

QuakerQuest: opinions on video gaming at Guilford

BY JOSH BALLARD
STAFF WRITER

"Evil pure and simple, destructive of social interchange, and of artistic effect," wrote John Collier in "The Problem of Motion Pictures."

Such was the rhetoric against film in the 1900s. Similar claims are now being levied against a more modern medium: video games.

With the rash of shootings last year, coupled with the increased capabilities of video game technologies, many are calling for some form of censorship.

"My opinion is that the depiction of violence in video games cheapens life, and makes a sport of death and destruction," said Director of the Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter in an email interview. "I could not, with any integrity, play one."

The question then arises: how does the Guilford community, steeped in both Quaker history and beliefs, view this controversial medium on its campus?

"I think Guilford has done a good job at showing it can handle different opinions on video games as they've held

tournaments for various genres," said senior Simon Warhaft. "I know from personal experience that these events are usually very successful, and they bring together individuals to showcase their skills in a positive manner."

It is this community aspect that seems to be a major draw for many gamers on campus.

"There is something about being in a room with a bunch of gamers, playing, that has a nice feeling to it," said Johnathan Crass '12, who founded the now defunct video game club during his first year at Guilford. "It cannot be replicated."

However, this group dynamic is only one aspect of gaming. Content and its effect on the user is another issue.

"(Video games) avoid questions like, 'Why are these characters in a war?'" said Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy Joe Cole in an email interview. "Are there any alternatives? Who are we killing, what are their stories and is there something more interesting and meaningful that we could be doing with our lives?"

It is this focus on thinking that acts as the impetus for more instances of casual gaming, titles that focus more on puzzle solving than violence. Examples include the popular Angry Birds franchise as well as Associate Professor of Geology Dave Dobson's "Snood."

"I think there are legitimate concerns about depictions of antisocial or destructive behavior in games, particularly with the treatment of women. But these issues also come up in movies and books. I would prefer that we respond to this with criticism, commentary, dialogue and effective parenting, rather than censorship."

Dave Dobson, associate professor of geology

Some critics condemn violent video games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty for allegedly glorifying violence, while many gamers defend the entertainment and critical thinking aspects.

"I think casual gaming is a good way to introduce more people to games," said senior Patrick Berish. "These games are getting more in depth, but for the moment, they are just a fun distraction."

Yet, some students feel more involved with the games they play.

