

Black Friday on Thanksgiving: the epitome of gluttony

I went Black Friday shopping. On Thursday.

After finishing Thanksgiving dinner, my mother and I braved the frigid cold to visit the Walmart Supercenter in Elkin, North Carolina.



BY MATTHEW JONES
STAFF WRITER

Once inside, I wondered if I had walked into the third circle of hell.

Everything about Black Friday sales on Thanksgiving is wrong. The savage consumption, the exploitation of shoppers and the betrayal of a sacred American holiday make events like the one I attended

despicable.

In the store, employees in yellow smocks tried to clear pathways in crowded aisles. Confused shoppers clutching ads asked for directions to the line for a \$29 Android tablet. Other workers guarded hordes of iPods and "Call of Duty" discs from behind the relative safety of the electronics counter.

People have called the day after Thanksgiving Black Friday since the early 1960s, when shoppers crowded the streets of downtown Philadelphia, creating a major traffic snarl.

"Black Friday is the name which the Philadelphia Police Department has given to the Friday following Thanksgiving Day," said Earl Apfelbaum, in his shopping ad from 1966, trying to promote his store's year-round deals. "It's not a term of endearment to them."

Little has changed. On Thanksgiving, armed police officers patrolled the aisles while the Walmart's parking lot filled with shoppers' cars.

As 6:00 p.m. drew near, crowds coalesced around the piles of Nerf guns and Disney dolls. Some already had their hands on items, making sure they could get the one, or five, that they wanted. Others hung back with



Shoppers flooded Elkin, North Carolina's Walmart Supercenter for Black Friday deals as early as Thursday, Nov. 27, after their Thanksgiving dinners.

their empty shopping carts, biding their time.

This year, Walmart spread out their deals over three events, with the first one at six PM on Thursday. It is all part of their master plan to maximize revenue during this critical shopping period. By extending the sales, executives hope they can get deal hunters to come back over and over again.

"It used to be called Black Friday, then it became Thursday (and) now it's a week long," said Duncan MacNaughton, Walmart U.S. Chief Merchant in Fortune. "Maybe we should just call it November."

A voice crackled over the intercom, opening with a plea for shoppers to listen to the store associates and police officers. This came as a surprise to no one in the store. Last year, a video of a fight at this store went viral and wound up on the national news.

Then the magic words came: "You may now

make your selections for the six o'clock sale."

The store exploded into a flurry of activity. People grabbed the items they had guarded so carefully and threw them into their carts.

With air guns and art supplies, shoppers pushed their way towards checkout lines that extended well into the apparel department. Aisles looked like a Los Angeles freeway on a Friday afternoon.

I found myself walled in by shopping carts in the women's underwear section. People pushing carts had squeezed themselves so close together that no one could get through.

Who would want to go through that?

The consulting firm Accenture found in its annual Holiday Shopping Survey that 66 percent of respondents would likely shop on Black Friday this year. That is up from 44 percent in 2011, despite overwhelmingly negative media coverage of the day.

Are the deals so good that Americans will ignore the pleas of the cool-headed?

"The savings offered by doorbuster deals — the ones people literally line up for weeks for — couldn't possibly make up for the time and discomfort involved," writes Shane Roberts for the blog Kinja Deals, which has posted multiple guides to saving on Black Friday this year. "And in any case, those people could be getting the same deals online."

After going through this, I am inclined to agree with Roberts. I am not ready to give up my Thanksgiving holiday for a \$648 flat screen television or a \$10 pair of jeans.

So what did I buy at Walmart if it was the third circle of hell?

I could only bring myself to get the essentials: laundry detergent, window cleaner and sour cream.

Such steals.

Only drastic action can solve Serendipity safety concerns

Guilford College should not hold Serendipity this year.

But it will anyways.

Since last year's Serendipity, students and administrators have tried to find the solutions to the annual problems associated with the weekend: drinking, drunk driving, drug abuse, assault and everything in between.



BY LANDON FRIED
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We know that Guilford deals with these same issues every year. Students participating in dangerous activities put both themselves and bystanders at risk. Guilford faces the prospect of a liability lawsuit if any

activity results in a tragedy.

"The event is great to build community, and it would be awesome to continue (it), but I still understand the concerns coming from administrators," said José Oliva, sophomore and president of Community Senate.

