

Handicapped

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bably just forgotten." Forgotten? How? The answer to this question is unknown.

Although the answers to these questions will remain unclear, one thing is apparent. In the past few years, the entire Guilford College community has made a sincere and conscious effort to make it possible for students confined to wheelchairs to attend the school. But is it enough? Is it possible for a handicapped student, not only to attend classes, but to live, work, and participate fully in all social and academic functions on our campus? Unfortunately, it isn't.

Among some of the major structural barriers on the campus, besides the gym, are the lack of ramped entrances and/or elevators in Dana Auditorium, New Garden Hall, the library, and every dormitory on campus. Unbelievable? Not really. Shocked that you never noticed before? Don't be. Gross negligence like this is commonly overlooked. To direct any anger at any individuals, since no one can be blamed for a wrong that they are not aware of, is not the answer. As Bill Schmickle put it, "it's not at all a question of a lack of consideration, but rather one of pure ignorance."

It is not the intention of this article to express anger, nor is it to ruffle feathers, to attract pity, or to gripe. Its sole purpose is to promote a campus-wide awareness of the seriousness of these problems, which can be

more aggravating, more embarrassing, more humiliating than you may have realized.

One obstacle that needs to be overcome is a general misunderstanding of the problem itself. If someone told you that students in wheelchairs are unable to get up into the stacks to take out books, your first reaction would probably be, "no problem, I'm sure that there would always be plenty of people in the library that would be willing to get books for them." This is true, in fact this is probably more likely to occur on our campus than on most others. The willingness of students, faculty, and staff, to give assistance to others is overwhelming, and is much appreciated. But that is not the point.

It was the purpose of the "Barrier-Free Act" to allow all handicapped adults to be as self-sufficient and independent as other adults. Think about how you would feel if every time you needed a book, or anything else for the matter, you knew that you had no other choice but to bother someone to get it for you?

It is understandable that complete renovation of Dana, the gym, New Garden, the library, and the dormitories is a major undertaking that will take a considerable amount of time and money (assuming, of course, that it WILL be done). But there are many less troublesome things that can, and should be done in the meantime. Some sections of the sidewalk are mutilated to the



Lisa Smith climbs the stairs to Shore dormitory.

Photo by Tom Risser

point of being dangerous, particularly between Hobbs and King, and between Shore and Binford. Many doors, including the back entrance to Founders, and the side door of Archdale, are much too heavy to hold open with one hand, while pushing ones self through the doorway with the other hand.

There are also a number of things that each member of the community, with a little extra

thought, can do that will make a difference. No maintenance vehicle, or any other vehicles, should ever be parked across sidewalks, or in front of ramped entrances. Elevators should never be left locked on one floor for long periods of time. Side doors with ramps should never be left locked while the rest of the building is open for use. These things can all be avoided without too much effort on anyone's part.

The next time you go for a leisurely stroll across the campus, take a few extra moments to picture yourself in a wheelchair. Then take another look at our campus.

"Life is not always a downhill ride, so we have to make sure that some people can go up."

Bill Schmickle

Lynch's Line

A Piece of Cake?

By Janice Lynch

My friend thinks I shouldn't write a column about weddings. As she was quick to inform me, "Weddings are becoming fashionable." If they're so fashionable, are all the brides wearing Christian Dior? They wouldn't have my size.

This summer I filed a few hundred newspaper clippings on Guilford alumni. Three-quarters of these were wedding notices from society pages. I am now qualified to tell you more about weddings than Emily Post. I know that organza, chiffon, pearls, Queen Anne's Lace, and silk are popular materials for gowns. I can tell you that ushers no longer wear pastel tuxedos with matching shoes. There are subtle distinctions to be made between an eleven a.m. wedding, a late afternoon wedding, and a candlelight wedding. At the reception, one does not cut in when the bride is dancing with

her father.

There are enormous differences between Northern weddings and their Southern counterparts. Southerners use sisters and brothers for maids and ushers; Northerners are a bit more callous. Southerners have cookies and punch at the reception and hurry folks home within an hour. Northerners take out a second mortgage on the house, drop out of college, and sell the dog to pay for the extravaganza they call a reception. Southerners may serve breakfast with grits to visiting relatives; Northerners serve white bread and white cake with white icing. Northerners serve a great deal of alcohol to numb the pain of the bill.

I know all of these things about weddings. I know what color my dress will be. Still, there is something I cannot quite understand. Something that keeps me awake at night: how do so many

people find one another and agree to live together for fifty years? Divorce is an option, but not one you consider on your wedding day. How do they know that in five or ten or fifteen years they won't be tired of a spouse's baby blues? What happens when the conversation wears thin? I mean, I wonder what Gunter Grass is saying in his poem, "Marriage," when he writes:

Exhaustion simulates harmony.

What do we owe each other?

It sounds just as bad in German and I need the answer before I'm thirty.

I asked a girlfriend at home why she was getting married—how at twenty-one she could know that this man would be her man. I asked how she could plunge into it. "Good sex," she said, "for good sex." I don't trust her though. She's Catholic—good sex for Catholics is guiltless sex. It isn't marriage.



Letters

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say, North Florida is part of the South), spent a summer in a large Northern city and wrote a humorous column about unceasing traffic jams, high prices, toll roads, crime, and other stereotypical images of the North. I am sure that many Northerners would find it as unfunny and offensive as I found Janice Lynch's description of life in the South.

Greensboro may not be a 24-hour cabaret, but neither is it the isolation chamber that she portrays. I hope that people will recognize her column as a failed attempt at a joke, rather than an accurate description of the city.

Sincerely,
Fred King

Dear Editors:

During Freshman orientation, time was set aside to familiarize incoming students with the Stu-

dent Services Office. Among the services discussed was the new "Big Brother/Big Sister" program, funded by Student Services. The speaker, a student who was closely involved with this program, made some fascious remarks regarding underage drinking. As a result, Guilford's drinking policy, as well as the integrity of Student Services, was questioned by some parents.

I was the speaker at that Student Services presentation and would like to clarify that 1) Big Brothers/Big Sisters is not a beer providing organization, 2) I take full responsibility for the careless, off-handed manner in which my comments were made, and 3) Guilford, as a Quaker institution, prefers to keep the presence of alcohol to a minimum.

I hope that my seemingly light treatment of such a serious, legal issue has not caused needless difficulties.

Gayle Coppock

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