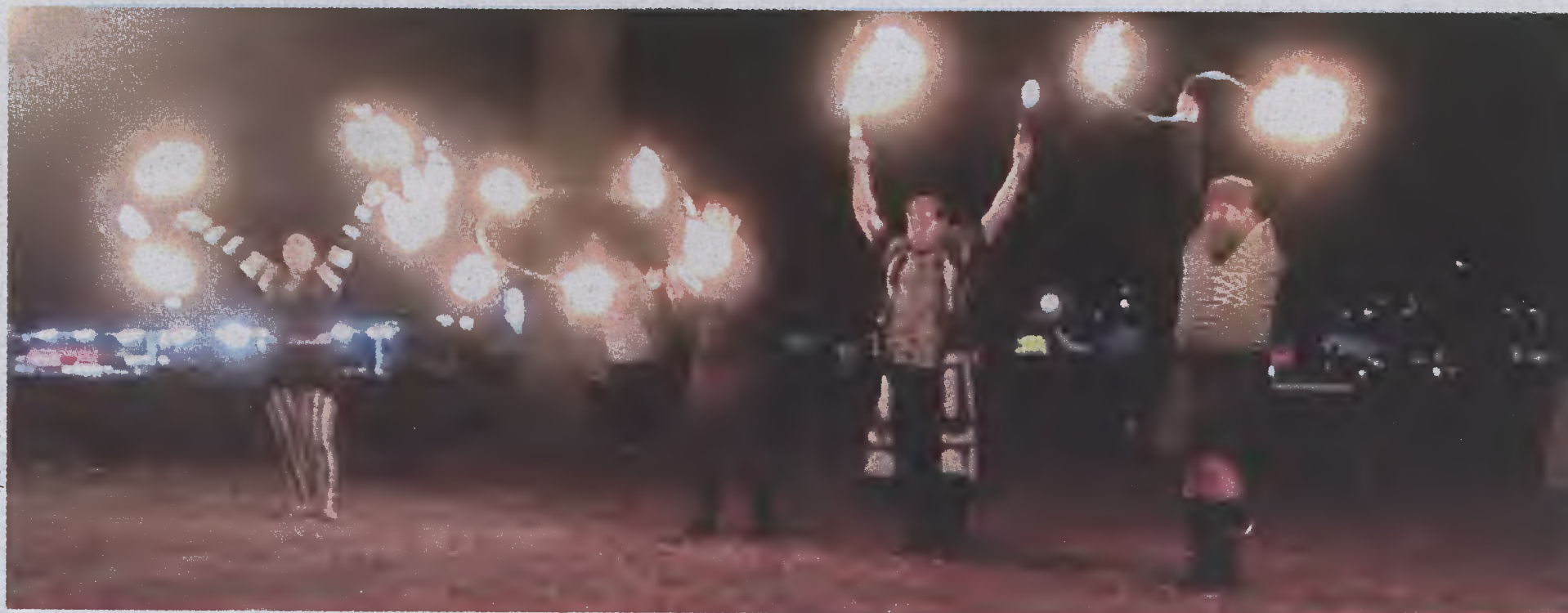


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Nerds get fired up about WTH!? Con



Based in Greensboro, the theater troupe known as the Fire Faires performed on campus during What the Hell!? Con at night on March 7.

BY NICOLE ZELNIKER
FEATURES EDITOR

“Do you like walrus?” said sophomore Ward Sandberg. “Well, come to What the Hell!? Con. We do just about anything.”

This year, Yachting Club’s annual What the Hell!? Con took place in Duke Hall and Dana Auditorium from March 6-8, though the planning process started months earlier.

“The work for the Con starts when the academic year starts, probably before,” said senior and Yachting member Alex Trout.

There is no shortage of work for anyone to do.

“We need to find guests and figure out how much we need to pay,” said junior and Vice Commodore Ryan Siebens. “We need to make reservations, make a schedule and get members of Yachting involved.”

Every year, new members of the Yachting Club organize the Con. This year, the club elected

Sandberg and sophomore Sam Knecht as con runners.

