

The 1988 Quaker: a yearbook for the ages, of the ages

BY ANDREW STUART
GUEST WRITER

It was 1987, when I, a student at Guilford College, was asked what I wanted to do with the Quaker, Guilford's yearbook. I whipped out the yearbook of Vanderbilt University, a medium-sized school in my hometown, and started flipping through its hundreds of pages of color, and that sealed the deal. My apprehension must not have shown because I asked for about \$50,000, and that's what I received, Apple Macintosh and very heavy Apple laser printer included. I also received funds to upgrade the darkroom and its ancient enlargers.

I started a set of notebooks; one was a detailed layout of the book, one was about staffing and one included long lists and details of all of the tasks which I had to complete. I stayed in Greensboro in my very first apartment, working as a Guilford student security guard — I don't think you have those anymore — and spending much of the rest of the time with my notebooks. I could see the whole thing completed in my head even at that early stage, so there were really no surprises with regard to content and layout as things progressed. All of the surprises came in other areas.

After a long, dull summer as a security guard, the fall of 1988 finally arrived. As in 1986, I never went anywhere without my camera. I shot who knows how many hundreds of rolls of film, black and white and color; this yielded thousands of images.

I remember very clearly being overly optimistic about staffing, meaning I thought I was going to have a staff of at least 12 to 15 people. I engaged in a furious promotional campaign with signs everywhere. I even put cards in every dorm room, inviting the students to join the Quaker staff.

When the first staff meeting rolled around, four freshman girls showed up.

I knew I wanted to do the majority of the photography on my own, but I wanted a staff to deal with the writing. My "staff" wasn't interested in photography, and when I assigned pieces for them to write, they didn't show up with anything the next week.

Early in 1988, I fired the staff.

It was as though a great weight had been removed from my back. Not being able to recruit anyone to help meant the quality of the writing was not what I would have wanted, but even today, I can't think of any way around the problem I faced in this area.

Much more cooperative was the student body. I was well-known and trusted with the camera from previous years, and when it came time to do the shots of the seniors and underclassmen, I was overwhelmed with requests for time slots for photos. I put up sign up sheets in the Founders lobby and did the shooting for weeks and weeks in the fall of 1987 with additional shooting in the spring of 1988. I had to expand the underclassman section to just about a hundred pages.

In the evenings, I would process film and print, and on

Sundays I would do layout pages — a completely manual process using a ruler and pen on forms provided by the printer. It was a very backwards process compared to the way things are done today, and it was a laborious process that I did entirely on my own.

And all the while, I also had to shoot sports and events and groups. Getting the names of everyone in every picture and typing them up was a chore, but most of the work gave me a sense of accomplishment, and I made lots of bonds with a large percentage of the student body. These bonds allowed me access into places that I otherwise would never have had access. But, the access also had unintended consequences.

Nudity became what my book was best known for. I thought I was working at a time when showing some body parts would be tolerated, and I thought I was attending at a college known for tolerance and freedom of expression. But that wasn't the case . . .

Check out the full article online to find the "naked truth" behind Andrew's struggles in putting together the 1988 Quaker.

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Hege Cox
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Contact faustap@guilford.edu