

The effects of a temporary on-campus handicap

D'Nise Williams

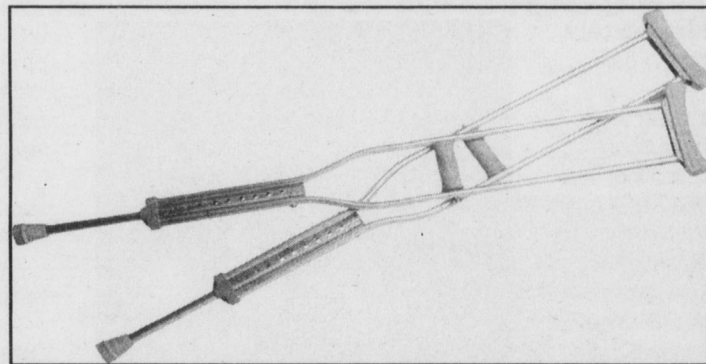
Staff Writer

When I was a child my great-grandmother often told me, "you never truly appreciate the small things in life until they are gone."

While I took this advice to heart and made a daily agenda to recognize and appreciate each sunset and sunrise and all that came between, somehow I forgot to evaluate the importance of one of the most practiced yet unappreciated activities done by man - walking.

Handicapped from a dislocated knee after jumping over a fence during an FYE expedition, I found myself needing crutches for 6 weeks. Already feeling frustrated and confused, Guilford's lack of handicap accessibility only added fuel to the fire.

None of Guilford's six dorms have an elevator enabling students to reach upper floors, though most of them have handicap ramps



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enabling access to the building. I realized this was a problem when, living on the third floor of Milner, I had to lift myself up three flights of stairs several times a day.

I realized that Archdale, the home of many professors' offices, was anything but accessible. While it too had the misleading lure of handicapped ramps I discovered that once inside I was either restricted to the first floor or forced to painstakingly drag myself up a flight of stairs.

Even Dana auditorium and the Alumni gym, sites of

many of Guilford's largest events, became major challenges, neither one having elevators or easily accessible ramps for the disabled.

Tedious as my trials with Guilford's buildings were, the real test was with the sidewalks. Though many of the sidewalks leading to main buildings have been or are in the process of being repaved it is the sidewalks in between dorms where the true peril lies.

For example, one night, under a vaguely lit sky, I decided to visit Bryan. On

this journey I discovered the large gaps in the crosswalk leading from Milner to Bryan. At one point I fell victim to a hole in the pavement and had to be escorted back to my dorm via golf cart.

Dismayed and angered I asked myself where is all of our tuition money really going?

Can Guilford College not afford to renovate its buildings and add elevators, or to repave the sidewalks so that handicapped students are able to get around, and able students don't hurt themselves and become handicapped?

If the safety of students has always been the school's number one priority, why aren't these changes being made? Is the school blind to their necessity?

While the reality of the situation may be that many of Guilford's buildings are too old to support the renovations required to bring them up to par, the fact still remains that

this is a growing problem. As Guilford's enrollment increases each year, so too does the probability of handicapped students attending: handicapped students that Guilford does not currently have the capacity to support.

I propose that every able bodied student take a walk around campus. Examine every crack in the sidewalk or lack of elevators; things that may be minimal to them but hampering to another.

Then, I propose, we show campus life our concern: sending e-mails, letters or making calls until I, in my disabled state, can safely walk on every side and crosswalk on campus, and casually access any floor of any building.

It is the duty of the students to make our voices heard, and make the necessity of these changes understood.

Who knows when you may be down and out and unsupported by Guilford?%

Mealin' and wheelin': Slow down and savor the flavor

Kale Griggs

Staff Writer

The fluorescent draw of drive-thru's may lead us to believe that we are accomplishing more, but moments saved eluding the second hand can be precariously empty. Often our challenge with the clock is not how to gain more time, but how to learn to spend what we have wisely.

Pushing the envelope of deadline upon deadline, it seems that many Americans bow to the clock's altar. I, too, have been conditioned for speed, but recently, as I rushed to win my daily round of "Beat the Clock," I fell weak to the temptation of leisure. At first I felt guilty, but a little taste of freedom led to a timely revelation.

At a quarter past five most mornings, I find myself alone on the highway. With little room to spare and no one around to justify myself to, I often forego my own sensibilities and head for one of those time-saving drive-ins. But last Tuesday, though I

was headed for McDonald's, I abandoned the watch of reason and sat down to place my order at my favorite café.

"Been a while," said a set of eyebrows. With a flick of the wrist, my hostess of a decade slapped the daily news on the table and put her back to me.

"Well now," I thought, my face hot with blush, "could this be why I strayed? No one treats me like this at the other place." At McDonald's, I just whip my car around to the window of one of over 27,000 restaurants world-wide and a faceless arm trades me a bag of goodies for money. I'm not ashamed; getting what I want two-thirds of the time is darned convenient.

In fact, not one member of Ronald's pin-striped team cares if I skip breakfast. With stores in 119 countries on six continents, they understand raw productivity. They say I deserve it. Besides, with a drive-thru on almost every corner, fast-food is available whenever and wherever I want it

There, no eyes ever meet. Rarely do I feel compelled to confess my madcap indiscretions to a crackle in the microphone. Beneath the glow of golden arches, I simply slink away into a world of 43 million customers served.

But alas, musing about my hiatus into autonomy was interrupted. One distinctive clank of porcelain striking table dropped my mouth open. With all of the composure of Pavlov's dog, I salivated as my eyes lay witness to what had arrived.

Scrambled eggs, firm not runny, two delectable slices of tender pork, and a half order of crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, hashed-browned spuds from above.

Without saying grace, I took in a fork full of delicious. Hot, steaming, robust eggs complimented the sharp taste of a utensil slipping between my lips. The first bite passed my mouth and without haste I felt the first zing of salt and silk touch my tummy. Reload, repeat. I think may have moaned a little as I savored each delectable morsel, right down

to the...

"Hey, what's with the toast?" I demanded, our parallax threatening to end my euphoria.

"Fast fixing your hunger," she said. "It makes you fat."

It was when I found myself negotiating both human and food that I realized I had found something worth sharing. Stepping inside this little greasy spoon is no nemesis to time; it's quite the opposite. McDonald's and its fast-food counterparts may shave seconds off my commute into daily life, but for moments like this one, time and the world that revolves around it actually come to a halt.

You see, no matter where the journey of life has led me, a fireball named Maria has been here to start my day with a cup of bottomless caffeine and a dose of quick wit. In the midst of my chaos, she blends stargazing with reality in an attempt to satiate a free radical like me.

These one-of-a-kind insights are both valuable and free. Truth is you just can't match this kind of experience at the other place. %