

Vision of Purpose: Favoring a More Secure Home

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Staff Writer

Being that this is my inaugural article, I would like to take some time in introducing this section's purpose and expectations. Last year, as many of you know, this section was written by a radical right conservative. This year it's by a middle of the road Democrat. Last year topics ranged from Legislative issues to personal attacks on national figures. This year the format will involve more insight into "political bickering" and national policy.

This year this section will focus on hot issues facing our nation today, both in domestic policy and foreign policy. Much will be debatable and controversial. The expectation set forward is to make you think, grab attention and form opinions.

Today's topic: Crime and crime prevention. As many already know, the House of Representatives is considering a bill that would spend more money (30.3 billion) to build prisons, pay for prevention programs and add a supposed 100,000 new police officers. In addition the bill would take 19 assault rifles off the market, includes 15 more crimes to the list that would be punishable by death and has a provision that allows people three criminal offenses before putting them away forever (three strikes and you're out). Other than the fact that the nation cannot pay for this, at first glance, it sounds all well and dandy.

We all know how rampant crime is today and many of us have firsthand knowledge of how dangerous

and insecure it is out there. The problem is how do we, as a nation, confront this in a responsible way to insure safety. Police officers, politicians and average Joe think this bill is the perfect and legitimate way to go.

When one analyzes the proposed solutions, some misconceptions are made apparent. For instance, the money that is provided for new police officers will only actually pay for 30,000 new cops rather than 100,000. Second there has not been any study that has shown that more cops equals a decrease in crime. Third, the money that is going to these prevention programs is nothing more than a facade to pretend to do more to fight crime.

Money being spent on prevention programs: \$10 million for a crime research center in Beaumont, Texas (to Rep. Jack Brooks district). \$5 million federal dollars to pay for keeping basketball centers (midnight basketball) open. There's one question that comes to me: why does it take federal dollars to support this when YMCA's and 34 states already provide this service to inner cities -- \$5 million? Multi-millions for increased education and information, billions for federal tracking networks, millions for pre-school programs (to try to nip criminals in the bud, I guess). And everything else in the 30.3 billion will go to new cops and building more prisons. There is too much money going too many places and not solving enough problems.

Secondly, there is already evidence to support the claim that there is discrimination in the way people are sentenced to death; why increase crimes to be punishable by death without any provi-

sion to insure judicial fairness in the sentencing process?

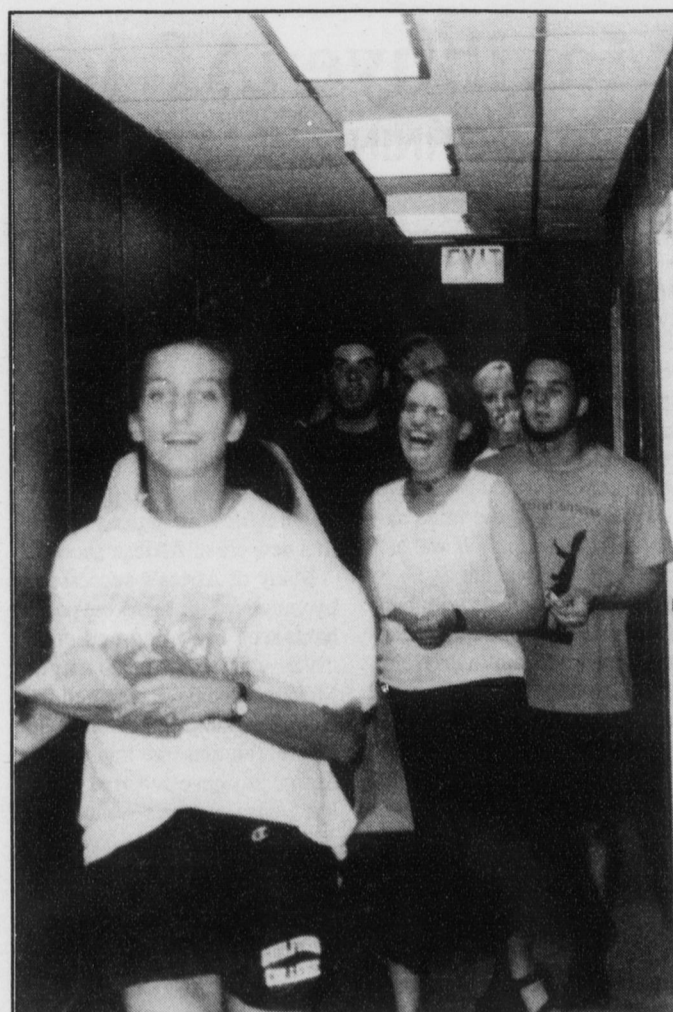
My last critique of this legislation is there are still too many guns! I say ban all assault rifles that have no purpose or use in society and tax ammunition to pay for such things as health care and damage done to the environment. Make gun owners have to pay for the guns they have in their house instead of continually giving stipends and tax breaks for gun ownership.

The problem, politically, is one of too much special interest influence and too much political bickering on both sides of the aisle. The NRA has forced its way into the House to kill the bill entirely and most Republicans are dead set on stalling any vote so that Clinton cannot say he tried to fight crime when running for reelection.

Legitimate concerns are not being addressed while more "pork" is added to sway influential congressmen and Republicans sulk in depression after having the lost the White House. Why do we need a crime center in Beaumont, Texas? Well, D-Jack Brooks wasn't going to vote for the bill that he helped author because of the weapons ban. Why are Republicans catering to a Georgian that goes by the name Newt? Because many of them know that political jelly beans await them down the road.

It is not the system; it's the attitude. My hope is Clinton will somehow work another composite miracle to get this thing done and done right. Clinton, as far as domestic policy goes, is trying to center debate upon issues that face people day in and day out. He doesn't seem to want political bickering, just clean results that work.

As for now another woman is raped while the criminal does little or no time in prison, another drive-by shooting takes the life of another girl while placing her sister in a wheel chair for the rest of her life, and another man is stabbed for what little money he has in his wallet. The sooner we realize that we are all victims is the time we realize that we really do favor a secure home.



Heather Glissen

As a part of Saturday night's scavenger hunt, S.O.S groups run down the halls of second floor Founders Hall to try to find the offices of The Guilfordian, The Quaker, and WQFS.

AFRICA

Continued from page 3

will sow a seed of democracy that is more in line with true African principles, traditions and customs. Such a system has thus far taken root in Uganda, and we saw a semblance of it in South Africa.

In conclusion, we need a stern reminder or realization, as the case

may be, that among the number of the victims of man-made and natural disasters that we witness daily, thanks to the electronic media, are many intelligent men and women. There is an intelligence that is inherent in negritude that needs to and will be harvested.

We invite you to join us on this fantastic journey, that will explore the mind, attitude, concerns and opinions of three young African men.

What do you think of our first issue?

Write us a letter, e-mail us, call us! Tell us what you think. Your comments can either be in the form of an official letter to the Editor to be printed in the paper, or as an informal suggestion note. If you want to make a personal difference in the paper, join us Mon 8:00 PM Upstairs Founders.



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LEARN ABOUT GUILFORD: THEATRE & MUSIC DEPT.

Pope House
Thursday September 1
7:30 - 9:00
Refreshments, come and meet students and faculty

AUDITIONS FOR HENRY V

Directed by Ellen O'Brien
Monday September 5
7:00 pm
Signups will be in Founders at the "Interested in Theatre" table