

## EYEWITNESS

## "One mop at a time, peace advances"



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Approximately thirty miles away, in the more liberal and protected city of Ramallah, a small oasis of calm exists in the form of the Friends Boys' School, founded in 1901 by an intrepid group of Quakers.

The Boys' School served as a home base for the Guilford group during a two-week work-study trip in Israel and Palestine this July.

The group, a fairly large one, consisted of sophomores Kelsey McNicholas and Pauravi Shippen-How, senior Cully Salehi, as well as recent graduate Genoa O'Brien, board member Ellen Hamrick, community member Nary Nelle Smith, Kennesaw State professor Maia Carter and son Graham, oil investor Bill Deichler, and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter.

From the Boys' School in Ramallah, the group took day trips to cities such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Caesarea, and Qumran.

The days were long, and temperatures climbed past the nineties.

"If you think it's hot in here, you should have been in the middle East this summer," joked Carter to a bevy of listeners at the Sept. 9 Eyewitnesses to Israel & Palestine discussion.

Temperatures weren't all the group found trying during the course of their visit.

"There's a limited amount of water in Palestine, especially in those areas that are controlled by Israel," Salehi said. "You can see how much water you have left, and then once you're out, you're out. That's it for the week. Imagine having to decide between taking a shower and washing dishes."

In Israeli settlements, McNicholas said, the water situation is not as dire as it is for Palestinians.

"Some of them [Israelis] will come and put dead animals and so on into the community water supply, and then—I mean, what do you do, if there's nothing else?"

Though the students may be new to the Middle East experience, Max Carter isn't.

"Since 1997, my wife Jane and I have led work study-trips to the Middle East and over the years have developed a pattern of working at the Ramallah Quaker School studying the conflict, making connections with Israelis and Palestinians involved in the search for peace," Carter said at a colloquium in 2005.

Every year, Guilford students are shocked and fascinated by the juxtaposition of ancient



(Left) Liberation Graffiti  
(Middle) Genoa O'Brien, Cully Salehi, Kelsey McNicholas, and Pauravi Shippen-How proudly display their paint-colored hands after a hard days work.  
(Right) Kelsey McNicholas mopping floors at the Friends Boys' School.



temples and sprawling graffiti, of millennia-old olive trees and slick padlocked fences.

They return bursting with the impetus to inform the world of what they have witnessed.

In Boren Lounge on Sep. 9, the audience listened quietly as Shippen-How spoke about each of the people now appearing on the screen behind her. Salehi, stopping at a picture of a Palestinian speaker, explained that he was discussing Israeli border control.

"They only let in Israeli products, so it will channel money to Israel," she said.

"This is the only thing people over there asked," McNicholas said. "For all their hospitality and generosity, all they wanted was for us to tell their story."

The three students – McNicholas, Salehi, and Shippen-How – and Carter told story after story of their trip to the Middle East.

A dead chicken thrown into a community water source. Checkpoints throughout Palestinian cities. A firm chokehold on the Palestinian economy.

Nearly all of the problems they described are impossible for a small group of students to solve.

The question becomes: what can one do in the face of such a daunting task, that is, ameliorating the situation in the Middle East?

At the Ramallah Friends Boys' School, one does whatever one can to help, whether that means painting tables, washing dishes, or cleaning floors.

Towards the end of the PowerPoint, an image of McNicholas mopping industriously appeared on the screen.

"Bringing peace to the Middle East—one mop at a time!" Carter said.

*The Eyewitness to the Middle East lecture series will continue through this week, with locations and times announced on fliers in Founders Hall.*

## Tara Thai: good, cheap, close

By Kyle West  
STAFF WRITER

While the majority of Thai restaurants boast some exotic (and usually highly priced) dishes, Tara Thai across the street more than makes up for all those uppity "Asian-fusion" slop-houses you see.

Tucked amid the relatively quiet commercial block behind Pizza Hut on College Road, Tara Thai is a place where food is what it is. It's a restaurant that doesn't try to pretend to be anything more than a great place to eat. At Tara Thai you won't find yourself paying for ten-foot-tall bronze statues of Buddha or some decadent waterfalls, but you will find a great place to grab lunch for cheap.

The first thing that you notice coming into Tara Thai are the usually empty tables, and esoteric wall furnishings, but looking past that you find a quaint little restaurant that is big on taste, variety, and a love of food. With one of the largest lunch menus in town, there's no better place to spend six bucks, especially considering how close it is to campus.

All I can say is that their Pad Thai is my savior concerning hangovers, break-ups, car accidents, and even debilitating sicknesses. Coming standard with a heap of chicken and possibly the best-made tofu I've ever stomachached, Pad Thai is a hearty and flavorful standby, and one I never pass up.

Tofu has never been a friend of mine, and while I've always heard its praise, I never believed in such hysteria over this uniquely textured and uncomfortable food. The golden brown morsels buried in the Pad Thai noodles looked a lot more like chicken

than any tofu I've ever choked down, and from the first moment, I was hooked.

That was three years ago.

But about the food. In addition to the venerable Pad Thai, I would also suggest a rich dish of masamun curry with chicken and a bed of rice, staying true to Thailand's love of spice without cooking your face off.

At Tara Thai, the food is never served without an appetizer of the day's soup, and each dish also comes with a spring roll. That is to say, the portions are right on the money, and for only \$5.95 a plate, with shrimp or duck an extra two bucks, that is a deal one could hardly pass up.

Once, last Thanksgiving, every dish had turkey in it, and there was really nothing to say to the servers to keep the feathered fiend out of my Pad Thai. That being said, turkey Pad Thai is certainly an eclectic, and totally American, twist to the traditional and ubiquitous Thai dish. It is precisely this intrepid combination that represents what food means at Tara Thai, and while I may be venturing out on a limb, food there is an adventure, one that should be taken in with plenty of good drinks, and a heaping dash of spirituality.

Despite how tucked away Tara Thai is, this little Asian oasis is unique in its style and approach to good eating, one that is at once refreshing and gastronomically delightful. And as Quaker Village begins to sound its death-knell, places like Tara Thai are fast becoming the bastions of home-grown goodness.

Places like this depend on student patronage, enhancing our little suburb of Greensboro far more than any store at Friendly Center ever could.