“It’s a very high-stress thing to do, running the Con,” said Adrienne Mattson-Perdue ‘13, who ran the Con in 2012. “It feels like a massive wreck behind the scenes, but people have fun and that’s really what matters.”

All Yachting’s hard work paid off, culminating in one of the coolest, yet nerdiest, events of the year.

“The Con allows a coming together of people from the wider Guilford community and people from the nerd community that lets us get our geek on in a safe environment,” said Associate Professor of Mathematics and Yachting Advisor Ben Marlin. “More than anything, it spreads a net that pulls people in and lets us know about one another.”

The unofficial theme of this year was a throwback to the old Yachting Club, inspired by this year’s special guest.

“We have the founder of Yachting coming back, J. R. R.

Blackwell,” said junior and clerk Eva Sutton. “She’s a writer, and she made a couple of games.”

Blackwell graduated from Guilford in 2002 and now leads what she calls the “creative life.”

“She’s a well-known photographer and developed an RPG that won an award,” said Sandberg.

Yachting has been around now since 2001.

“It’s pretty big now,” said Blackwell. “A lot of clubs dissolve, so I’m excited that 14 years later, (they’re) doing their thing.”

Other features of the Con included the board and card game room and a bad movie room.

“The bad movie room is always good,” said Trout. “It’s just a place to watch terrible Korean knockoffs of Jet Li and Jackie Chan movies.”

Additionally, vendors, performers and artists sold and displayed their work.

“The Dealers’ Room and

Artists’ Alley always feature cool stuff to empty my wallet, (like) comics, games, miniatures and costumes,” said Marlin.

One of the favorite events is the Geek Auction, after which, all proceeds go to Child’s Play, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in hospitals through toys and games.

Participants dress up in costume and auction off anything from homemade cookies to hugs to art pieces.

“I would call the geek auction (a) must-see for the Con,” said Mattson-Perdue.

Ultimately, the Con opens doors for people who are nerdy about all kinds of things.

“You can be very involved and involved right away,” said Blackwell.

Want to get involved next year? Join Yachting at their 10:30 p.m. meetings in the Community Center every Thursday night or contact senior and Commodore Patrick Withrow.

It’s Saturday White Live

BY NELLIE VINOGRAD
STAFF VIDEOGRAPHER

Anyone who has quoted “I can see Russia from my house,” Tina Fey’s iconic Sarah Palin impression, can tell you that Saturday Night Live reflects the politics and culture of the world around it. Or at least it should.

Today, SNL has the most racially diverse cast in 40 years, with comedians Kenan Thompson, Jay Pharoah, Sasheer Zamata, Leslie Jones and Michael Che playing prominent roles in the show. All identify as African-American.

Despite this seemingly progressive leap, the cast is not yet, and has never been, a fully diverse and representative body, especially in terms of racial diversity.

“The trend I’ve seen most recently really feels that the producers are trying to add more diversity but at the expense of comedic value,” said CCE senior Bonga Nxumalo. “I feel like current cast members were brought on for the sake of diversity, leaving comedic talent a secondary.”

A look at the history and culture surrounding SNL, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, paints a telling picture about the issue of representation in the media both past and present.

Created in 1975 by Lorne Michaels, SNL has struggled with racial diversity since its conception. People of color have generally received token representation at best, beginning with Garrett Morris in the original cast, who left in 1980 after reportedly feeling typecast in many of his roles.

In its 2013-14 season, many critics lambasted SNL when it added six new cast members, all of them white. Michaels claimed that these racial problems were not, and have never, been intentional.

“It’s not like it’s not a priority for us,” said Michaels in a 2013 interview with the Associated Press about the lack of women of color in the cast. “It will happen. I’m sure it will happen.”

Associate Professor of Psychology Richie Zweigenhaft says that this approach is often the dominant solution in the media, but that does not make it correct.

“Just like there are groups monitoring news shows to keep track of diversity, a show like SNL needs the people in charge to be reminded of that,” said Zweigenhaft. “People are just looking for the best candidate (to add to the cast or crew), but they may need to take a step back and look at the institutional problems that they’re adding to.”

Though criticism tends to focus on the show’s representation of African-Americans, for other races the numbers are even lower. In its entire 40-year run, there has never been a cast member who identifies as Asian-American, according to a Huffington Post article published last year.

