

Letter to new students: Keep calm and carry on

"Orientation was fun, though it already feels a little cliquy."

Charissa Loew

"It's been an ease transitioning to the school."

Ben Evans

"We really like our hall. Everyone's so sassy."

Vince Schueren & Liz Harrison

"My first week has been excellent. I've been making many friends."

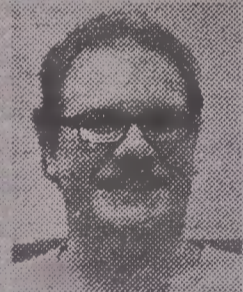
Zane Chesivoir

First-year responses to the question "What has your experience at Guilford been like so far?"

"Once I got here, I'm constantly reminded I made a good school choice."

Gabe Pollack

You've been moving for days now. You have no clue where you are. You stumble into what appears to be a quaint college campus, but under the surface it seems much more terrifying. This is only the beginning.



BY JOSH BALLARD
STAFF WRITER

This sounds like the plot of an exciting new TV show, but for many here at Guilford this year, it's a reality. Whether you're a first-year, a transfer, a new CCE student or a fugitive on the lam, the first few weeks at Guilford are daunting. You're going

to have to wise up if you want to survive — and fast.

"Keep Calm and Carry On" is a common phrase nowadays. It was adapted from a British propaganda poster during World War II, and has been emblazoned on everything from notebooks to coffee mugs. We even see variations of it here on campus, from "Keep Calm and Go to the Hut" to "Keep Calm and Find an On-Campus Job."

In this short time, you have to figure out where everything is. You have to immerse yourself in a campus culture that can eat you alive if you're not careful. You have to know what heteronormative means.

All of these factors could fluster anyone, but if you "Keep Calm and Carry On,"

you'll begin to realize that Guilford is not a terrifying place, but instead a wonderful community in which to learn and socialize.

You'll start to make friends with people in your classes. You'll learn that the Library, the Hut and other quiet places will help you with your homework as much as the Internet does. You'll even discover a higher level of distaste for Canadian geese than you ever thought possible.

All of these factors and more will hopefully convince you to stay the course and continue your education here at Guilford. If you stick around, you're certain to find your niche within the community and make a difference, even if some of your views don't coincide with the majority.

That's what makes this college so great. We're an amalgam of different views and groups combining together under a shared set of values, trying to make sense of this ridiculous world. Remember that generations of students have come before you and have succeeded in their own ways. It may not have been quick, easy or the way they planned, but it happened.

I survived living in Milner, I survived my first 300-level course, and I'm going to survive this year as a senior and the next as a "super-senior." If you just "Keep Calm and Carry On," you'll be back on the run in no time.

Then the next batch of new students will be trying to keep up with you. Good luck and welcome to Guilford.

Russia's Pussy Riot: Just a kangaroo court-room drama

When the Russian punk band Pussy Riot was sentenced to two years imprisonment for "hooliganism," the question that I, and much of the free world, asked was: "Why?"

"Hooliganism," as defined by Article 213 of the Russian Criminal Code, is "a gross violation of the public order which expresses patent contempt for society, attended by violence against private persons or by the threat of its use, and likewise by the destruction or damage of other people's property."



BY ANTHONY HARRISON
STAFF WRITER

While Pussy Riot's protest was disruptive and contemptuous, the group did not physically or lyrically threaten violence. Instead, the four women, wearing brightly-colored masks, genuflected, threw their fists in the air, and implored the Virgin Mary to "be a feminist" and "banish Putin."

A week later, three members of Pussy Riot were arrested. Although Pussy Riot's crime was victimless, the defendants were held in solitary confinement for five months and placed

in a glass cage during proceedings, like violent rapists or murderers.

To me, five months in solitary confinement seems like excessive punishment for a "crime" which Americans consider a right. Just as in the U.S. Constitution, the Russian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and assembly, however, it also prohibits "agitation which arouses national or religious hatred." In her verdict, Judge Marina Syrova stated, "The actions of the defendants reflected their hatred of religion."

Even so, during closing statements, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, one of the members of Pussy Riot, insisted that the protest was purely political.

So, why are these women being imprisoned?

During sentencing, Judge Syrova outlined three parameters for finding guilt: the choice and timing of the venue, Pussy Riot's continued performance and resistance to be taken outside by security and cathedral parishioners, and the defendants' and their accomplices' conduct after the fact.

While they did resist expulsion, and many churchgoers were offended, the cathedral was essential to Pussy Riot's message. They wanted to engage Christians in their dissent towards Putin.

Article 2 of the Russian Constitution reads, "Man, his rights, and (his) freedoms shall be the supreme value. The recognition, observance, and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms shall be the obligation of the State." This article is essentially a rewording of the preamble of our own constitution. It should stand as a mission statement, yet it is one which is not being observed in Pussy Riot's case.

Since Pussy Riot should enjoy the same freedoms we do, let's imagine the events through an American lens. If three women marched to the altar of the National Cathedral in Washington and started dancing and screaming, "Obama is Satan," I feel that there would be no repercussion aside from being led out quietly by priests. Forget the notion of arrests or a trial; judges would laugh the prosecution out of the courtroom.

I am appalled that this perversion of justice is taking place anywhere. I am outraged that it is occurring in a nation which claims to espouse justice, freedom and democracy. The Pussy Riot trial has shown Russia to be a hotbed of bias, repression and tyranny.

Though they refuse to seek official pardon, Pussy Riot's attorney stated that they would be seeking an appeal. I hope another judge will impart proper justice.