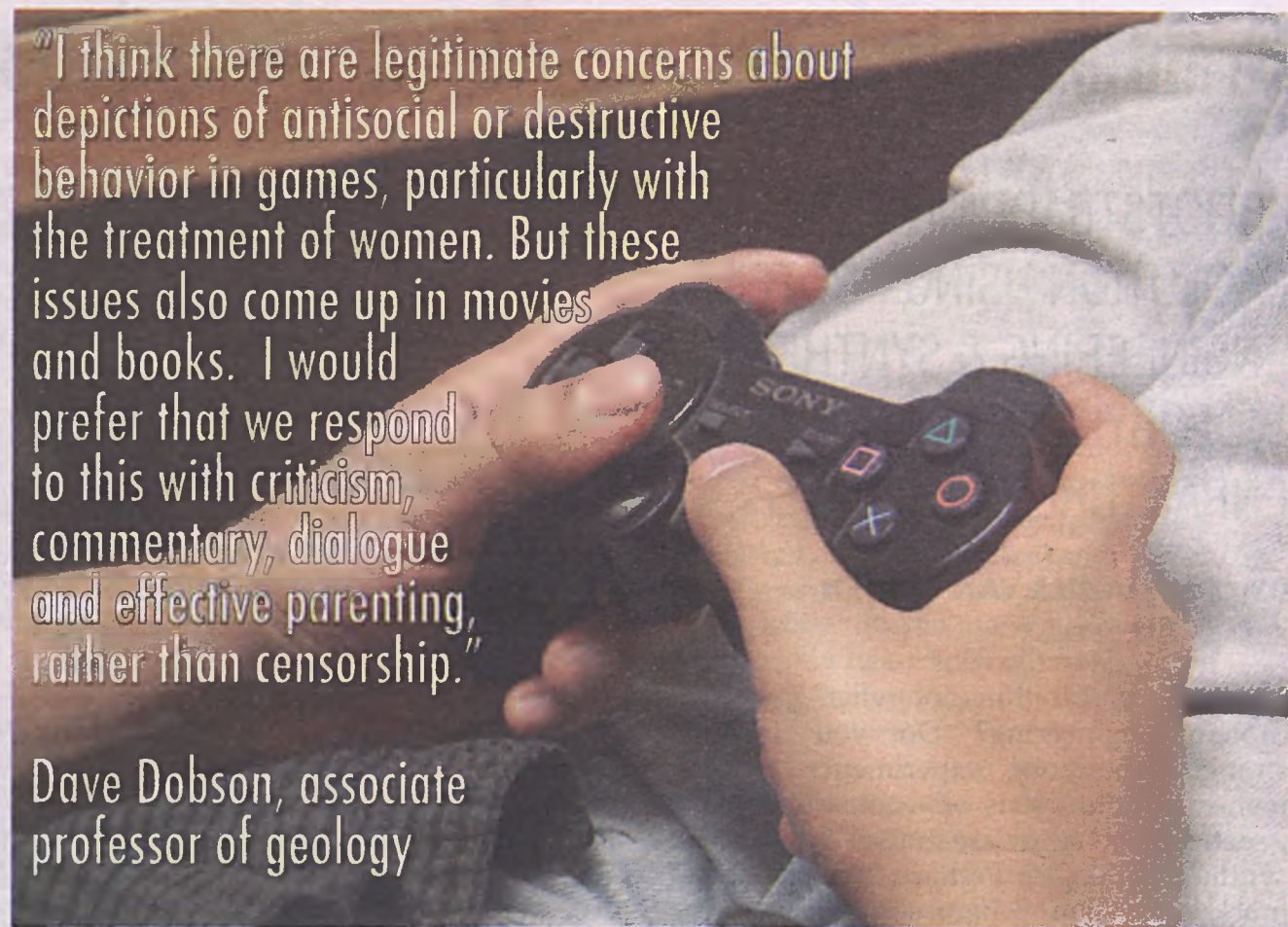
"Sometimes, I get really connected to the characters in a game," said sophomore Allison Stalberg. "I might get sad, but it's a good sad. It is feeling for something other than myself. That is nice."

So, perhaps, video games are then only one facet of a deeper issue.

"I think there are legitimate concerns about depictions of antisocial or destructive behavior in games, particularly with the treatment of women," said Dave Dobson in an email interview. "But, these issues also come up in movies and books. I would prefer that we respond to this with criticism, commentary, dialogue and effective parenting rather than censorship."

Until a final decision is made concerning video games, many students will play on.

"Gaming is not a crime," Warhaft concluded. "So have fun."



BRANNA GLENN/GUILFORDIAN

And the new Community Senate and Campus Activity Board Executives are...

The Guilfordian asked the new executives about their thoughts on next year as well as the question: "If you had a pet teacup pig, what would you name it?"

Senate:

Samir Hazboun – President



"I am excited about working towards scholarships for undocumented students." Teacup pig: Topsy

Justin Przewdziecki – Vice President



"I hope to improve involvement. Senate's success lies in the participation of the body as a whole." Teacup pig: Dr. Kenneth Noisewater

Daniel Veizaga – ICC Chair



"I am really excited to work with the new executive board."

Josh Strassburger – Treasurer



"I am excited about working with a good group of people." Teacup pig: Earl

Nick Huckins – Secretary



"I want to get more Guilford College students involved so that Student Senate can reflect the views of as many students as possible." Teacup pig: Dunbar Jr.

CAB:

Jaime Rodgers – President



"Next year, we'll have mostly new members and I'm excited to hear about the fresh ideas they'll bring and actually seeing them happen." Teacup pig: Hermione Hamhock or Princess Emily

Blake Brown – Music and Live



"I am excited to start my year as Music and Live Chair and continue to apply the standards I had as Serendipity Chair to give students the best experiences possible." Teacup pig: Lil' Wil-bur

Zach Kronisch – Serendipity Chair



"I plan on helping to provide a 'dipity Alumni will wish they had when enrolled and that future classes will use as a template." Teacup pig: Bumbo

Grier Cross – Specialties and Events



"I am excited to further serve my fellow students in Specialties and Events for another year." Teacup pig: Grier Jr.

NOT PICTURED: Trenton Wells – Public Relations