

AACS prepares for its busiest month of school year

E.J. Hofferman
Staff Writer

One of the many special interest groups on campus this year is the African American Cultural Society (AACS). Organized by Guilford's African American student community, AACS is a support group for minorities. According to President Crystal Johnson, its main goal is "to promote unity among the minority students at Guilford."

Besides stressing community, the organization also encourages participation in the academic, social and policy-making aspects of the college community. Through open discussions and featured

lectures, AACS targets prevalent social and minority issues affecting the campus as a whole. Projects and cultural activities, study groups, male and female support groups, and student retreats are sponsored throughout the year to create a greater awareness of the African American experience.

AACS co-sponsored a successful African dance photo exhibit in early September, and more recent activities included a business social featuring prominent black business leaders from the local area, and a canned food and Thanksgiving basket drive for the needy. The society will be busiest this month when it commemorates Black History Month by sponsoring speakers, cultural events, and the year's biggest event, Cupid's Cotillion on Feb.

17. Because of recent budget cuts to student organizations, the society is also organizing a fashion show to help raise scholarship money for students in need.

Gordon Moshoeu, a history major from South Africa, has been impressed with AACS so far, because "it is aimed at doing good things and focusing attention on real issues, such as helping the homeless and increasing scholarships for black students who want to come to Guilford. I like hearing and sharing ideas with my fellow students. Being with people you like makes adapting to a culture easier."

Vice President David Lincoln, a sophomore from Baltimore, joined AACS because "it brings together students for a common good and promotes many of the things I believe in. I enjoy the environ-

ment and discussions immensely and look forward to contributing to the program this year."

Although enjoying steady participation so far, AACS is always looking for new members. The program is open to all Guilford students, and Johnson promises that "those who are willing to learn and to listen will be provided with an excellent cultural experience." The society meets every other Thursday in the conference room in the cafeteria, and meetings usually consist of discussions of events and subjects pertaining to the program.

Introducing the Mountain Gate Zen Community

Ami Worthen
Staff Writer

Once a week, religion professor David Barnhill and a group of students from Guilford meet at their "zendo" to perform the Zen Buddhist rituals of "zazen," chanting and "kinhin." Zendo means "meditation hall," which, in this case, is New Garden Friends Meeting. Zazen means "seated meditation." Chanting is done to cultivate a "meditative state of mind." Kinhin, meanwhile, is walking meditation and "another method of stilling the mind."

Engaging in these practices, said Barnhill, helps to "clarify and center your mind." In order to create the best environment for this, he started the Mountain Gate Zen Community. The group's meetings are structured and done strictly according to Zen rituals. The nature of meditation requires "an atmosphere free of disorder and confusion," and the participants are expected to act with seriousness and reverence. The meetings focus not only on relaxation, although that should result from meditation. Rather, zazen and the other types of meditation are a way "to develop a new habit: concentration of the mind."

Hopefully, said Barnhill, the formation of the Mountain Gate Zen Community will also result in its developing into a true community. Barnhill started this group partly to create a practicing Buddhist community, which helps those who have previously had to meditate alone, and those who have never meditated before.

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LIFE IN HELL

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