Unless major changes happen in Serendipity this year, the College will cancel all future Serendipities.

"For over four decades this has been our tradition, and it is in serious jeopardy," said co-founder of Serendipity Esther Hall '74. "It rests on the shoulders of Guilford students; not just the planners of the events, but every student."

Guilford needs that complete culture shift to happen within the next six months. A change of that magnitude would probably take four years of consecutive changes to allow for student turnover.

The College does not have the time to make a comfortable transition from the current Serendipity culture to a safer one. Even now, the current plan to solve the Serendipity issues has minimal structure and planning, making it unlikely to work under a crushing time constraint. No one knows how effectively the measures will increase safety or how well the message will spread across the Serendipity crowd.

Delaying Serendipity for one year would

make it easier for the current culture of Serendipity to change into a safer one. It would minimize safety and liability concerns without the college immediately threatening to eliminate Serendipity indefinitely.

But the College already missed this opportunity. Guilford booked the bands for the concerts. Guilford committed to having Serendipity this year well before any concrete plan existed to make the weekend safer.

Of course, an overwhelming number of students would scream at a decision to cancel Serendipity for a whole year. Even more, however, would rally against a decision to end Serendipity forever.

"We're Guilford, and we wanted to be very upfront with the students about the issues and about the problems and not just pull the rug out from under them," said Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Jen Agor. "We wanted to give them the opportunity to change. (We) hope that it's effective and we don't end up regretting it."

Right now, Guilford has a bundle of scattered ideas to save Serendipity. If everything goes according to the current plan, we can prepare for Serendipity and hope that a grab bag of ideas to promote wellness can create a total culture shift in half a year.

"This will probably take four to six years to result in the change that we all want to see," said President of Guilford College Jane Fernandes.

The College should not make sufficient student safety a result for 2019. The culture of Serendipity can change, but it will take enormous steps that the College has not made yet.

Guilford should not continue to put student safety at risk for the sake of a school tradition. If Guilford fails to make the weekend a safe environment, the College should bear responsibility for whatever happens.

The culture of, "I wouldn't usually do something that dangerous, but it's Serendipity," needs to change.

The College wouldn't usually continue events associated with dangerous activity.

But it's Serendipity.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

NC must amend hate crime laws

On Nov. 9, Stephen White '94 left Chemistry, a gay nightclub in Greensboro, with Garry Gupton. The two then checked into the Battleground Inn.

When Stephen was found, he was unconscious and suffering from smoke inhalation and burns covering over half of his body, according to the News & Record.

The police have reported that Stephen was beaten with a telephone, television and other pieces of furniture and set on fire. Doctors, in an attempt to address his wounds, had to partially amputate both of his arms, but were unable to save him.

He died from his injuries on Nov. 15, and Gupton is now facing a first-degree murder charge.

While Gupton may face additional charges with regards to the fire, he is not being charged with a hate crime. Officials claim that there is no current indication that White's murder was a hate crime.

The crime could potentially fall under federal hate crime laws, however North Carolina's hate crime laws exclude sexual orientation from protection entirely.

According to Partners Against Hate, North Carolina's law "prohibits repeated harassment (sic), violence, physical harm to persons or property, or direct or indirect threats of physical harm to persons or property, motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, or gender."

LGBT MAP reports that North Carolina is one of 20 states where hate crime laws do not address either sexual orientation or gender identity.

This neglect on the part of North Carolina's legal system is inexcusable. It disregards the human rights of people of varying sexual orientations and refuses to acknowledge that violence against the queer community is a problem.

The FBI reported that, in 2012 alone, 19.6 percent or over 1,000 of the 5,790 single-bias hate crimes in the United States resulted from sexual orientation bias, excluding unreported crimes.

In the eyes of North Carolina state law, violence against people of color, against people of faith, and against women cannot be not tolerated, yet the state ignores violence against people who are queer.

In recognition of all of victims of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation, North Carolina must change their hate crime laws. We cannot tolerate homophobic violence, and we cannot tolerate the exclusion of the queer community from our laws.

We will remember Stephen White, graduate of Guilford College's Class of 1994 and veteran of the United States Army 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg and the Joint Security Force in Korea.

We hold Stephen's friends and family in the light and invite you to do the same.

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