious, philosophical and ideological elements have converged in North Carolina that do indeed add insult and injury to many of our fellow citizens.

I'm speaking of course about the proposed Amendment One to North Carolina's Constitution.

This disgusting distraction and heinous waste of taxpayers' time would, contrary to what many people believe, not only affect same-sex couples. Instead, many of the provisions of the amendment would have a detrimental effect on unmarried heterosexual couples as well.

What the amendment would do is make it impossible for the state to recognize the legal rights of any unmarried couple. Only "a marriage between a man and

woman" would be acknowledged by the state for legal purposes.

According to Progress NC and the Coalition to Protect North Carolina Families, at stake are rights of hospital visitation, child custody and protections against domestic violence currently held by unmarried couples in North Carolina.

Healthcare benefits for the children of unmarried policyholders, gay or straight, would be nullified, as would domestic partner benefits offered by many companies. In some cases, children could be taken away from someone who has looked after them their entire life if that person is an unmarried parent.

In perhaps the oddest and most perverse twist regarding possible effects of the amendment, Progress NC claims that many unmarried senior couples would be forced to wed in order to maintain certain pension, healthcare, and Social Security survivor's benefits.

So, your widowed grandmother would be forced to choose between her monthly check and the right to make decisions for her boyfriend if he were hospitalized. Talk about family values.

The fact is, the proposal isn't specifically about not recognizing same sex unions as marriages. North Carolina already doesn't recognize them. The bigger story is that conservative lawmakers also want every straight couple to get married,

whether they want to or not.

If you add this to the fact that they also want to control access to birth control and make difficult end-of-life decisions for families, it's hard to see where exactly their "small government" philosophy comes into play.

It seems that many conservative lawmakers are happy reducing government interference in such matters as minimum wage, environmental standards, and child labor laws (yes, child labor laws — Google "Republican child labor"), but when it comes to the most personal decisions of our lives, such as when to have a baby and when and to whom to get married, this laissez-faire philosophy seems to disappear.

To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, two grown men clipping coupons together or two consenting women spending a Sunday at Costco neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. Neither does the unmarried straight couple next door whose apartment has only one bedroom.

We have bigger things to worry about right now, such as jobs, escalating gas prices, and tuition rates that will not cease to rise out of the middle class's reach.

While I would prefer marriage equality today for same sex-couples, we first have to fend off this attack on the rights of all of us. Vote no to Amendment One on May 8.

Is God running the country now?

By Alex Lindberg
STAFF WRITER

"Legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between Church & State."

These were the ideals of one of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson. In his opinion, religion is a personal practice and should not be in politics. Even our Constitution states that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

However, none of this has stopped politicians from using their religion to gain supporters and attacking the religion of their opponent. I am not saying that it is bad to be religious, but I strongly disagree with using your religion as a campaigning tool or using it to decide laws. And in my opinion, we seem to have lost one of the ideals our Founding Fathers passed on: separation of church and state.

With the U.S. being one of the most religious countries, it is not hard to see how religion became such a mainstream topic. The aftermath has left our nation divided into many sects that spend the days bickering over which religion is the "true" religion. While usually our politicians try to avoid religious subjects, media and social demand has brought many religious topics into politics.

For instance, during his interview with Mitt Romney, NBC anchor Lawrence O'Donnell made several derogatory comments about Mormonism. It was not until after many offended parties demanded an apology that he gave one.

The media and some politicians have turned topics such as gay marriage, abortion and war into debates between religious morality and social morality.

All this does is further the separation and tension between the groups. Rather than presenting the topics in an informed and non-biased way, the news seems to deliberately try to find the extremists on both sides of the argument for information.

Then there are the politicians who preach against the separation of church and state, who wish to turn this nation into a new Christian nation. In a recent study done by the Pew Research Center, it was found that around nearly 40 percent of Americans, "say there has been too much expression of

religious faith and prayer from political leaders," in the recent term, a significant increase from the average 20-25 percent. Some of the presidential candidates, such as Michele Bachmann, even resorted to asking for their religion's votes and support.

During his bid for presidency, Rick Santorum tried to use his religion to gain voters by trying to increase public outcry on some of the aforementioned subjects.

"Just because public opinion says something, doesn't mean something's right if it's not right," said Santorum during a rally sponsored by the Christian group Family Leader in Des Moines, Iowa. "Unless we protect it with the institution of marriage, our country will fail."

This was shocking to hear after he claimed at the start of his campaign that he would not let his private beliefs interfere with matters of public opinion.

There is a reason why the U.S. Constitution says that no religious test shall be required as a qualification of office — politicians are not supposed to bring their religions into office. I understand that is a lot to ask someone to not use the teachings and moral preachings one has learned since they were young in their job.

Understand, it is not just politics or just religion I am annoyed with. It's the combination of both that quite a few politicians embody today.

Last I checked, senators and congressmen were supposed to represent the people of their province, not their personal religion. They should be making their decisions based off what they know on the subject, not what they believe.

I'll finish with a quote from the Treaty of Tripoli, signed in 1797: "As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen, and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."

Despite our belief that differences between religions will never cause our country to go to war against another, it seems to not apply for our own country.