

Talkback: Letters to the Editor

In response to Letter concerning 'Sex and the Semester' from Feb. 18

To the editor:

I am replying to Ms. Hollifield's recent editorial concerning Sam Kittle's "Sex and the Semester" column.

My response is based upon my perspectives as an AIDS Fellow, someone with fairly conservative personal morals, but most of all, as a student experiencing the reality of Guilford College.

Ms. Hollifield asked, "Do college students at Guilford really need advice about sex?"

In a nation where fifteen million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases are diagnosed annually, and where over one in five of North Carolina's new HIV diagnoses are college students, my answer is a resounding yes.

Certainly, Ms. Hollifield would agree that these realities of unsafe sex are too devastating to ignore. But scare tactics alone will not constitute the comprehensive, realistic sex education

that students desperately need.

Abstinence-only education ignores reality. Professors at Columbia and Yale Universities recently surveyed 12,000 teenagers aged 12-18 who pledged to abstain from sex. When a follow-up survey occurred six years later, eighty-eight percent of teenagers who had pledged not to engage in premarital sex had (compared to ninety-nine percent of those who did not pledge).

While the "pledgers" tended to engage in sex later in life, married earlier, and had fewer partners, only forty percent of males used condoms when they actually had sex, whereas fifty-nine percent of the "non-pledgers" used condoms.

Additionally, both the "pledgers" and the "non-pledgers" had a similar prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases.

The best approach to sex education is one that, while

certainly acknowledging abstinence as the only guaranteed method of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, also recognizes the fact that the vast majority of Americans will engage in premarital sexual activity.

Options like serial monogamy, birth control pills, condom use, and "lower-risk" types of sex (for instance, the risk for HIV transmission through oral sex is significantly less than through anal sex), can significantly reduce the spread of certain sexually transmitted diseases and/or unplanned pregnancies.

Most importantly, however, sex education should empower students to negotiate when, if, and with whom they will engage in sex. This would eradicate the emotional trauma that Ms. Hollifield fears would result from sex.

Students should learn to establish their own personal boundaries based upon their individual comfort level, and not feel guilty for

having these boundaries, nor should they pressure others to cross their own.

Ms. Hollifield additionally mentioned the temptations that would inevitably result from co-ed housing. Having lived in co-ed housing for nearly two years myself, I disagree. I have developed friendships that have strengthened my ability to communicate with the opposite sex.

While abstinence is the best option for preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy, it is nevertheless an option, and an unpopular one at that.

Teachers and parents - not just at the college level but at home, in middle and high school - must prepare students with factual knowledge to make decisions regarding a very intimate aspect of their lives.

Ultimately, however, students must make their own choices about sex.

Erin Burns
Sophomore

Iraq vote is meaningless until US leaves

We are truly living in some interesting and historic times.

The people of Iraq have finally been given the opportunity, after decades under the control of an oppressive dictator, to voice their opinions about who should rule their country.

But I guarantee that not one Iraqi person voted for the U.S. in the recent elections.

We must allow the Iraqi people to have control of their country. As long as there is an American presence, Iraqis will not be able to run their government and the power will remain in American hands.

They don't want us there and no Americans, other than those who are profiting off of this crusade or those that have been fooled by Bush's lies and ridiculous claims, want to be there either.

I am always amazed at the logic used by our leaders when they believe that there will be peace created by a bloody war.

There is no way that invading a country where people already want to attack us can make us safer, especially since we completely ignored this nation's sovereignty and neglected to get the support of the global community, not to mention the false justification we used for invading.

We should have never gone into Iraq and there is definitely no reason why we should remain there. As great as it is that the Iraqi people have finally voted, it will be meaningless for as long as the US makes its presence known where it is not wanted.

It is so ironic that the US Empire tries to justify its expansion by saying that they are spreading the system of democracy, something that does not even exist at home. All the while they fail to mention the benefits that certain rich white dudes receive from these immoral practices.

I pray that Bush doesn't come to believe that our God wants him to conquer Iran.

Kyle Brebner
Junior

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Sam is a female and from what I gather, a heterosexual one, meaning that she is writing about what is familiar to her. So it might be difficult for her to gear her experiences towards homosexual relationships as you put it.

I used to write a column similar to hers in high school so I think Sam was bold and honest with her article.

My friends and I found it to be the most enjoyable article in the paper last week as we read it over lunch in the Underground and we would love for it to stay in *The Guilfordian* ... KUDOS SAM!

-Alana Hoare
First Year



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Sometimes venting your spleen can be dangerous