

Shore Hall introduces first gender-neutral bathroom

BY NICOLE ZELNIKER
STAFF WRITER

Deciding which bathroom to use is typically an easy choice for students to make. "Girls" go into the bathroom labeled "girls," and "boys" go into the bathroom labeled "boys," but for students that don't fit this gender binary as easily, that decision becomes harder.

Junior and Trans*Action president James Escobedo believes that not having a gender neutral bathroom can be dangerous.

"Sometimes it's not very safe for a trans* student to go into either a male or female bathroom," said Escobedo.

Shore Hall Director Kristie Wyatt discussed how the bathroom came to be in an email interview.

"The gender-neutral bathroom was born out of a community meeting initiated by two of my residents in Shore Hall, and the building's overall interest made the Honors Hall a great place to start this project," said Wyatt.

Escobedo elaborated further on the steps that needed to be taken.

"We went through Trans*Action," said Escobedo. "We're

a club for trans* identifying students. We came up with a plan of action for getting a gender-neutral bathroom."

While a gender-neutral bathroom is a step in the right direction, that's all it is: a step.

"I still feel as though more steps should be taken, but it's a good start," said first-year Taylor Brown.

Admissions Director Andy Strickler believes a gender-neutral bathroom is a natural step our college should be taking.

"Gender-neutral bathrooms have been present on college campuses for at least two decades," said Strickler in an email interview. "My older brother started college in 1987, and his alma mater had gender-neutral bathrooms from his first year."

According to Brown, gender-neutral housing is next.

"What we're trying to do is set up one of the theme houses as gender-neutral so students who come out as genderqueer or transitioning have a place to live instead of having to deal with buying out a single just so they can have that privacy," said Brown. "They can have a place where they know they aren't alone."

"With transitioning, it's really awkward to be around a person you don't think is particularly queer friendly," said junior and Pride Vice President Sidra Dillard. "You're doing a lot of stuff physically, and it's awkward to have (a roommate) who can see it."

As for the bathroom, whether a small step or a leap, students and faculty alike are extremely excited.

"I suspect it will impact a large number (of students) in the long term," said Strickler.

Wyatt agreed.

"I am extremely excited about the new signage and inclusive nature of the gender-neutral bathroom and am looking forward to seeing the project expand throughout the campus," said Wyatt. "It has been a long time coming."

Dillard is also looking forward to the new bathroom.

"I really like the sign that says 'All bodies welcome,'" said Dillard. "That's my favorite part. 'All bodies welcome' is a powerful concept. It doesn't matter what your body looks like."



LESA ROBBINS/GUILFORDIAN

How to make the best of your Valentine's Day

BY KELLI URESTI
STAFF WRITER

Valentine's Day can be a day of romance for some, while dreadful for others. Either way, we all know it is coming and must find some way to cope. Planning for Valentine's Day is essential, but unfortunately, matters of love can be quite confusing at times. Here is a quick guide to planning the perfect Valentine's Day.

Asking someone to be your valentine can be nerve-racking, so here are a few ideas.

"I would want someone to get a blimp that says, 'Gabby, be my valentine' or to write it in the sky by a jet," said senior Gabby Oglesby.

"I would want something creative and funny if I were asked to be someone's valentine," said junior Turner Votipka.

Chocolates are always a must on Valentine's Day. Sending a card saying "Be Mine" with a red rose is a nice gesture. Whether spending big bucks to rent a blimp or simply sending a Valentine's Day card, create a moment that will be special for both you and your crush.

"Unfortunately, I will be on a bus for Valentine's Day, but if I were to be home, I would go to Celebration Station and play games with my girlfriend," said Oglesby.

Votipka is another Quaker athlete who will be spending his Valentine's Day

heading to a match.

"This will probably be my worst Valentine's Day," said Votipka. "I will be spending it on a bus crowded with guys."

Guilford faculty members have their own plans for Valentine's Day.

Head volleyball coach Emily Gann said that she will be celebrating with her husband by watching him coach his basketball team.

"Quality time with someone that you love — whether boyfriend or girlfriend or a friend — it is nice to hang out with them, to put away the phones and spend some quality time together," said Gann.

Robert Duncan, visiting assistant professor of political science, has been with his wife for 35 years.

He typically gets a flower and a card for his longtime valentine, although Duncan believes Valentine's Day to be just another day.

After spending 35 years in love with his wife, Duncan has provided young couples with credible advice for Valentine's Day.

"If I was courting my wife, what I would arrange is a very romantic dinner, have a nice dessert, take her home and stand in the doorway saying goodbye for two hours," said Duncan.

Oglesby suggested renting a movie, getting takeout and just enjoying one another's company.

Some wonder, "Who buys the gifts?"

What should I get? Can I afford this?"

The most influential gifts are those that are meaningful.

No one needs a diamond necklace or a Rolex on Valentine's Day. If you can't afford it, don't buy it.

Candy, flowers and a stuffed animal are all good options. Conveniently, you can find all three at the nearest CVS.

Another idea is to make a collage of

memorable photographs, which is both heartwarming and cost-effective. It is sweet, thoughtful and you don't have to spend more than 20 dollars.

These are just a few quick tips for planning your Valentine's Day. Celebrate with friends or that one special person, but remember that Valentine's Day is a day to do a little extra for those who mean the most to you.



ADAM P. FAUST/GUILFORDIAN