

Russophile makes good at Quaker school

BEN THORNE
staff writer

Why should we study history? It is, after all, just a bunch of dead guys, right?

Don't tell that to Ed Sharp, visiting professor in history, who finds studying corpses very interesting, even important.

Here only a semester from UNCG, Sharp has already become known for his unusual style of teaching. I experienced it personally last semester in world history, and I can only describe it as an intellectual obstacle course sure to keep any student on his or her toes.

Lecturing only rarely, Sharp prefers to ask students questions which require careful thinking and interpreting history based upon the facts and not just speculation. Whenever he can, Sharp picks apart these arguments to expose their weaknesses, inviting other students to join him. This is not done out of spite, but rather because Sharp wants students to better defend their opinions, reason critically and logically, and learn to assess the arguments of others with a skeptic's eye.

"I want students to develop opinions of their republic and society. My classroom is really a lab

where we experiment with debate," says Sharp.

According to Sharp, we are all a product and a part of history, which is his pet answer to why he teaches history. Not satisfied with such answers, *The Guilfordian* demanded the real truth. Sharp, after being bombarded with questions, finally admitted, "I'm not really good at physics."

It was chance that led him to specialize in Russian history. As an undergraduate, he fell under the sinister control of a professor who taught Russian history and subverted Sharp to his fascination with Russia.

Why on earth would anyone want to teach in the first place? To me, it seems as though one spends years of studying, racking up debt, only to live in abject poverty. When confronted with this harsh assessment of reality, Sharp replied uncertainly, "I've wanted to be a teacher so long I can't remember."

Recovering his composure admirably, Sharp continued, "I like teaching. It is something that is a



Ed Sharp

positive and tangible contribution to society. I see a lot of students who not only want to make a buck but make a difference as well, especially in economic and political justice. I don't do any of those things, but I share with them the ideal of making some kind of difference even if it is small. Teaching is rewarding because you get to watch students grow and learn."

That reward is the reason Sharp likes teaching at Guilford. To him, it represents the best in American higher education due to the college's high academic standard and Guilford's faculty.

"Guilford is different because of its faculty. The students are given, even compelled to take a more active part in their education. The faculty are even willing to help, whereas most institutions take the 'sink or swim' philosophy.

"Guilford is unusual in that it goes to great pains and great expense to further collegiality.

Most colleges are sequestered—you know the people in your own department and that's all. [Guilford] likes interdisciplinary classes

and wants faculty to get to know each other."

Lest the reader be misled, I want to state that Ed Sharp is not an arid intellectual. He is also an arid—I mean avid—athlete who loves skiing, scuba diving, sailing, and running.

For further entertainment, Sharp loves to read and will peruse the pages of anything, be it history, science fiction, magazines, or cereal boxes.

His favorite activity by far is playing with his six-month-old son Benjamin and his wife, Kelly Burke, who is an associate professor of music at UNCG, the principal clarinet in the Greensboro Symphony, and a *mother extraordinaire*.

Sharp, quirks and all, is a wonderful addition to the History Department and to the broader Guilford faculty.

Write to know Anxiety for a reason

ALICE REID
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If the walls in Bauman could talk, what a sad story they would tell. They could tell not only of computer problems and the printers we seem to have bought from Satan, but also of the late-night anxiety attacks caused by myriads of papers.

Guilford hopes to improve the writing of its students by being a writing-intensive college. For this reason a program called Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) was instituted.

A "W" course is one that includes writing instruction in addition to the regular course work.

A "W" course must meet certain criteria which include: a process approach to writing, the use of both formal and informal writing, preliminary paper drafts which are commented on by students and/or instructors, and a minimum number of final draft pages which have gone through the editing process.

In order to get a class listed as a "W" course, professors are required to fill out a contract for approval.

The goal of this program is for students to participate in several varied forms of learning. Students learn how to use writing to engage with their audience in a variety of ways. Students learn how

to write more confidently and effectively—particularly in specific disciplinary contexts. Students learn how to edit and how to become better self-editors.

In addition, it is hoped that students in "W" classes will also gain better time management skills, heightened small-group skills, and generally improve career skills.

Even when students are not practicing for their future job or major, writing skills will help them with anything they might do now or in the long run.

Teachers who want to offer "W" courses are invited to attend three lunches each semester.

At these lunches they talk informally to examine problems and trade tips and strategies.

From these proposals 12-20 writing-intensive classes are offered each semester. The average enrollment ceiling for one of these classes is 18 students. At the end of the semester, students in the class fill out a special evaluation form. Their input is directly used to improve the program.

You may spend late anxious nights in Bauman, but Guilford hopes you gain more than that from its writing intensive curriculum.

Theater's a-buzz

OLIVIA BRADEN
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The recent arrival of new guest director Danny Scheie has Guilford's theatrical hive in a buzz.

Scheie comes to us from San Francisco, where he was most recently employed by the highly-regarded Shakespeare Santa Cruz.

Scheie keeps no modest profile in the San Francisco area. He has directed three plays there since September and will be beginning yet another upon his return to the Bay area.

Scheie is no stranger to the Guilford community either. He appeared as a guest artist in the college's production of *Waiting for Godot* several years ago and has worked professionally with both Jack Zerbe and Ellen O'Brien.

On returning to Guilford,

Danny says it is "familiar and nice." He says it is also "good to get away from the same gene pool" in San Francisco. Danny says that he feels more free to take risks on this project because he does not feel the pressure of hometown critics and box offices.

Scheie will lead ten Guilford students in an adapted version of the one-act play *La Dispute* by French playwright Pierre Marivaux.

Though the play first appeared on French stages in 1744, Danny hopes to bring the content close to experiences had by today's audiences. To achieve this, he is working with a modern translation of the script provided by his brother, Tim Scheie.

Twisted around the structure of a sparse industrial set, *La Dispute* is a charming talk of first love and the mishaps that arise out of innocence and ignorance. Scheie proclaims with enthusiasm that "this play is perfect for undergrads!"

The play deals with the sort of delightfully trivial tragedies that plague the years between the late teens and early twenties.

No one should go to this play looking for heavy drama, but if you like what you saw in last fall's production of *Noises Off*, then *La Dispute* should resonate well with you.

There is a small chance that anyone seeking an evening of light entertainment may walk away from this production disappointed. The director says, "This play is really (about) what occupies our minds most of the time."

It raises the simple question of whether human beings are really faithful in love and explores the true nature of men and women. Such queries should strike a chord with any audience.

La Dispute will open March 22 in Sternberger. Come see what the buzz is all about.