

## Campus religious and spiritual groups create welcoming home for students

BY NELLIE VINOGRAD  
STAFF WRITER

At a Quaker school, it can seem like religion is everywhere. The Hut is always brimming with meetings and different groups constantly hosting events on campus. And yet, in day-to-day life, most students prioritize other needs before their own spirituality.

Religious Emphasis Week, Feb. 16-22, was a time to reflect on religion on campus and why it matters.

The various religious groups on campus can be places of discovery. Coming from a Christian background, sophomore Laura Todd is currently the secretary and treasurer of Hillel and a member of the Guilford College Community of Religious Observants.

"When I came to Guilford, I found that I kept getting drawn

back into religious life," said Todd.

"But I can see how in college people don't typically see religion as cool, and religion and spirituality tend to fall by the wayside."

People of all faiths are welcome to every religious event on campus and are encouraged to learn and ask questions about different ideas.

College is, after all, a time for exploring and questioning ideas. Finding a place or a comfortable belief system is a life-long journey that for many, begins in this period of life.

"I'd like to see more frank and open discussion between members of different religious communities as well as those with no faith tradition or affiliation," said Guilford College Religious Observance member and senior Omar Hamad in an email interview. "I want there

to be dialogue where people aren't afraid to disagree with one another and less fluff talk about spirituality in an abstract sense."

The key here is a feeling of inclusivity and welcoming, so students can feel comfortable discussing such subjects that for some are a sensitive issue. The first step is to ask questions.

"Though very few people on campus consider themselves Buddhist, there are always people willing to learn," said junior Sophie Laine, member of the Buddhist Fellowship. "Religious life isn't a separate part of someone's life; it's a continuous presence. Having a group that helps with that is very rewarding."

Senior Emily Eadie, president of Pagan Mysticism Group, said participating with a religious group on campus has allowed her to both strengthen her beliefs and allow them to grow.

"There are still lessons from religion and spirituality that we can learn from," said Eadie. "It's good to know we're making a positive difference in the community."

Fostering a sense of community is an imperative for every group on campus.

"We don't want to be shut off, we want to love and serve other people," said junior Turner Votipka, a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

For some, the act of seeking religious groups is not so much an exploration of a foreign world but a return to the familiar. At home, it can be easier to participate in one's religious beliefs, while in college it requires extra effort.

During a recent panel discussion, the Muslim Student



Junior **Sophie Laine** lead meditation with the Buddhist Fellowship in the Hut. The group was one of the many participating in Religious Emphasis Week.



The Muslim Student Association recently hosted a panel discussion in King Hall.

Association discussed the need for a non-denominational place of prayer on campus, where people of all faiths and beliefs could come together in a quiet, focused space.

For Muslims especially, who pray five times a day, having a place on campus would make prayer more convenient. Not having a set location leaves Muslim students praying in stairwells or in quiet corners of classrooms and are often unable to perform Wudu, their pre-prayer cleansing ritual.

"I was walking up the hallway in the Frank Family Science Center and I saw a woman praying in the hallway," said first-year Airperi Iusopova. "I really appreciate

how she found the courage to do that, but I felt sad that she couldn't really concentrate on her prayer."

For sophomore and President of Hillel Stephanie Byer, campus has always felt welcoming. In that spirit, Byer wants to make sure her group is a place for all students to feel at home. Every Friday evening, Hillel holds Shabbat, a ceremony to usher in the day of rest, where all are encouraged to participate and learn about Jewish culture.

Religious Emphasis Week was just a week, but personal beliefs about religion and spirituality are not contained to a week; they last a lifetime. At a place like Guilford, now is a great time to start asking questions.

## Chemistry Club fuses community, science & learning

BY KINSEY DANZIS  
STAFF WRITER

Interested in exploring chemistry beyond the classroom? Have you ever thought, "Man, we never make things like toothpaste or dehydrated food in labs. Where can I do that?"

Even if making toothpaste isn't your main goal in life, Guilford College's Chemistry Club is a place for science enthusiasts to work on projects that are a little different.

"Chemistry is like cooking," said first-year and club member Ward Sandberg. "You're putting things together, and you get an end result. Most times, you can't really go back from that. When you can go back, it's fun, but most times you can't. It's an exciting thing."

The Chemistry Club has been at Guilford since 1994 as a branch of the American Chemical Society. After a period of inactivity, it was revived in 2009, and chemistry students have thrown themselves into it with renewed vigor.

"The purpose of the club is to learn more, delve deeper into chemistry and how it affects you on a daily level," said Rebecca Webster, Early College junior and club member. "We also give back to the community, finding ways to use chemistry and the knowledge we get from the club to do that."

No matter their motivations for joining, members enjoy the club all the same.

"I had a fantastic chemistry teacher in high school," said Sandberg. "He took on the course with such excitement and really made me want to learn about it. This club is a great way to continue that."

Colin Macintosh, first-year and treasurer of the club, was equally excited about joining.

"I thought the club could do a lot of good while we all had fun," said Macintosh in an email interview. "(We could do things) like stream clean-ups, water quality testing, tutoring and fun demonstrations."

One of the great things about this club is that anyone who wants to join can do so easily.

"Anyone who enjoys chemistry is welcome," said Gail

Webster, associate professor of chemistry and chair of the chemistry department as well as the club's faculty adviser. "It's good for those who want to learn more about chemistry, the profession and opportunities for chemistry students."

If you have an interest in the subject, you're perfectly welcome to stay for a meeting and see what they do.

"We can do stuff you wouldn't normally do in lab," said Sandberg. "We explore the things that are really cool. We're actually trying to set up a project right now where we basically create ice cream from scratch, not like you make at home with a bag, but from basic chemistry materials."

Just in case the prospect of creating your own ice cream doesn't entice you, there are plenty of other things done both within and outside club meetings. In the past, students have organized study sessions for others, attended local American Chemical Society meetings and community service events and participated in local student poster sessions. They've also had social activities such as a "Breaking Bad" marathon complete with pizza.

Meetings will be every other Monday at 6 p.m. in the Frank Family Science Center's chemistry study lounge on the third floor. If you've got a bit of spare time, go ahead and drop by. Chances are you'll find a lot more to love about chemistry than you already know.

**"We can do stuff you wouldn't normally do in a lab. We explore things ..."**

**first-year Ward Sandberg**