

Exposure of a Different Kind at St. John's Island

by Rich James

If you leave behind that poor man in the ditch, you leave your church behind too. — Rev. Renty Pinckney, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church

As wet and cold weather covered the Southeast during spring break, most students were skillfully plotting how to maximize their suntans before Monday morning. Sunshine was certainly on the minds of eighteen Guilfordians, but their skillful plotting was directed toward installing insulation, dry wall, carpet and even an outhouse. This determined crew made up the annual Spring Break Community Development Project to St. John's Island South Carolina. Any lack of exposure to the sun was made up by exposure to the island's unique culture.

The island is one of a cluster of "Sea Islands" southeast of Charleston. Two cultures exist there. The islands are home, and have been for 200 years, to freed plantation slaves and migrants from the Caribbean Islands. Until the 1960's the islands remained isolated poor farming communities, many with-

out electricity or water. The people speak their own dialect — gullah — a voice of their African and Caribbean heritage.

Home to the "gullah," the islands are vacation land for a growing affluent white community. Students who were returning for the second time were surprised by the rapid development which occurred in their absence. What was once woods and farm land was now shopping centers and resorts. With all the beach property in private hands, many of the native islanders have never seen it. Here, the ocean is a privilege of wealth.

The Guilford group was there to help combat the chronic condition of poverty for the native islanders. They worked through Rural Mission and ecumenical organization which serves the community by inviting groups to help with building and reconstructing homes.

The week began with an immersion into the vibrant religious life of the islanders. Service at the A.M.E. church was nothing like Quaker Meeting. It was a three-hour dialogue between the choir, minister and congregation, filled with wailing

gospel hymns, spontaneous testimonies, and an ecstatic get-up-and-dance sermon by Reverend Pickney. Religion solidifies the community and their form of worship reflects a bloodline to the ritual celebrations of Africa.

On Monday, the hard work began. The group worked on two main projects which they dubbed the "construction" and "destruction" sites. The construction site was the home of William Freeman, a man permanently bedridden with a stroke. Half of the group worked all week to make his home livable so he could return from the hospital. Combining work and play, the crew repainted and carpeted the living room, replaced the insulation and dry wall of the kitchen and bath and constructed a sturdy outhouse. "Once you build an outhouse," said Chris Chickering, one of the architects of the impressive privvy, "you'll never look at one the same again."

One of the neighbors, Mr. Arlington Mason ("call me 'Slim'"), would often visit and tell stories about the island. How he came to walk with a



Students destroy house on St. John's Island

photo by Rich James

Choir Records Successful Tour During Spring Break Performances

by Vic Johnson

This year the Guilford College Choir, led by choir director, Ed Lowe, took their annual spring break tour down south to Florida where the sun shines and oranges grow in back yards. When they got there, the sun wasn't shining, but, if that affected the spirit of the choir, it never showed in any of the performances, which made up one of the best tours the choir has ever had.

Senior choir member Shawn Daugherty says, "The choir has just blossomed in talent. The past two freshman classes have been extremely talented in their musical ability and seem to be very receptive to Ed's demand for responsibility and discipline. This year's tour was exceptional. It's been 16 years since Ed has wanted to do Jesu Priceless Treasure, and this is the first time he's had a choir capable of doing it well."

Daugherty feels that the real strength of the choir lies in its director Ed Lowe. "I think Ed is the energy and the primary reason the choir is where it is now. Ed achieves excellence in choir. Anybody who enjoys singing would do themselves a tremendous service. I think my ability is ten times greater that it used

to be. When I return from travelling, I will be joining a singing ensemble and taking private lessons. It has absolutely inspired me," says Daugherty.

But to have a successful choir and tour, a good relationship among the members is equally as important as musical ability. Sophomore Ritchie Eanes says, "On this tour, generally, the attitude of the choir members was exceptionally good. One of the most enjoyable moments was when we were on the bus and everyone was telling jokes. There was really a sense of close friends. This was in the middle of the week, so you know, instead of being ready to strangle one another we were having a lot of fun."

Eanes continued, "Everybody worked together. There were times when morale got down, people were getting tired, and their spirits were low, but I'd say that we were able to keep the spirit of the choir up most of the tour." It wasn't an easy task to undertake.

"There were ups and downs," says freshman Leigh Kemp. "I didn't feel like I had a real break. It took a lot of endurance and things got tense sometimes. The bus rides were long and I didn't get much sleep. The performances I loved. Just getting to know

everybody was great. It was very interesting staying with hosts."

When the choir wasn't staying in hotels, they were hosted by families in places like Atlanta and Tampa. Some of the hosts were alumni who gave interesting perspectives on Guilford. Some were friends or families of choir members, something Kemp feels brought the choir even closer together.

But what really held the tour together was the organization which was headed by Kim Strable, who visited all the places before the tour began and coordinated all the logistics.

"I am grateful to everyone who participated in its planning, making all the arrangements, and working out all the details that make for an intense performance," says Ed Lowe.

"Of the 16 years the choir has toured under my direction, this tour ranks very high, in terms of quality of performances, esprit de corps, attitudes, and camaraderie," says Lowe. "I commend the students for the level of maturity in which they handle themselves and the degree of concentration and discipline they brought to each performance. For me, this particular tour will always stand out in my mind."

Come Hear Dr. Tom Regan Speak On Animal Rights

8:00-10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28 1989

Leak Room

Duke Memorial Hall

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Japanese Film Festival

by Sall Morgenstern

A good crowd turned out to view "Ikiru" last Wednesday. This week should be even better.

Kurosawa's 1970 film, "Dodesukaden," is a remarkable movie based on shugoro Yamamoto's "The Town Without Seasons." The film focuses on characters who must deal with everyday life in a slum-ridden village. These inhabitants face the

reality of life amidst devastating conditions; they also have additional traumas to endure, leading them to retreat into a world of fantasy to make life endurable.

"Dodesukaden" explores love, anger, affection, laughter, and fantasy -- all the ingredients for a wonderful film.

Don't miss this one -- Wednesday, March 29th at 8:00 in Sternberger. Admission is free.