

## LETTERS

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ments necessary to become an Editorial Page Editor. What if the other candidate for the position had also taken English 110 and passed? Until we feel the overwhelming student voice calling us to that super competitive pinnacle of Editorship, we will resign ourselves to expressing our obviously elitist opinions on this humble little bulletin board while we dream about being able to apply the strict standards of the selection of the Guilfordian Editorial Editor to the selection of Senators. We could cut away the shiftless, unresponsive, ignorant, and generally out of touch students who are our leaders, elected into their honorless positions by the uncaring masses, because a returnee from abroad who almost made it to a Senate meeting has shown us the light! Or we could keep accomplishing things and continuing the educated discussions in the Senate meetings and beyond with the same group of people. Hmm, tough choice!

In the January 20, 1995 *Guilfordian* Daphne Lewis, your [former] Co-Editor-in-Chief, complained that workshops and other programs commemorating Dr. Mar-

tin Luther King's birthday were spread out over two weeks rather than being held on the "holiday." During last year's debate over whether Guilford should observe the holiday, she noted, "The side in favor argued that if students were to have the day off, then more people would be able to attend workshops." She and others who may be concerned should bear in mind that "the side" favoring the holiday consisted of persons with varying viewpoints. Some argued as Ms. Lewis so stated, but some others want the freedom to participate in off-campus activities or do whatever one does on other such occasions.

The King Center in Atlanta encourages people to do volunteer work in their communities to celebrate King's birthday. Whatever we do at Guilford, planning is open to everyone and was coordinated this year by the Dean of Students' office. Those concerned should come to the planning meetings, voice their views, and help organize the activities. As one of your headlines read in that same issue, "You are responsible for your own happiness."

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Israel  
Associate Professor of History and  
Intercultural Studies

**"GIVE ME THE LIBERTY TO KNOW, TO UTTER,  
AND TO ARGUE FREELY ACCORDING TO MY CON-  
SCIENCE, ABOVE ALL LIBERTIES"**

—JOHN MILTON

## Why Gingrich was right

S. Scott Spagnola

Staff Writer

The history of the balanced budget amendment debate is often muddled, with blame shooting across both sides of the aisle for the result of runaway spending.

When Ronald Reagan came to office in 1981, he was serious about balancing the budget. Unlike Bill Clinton, he was vocal in his support for such an amendment. Unfortunately, the power was not in the president's hand. The conservatives, including Reagan, believed that the way to a balanced budget was by cutting entitlements and social spending. The liberals across the aisle offered little support for such an amendment but believed that the deficit should be reduced by cutting military spending. There is obviously a clash of interest here, but it goes one step further. The conservatives wanted to *increase* military spending, and the liberals wanted to *increase* social spending and entitlements. In the end, the congress cut very little but authorized spending to please both sides. Defense spending increased marginally, while entitlements soared. The red ink began to mount.

Newt Gingrich is smart enough to realize that the debate focused too much on partisan issues. By not revealing what the Republicans intend to cut in order to achieve a balanced budget, he removed the partisan debate as an obstacle. He realized that the fiscal-disaster-in-the-making cannot even begin to be tackled if conflicting interest

precluded a balanced budget amendment. Passing the BBA first made far more sense. Once the BBA becomes law, then the partisan debates about what to cut can take place, but the end result will be forced, real action on reducing the deficit and eventually the debt.

How much of a problem is the deficit? Consider this. The Republicans claim they can balance the budget by the year 2002. Eliminating the deficit is the easiest part. After the deficit is tackled, the nation is must then begin paying off the debt accumulated over the years, plus interest. The debt is in the trillions of dollars. The interest on this enormous sum grows exponentially. Once the deficit is eliminated, the nation will have to set aside part of the budget to pay this debt plus interest. This will, in effect, be mandatory spending, year after year, probably for decades, until the accumulated debt is erased. This will limit where money can be spent, resulting in even more partisan debates; but unfortunately, this is the stark reality of the situation that at sometime must be addressed.

The BBA is the first step towards that larger goal of eliminating the debt. Without the elimination of deficit spending, the debt will soon become insolvent. Gingrich understood this, and he was right to prevent partisan budget battles from destroying this rare opportunity. After the amendment passes the Senate and is ratified, then we can have the partisan debate over how that goal should be achieved. The fiscal consequences of trivializing and ignoring this issue would have been grave indeed.

## A Classic mistake

Phoebe Jewett

Guest Writer

Many people don't care, many people don't even know, but it is an indisputable fact that here at Guilford there is no Classics department. (I'm sorry, but two introductory classes do not constitute a department).

Despite the apathy of some students, I feel that simply as a matter of principle, if for no other reason, Guilford should maintain a Classics department. Consider for a moment Guilford's self-definition.

The Guilford College Statement of purpose reads: "Guilford is an educational community which strives to integrate personal, physical and spiritual growth through participation in rich traditions. These traditions include a liberal arts education..." To begin with, liberal arts is a translation of "artes liberales," which is Latin.

Moreover, the definition of liberal arts is: the study of the subjects in the TRIVIUM and the QUADRIVIUM. The TRIVIUM, which includes grammar, logic and rhetoric, is habitually taught in Latin and with Latin materials. Therefore by definition, due to its lack of a Classics department, Guilford is not providing the liberal arts education that it claims to.

Many students greet this lapse in the Guilford curriculum with apathy, but there are also those who care. Here is a sampling of student quotes:

"Classics are a vital part of the educational experience. In order to have a more well-rounded academic community, Guilford urgently needs to expand..."

"How does Guilford plan to stress the

fundamentals of learning when there is no Classics department?"

"I agree that we should have a Classics department added...I had been thinking about taking a semester or two at St. John's in Santa Fe to experience Classics...if there were such a department here I wouldn't have to leave."

Should anyone even be considering leaving Guilford because they have a desire to learn? It seems not, especially if the desire in question is for Latin. Latin allows for learning in a way that no other course can because it provides the fundamental base for more thorough comprehension in other courses.

There is the inevitable question of the budget. There is no sense in having a Classics department if there are not adequate professors running it. And they require salaries and that requires money and that is something Guilford does not have much of.

But, Guilford does have many curious students who do not deserve to be robbed of the opportunities only Classics can provide

The money question is one of priorities, not actual amounts. For example, are the beautification projects on campus (such as the brick walkways) more important than the education being offered to the students? Maybe; only the administration really has the power to decide.

In closing, I would like to ask if it is any wonder that some students appear to mill aimlessly about campus? After all our motto, "Molior sapientiam atque virtutem," has been given to us in Latin, with no means by which to translate it.

## WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

"Although we know that God is merciful, please God, do not have mercy for those people who created this place."

*Elie Wiesel at the Auschwitz death camp which was liberated fifty years ago by the Soviets. Mr. Wiesel is a Nobel laureate who was a teenager when he was brought to the Nazi compound where over one million were killed*

"There were two radical movements in the 60s. One of them nobody ever writes about, and that's the one Gingrich came out of."

*Conservative David Horowitz on the Speaker of the House*

"If women can some day take the pills at home, abortion will become a truly private act."

*One of many doctors participating in the trial use of Ru-486 the so-called "morning after" pill which could, if approved by the FDA, replace surgical abortion in the United States*

"The narrative of the trial communicates nothing admirable about our culture."

*North Carolina State University professor Robert Schrag about the O.J. Simpson trial*

"At a certain point you have to wonder what it means to be alive in a city like this...can death be worse than Grozny?"

*Anya Pletnova, a resident of the war-torn Chechen capital after an intensified campaign of attacks by the Russians*