The show has also done a particular disservice to minority women. There have been fewer than 10 women of color out of 141 total cast members in the show’s history.

Junior Zana Hicks said that she thinks the history and overall environment at SNL is a turn-off for people of color as viewers, potential cast members and especially as women.

“A lot of times the jokes are what I can only think to call ‘white humor,’ a joke that is based on knowledge that the dominant culture is most familiar with,” said Hicks. “I honestly don’t think SNL has shown that there is ample room for women of color, so they just don’t try to be on the show.”

Another issue SNL faces is diversity in its crew, particularly writers and producers who influence the tone of the show. Of the 28 staff writers, only seven are women and three are African-American. This can lead to content that feels exclusive, particularly when it ignores the subject of race completely.

“A woman writing self-deprecating jokes about her experiences is funny, yet it’s not funny if a man writes deprecating jokes about women, and the same thing goes with all other demographics,” said Nxumalo. “I think the writers of the show know how offensive that can be, so they choose not to touch it.”

While the current record-setting cast sends a promising message about the future of SNL, Zweigenhaft says this may or may not mean permanent progress.

“I do see (the current cast) as a sign of improvement for right now, but as we’ve learned these things go forward and backward,” said Zweigenhaft. “It would be a mistake to assume that progress is a linear process.”

Extra lives are for more than video games

BY AUBREY KING
STAFF WRITER

Play games. Heal kids.

The motto of popular fund-raising initiative Extra Life inspires curiosity. What could be better than playing video games and helping people?

Founded in 2008 as an extension of video gaming website Sarcastic Gamer, Extra Life raises money for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals through a yearly 24-hour event.

During the event, teams livestream themselves playing video games like “Call of Duty,” “League of Legends” or various others. Viewers of the streams then pledge money to whichever team they’re watching. At the end of the event, all of the donated funds go to CMNH.

“Extra Life began in 2008 as a way of honoring a young lady named Victoria Enmon,” reads Extra Life’s website. “Tori’s battle against acute lymphoblastic leukemia inspired the Sarcastic Gamer community in a way that is difficult to describe.”

Though small, Extra Life streams go on throughout the year. The majority take place during one 24-hour period in early November.

The first Extra Life event raised \$302,000, a huge success by any measurement, but things really started to take off a few years later as media coverage continued to grow. In 2014, Extra Life raised \$5,102,500.90 for CMNH during the 24-hour event.

The formula obviously leads to success, and organizations outside of Extra Life have taken note. Social networking and community have even found their way into Guilford’s fund-raising efforts.

On March 3, Guilford College hosted its first Day for Guilford,

a 24-hour giving event similar in structure to Extra Life. Though it did not feature video game livestreams, Day for Guilford still made a difference.

“We saw an astronomical effectiveness from Day for Guilford,” said Senior Director of Annual Giving Lindsay Smith. “The 24-hour event really invigorated a lot of avenues.”

Inspiring causes gave Day for Guilford meaning, but unique delivery systems gave it staying power.

Day for Guilford focused primarily on social media. Highlighting and amplifying donor excitement propelled the drive to new heights, while Guilford’s website served as a hub for donations.

“Social media has really changed the face of giving,” said Senior Director of the Office of Communications and Marketing Angela Reiter.

The focus on social media drew in 862 donors and \$240,152, making Day for Guilford a roaring success. Many on the fundraising staff believe this technique could hold even more promise.

“I think the Internet, especially social media, has a significant place in the future of fund-raising, especially with the younger generations,” said Student Manager for Day for

Guilford Hali Rose Kohls ’14. “Our online presence did wonders for making Day for Guilford successful, but there was still so much more we could have done.”

In an age when technology pulls us further and further away from one another, Extra Life and Day for Guilford seek to bring us back together for a good cause. No matter what contribution we make, this events help us all make a difference.

“You don’t have to have a trust fund to make this all happen,” said Reiter. “Just imagine what we can do when we all come together.”

“Tori’s battle against acute lymphoblastic leukemia inspired the Sarcastic Gamer community in a way that is difficult to describe.”

EXTRA LIFE’S WEBSITE