

Staff Editorial

This year, Black history should be celebrated every day

Every February, teachers across America return to their tried and true lesson plans to teach thematic classes during Black History Month.

Throughout our primary education, most of us watched slideshows about the Middle Passage, looked at worn photos of Frederick Douglass, heard recordings of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and read excerpts of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" oration during February.

But do we ever truly connect with the material or the occasion?

For a month, people are reminded of this history. And oftentimes, the information remains just that — history.

At Guilford, we are reminded of monumental historic events and movements that occurred locally, such as our campus' involvement in the Underground Railroad and the Woolworth's sit-in downtown.

While undoubtedly important, these lessons about Black history are things that we are taught and did not experience firsthand.

The people, the causes and the events focused on in Black History Month are things that we have learned to appreciate and understand, but that we don't necessarily relate to. Until now.

This is a year Black History Month should be personally significant to all Americans.

Last November, we, as a nation, made Black history.

The overwhelming emotions of change and history-making that we have always been told about are finally tangible.

We don't have to open a dusty history book to understand the importance of Black History Month. We see it whenever we turn on the TV or glance at the magazine covers at the newsstand and we certainly feel it whenever we mention the 44th President of the United States.

As we have recently seen, Black history is not exclusive to past generations and it is not limited to 28 days of the year. Too often we get caught up in celebratory months and don't recognize greatness on an everyday basis. But history is made every day and it is our responsibility to acknowledge and participate.

In addition to everyone's individual celebrations of involvement in making history, Guilford's Africana Community, African American studies department and Blacks Unifying Society (BUS) will be sponsoring events all month, including a conversational panel about the election, the inauguration and what it all really means for our nation.

The editorial board of THE GUILFORDIAN consists of five section editors, two photo editors, a layout editor, an art director, a managing editor, and the editor-in-chief.

Reflecting Guilford College's core Quaker values, the topics and content of Staff Editorials are chosen through consensus of all eleven editors.

Internet use takes a turn for the... naked?

By Nasimeh Easton
ART DIRECTOR

Being a teenager means doing pretty dumb stuff.

Some of us get our license revoked or throw a party at our parents' house. Some of us get fired from our job or expelled from school. And some of us send nude pictures of ourselves to strangers on the Internet.

Wait, WTF?

Well, to be fair, "some of us" means about 1 in 5 teens (13-19) and young adults (20-26), according to a recent survey conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl. The survey's results say that 21 percent of teen girls and 18 percent of teen boys have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves online.

LOL, right?

My initial reaction to this information was to ROFL, but as I read more of the study, my amusement slowly turned to the sort of creeping heebie-jeebies that only the Internet can provide.

First I had to fight back the horrific idea that perhaps my 14-year-old cousin is part of that statistic — and then I read

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that 23 percent of the teens who have sent or posted "sexypix" said they sent them to people they knew only online.

OMG NO WAI!

Now, it's creepy enough to think of an eighth-grader sending revealing pictures of his or herself to their significant other, but to a complete stranger? In other words, to an anonymous face behind a computer screen that could very well be "To Catch a Predator"'s next victim?

That is far beyond the realms of LOL, ROFL, or even OMGWTF — that's just flat-out disturbing.

It's not the hints of sexuality that I find frightening, nor do I think teen pregnancy is the biggest threat here. What gives me the shivers is the fact that these statistics were undeniably born out of our breast-

loving, body worshipping, all-consuming American media culture, and no one's giving that fact the time of day.

Those who created the survey offer advice on how to protect yourself online; countless Web sites tout the importance of Internet safety for teens. None of these organizations, however, take a look at what these activities stem from.

Until there's a change in our media, until sex stops being equated with wealth, happiness, and every other aspect of consumerism, until women are not force-fed images of feminine "perfection" from the minute they exit the womb, teenagers will continue attempting to imitate the culture that teaches them these ideals. No amount of surveys or precautionary tales will change the younger generation without the help of the forces that shape them.

Before The National Campaign and similar organizations jump to chastising teens for the Internet behavior, they should take a step back and consider the real situation that caused it. Underlying all the BRBs and G2Gs is a cultural problem in need of a major overhaul — and it's time someone addressed that without any JK-ing around.

Letters to the Editor

Ed Studies handles cuts

On Friday, January 30, the Guilfordian published an article in response to the non-renewal of eight visiting, full-time faculty's contracts. One of those eight positions, held by Nancy Yoder, is connected to the Department of Education Studies. In the article, Nancy made allusions to damage our programs and students may suffer due to the non-renewal of her contract.

We, the Education Studies Faculty, are concerned about the effect that these non-renewals have on the people who suffer them and recognize that we are not privy to decision-making situations and processes across campus. However, Nancy was hired with the full understanding that she was under a two-year contract. No promises of extension were made, nor could they be, as this position was understood and agreed upon as a two-year commitment.

We certainly appreciate the work she has done for the college during these past semesters and are in deep sympathy for the devastating effect non-renewal may have on her. However, we are distressed by her comments, as they were made without thoughtful conversation among all Education Studies faculty about our ability to be resilient and to always meet the needs of our students.

The Department of Education Studies has always planned ahead for the semesters to come. David Hildreth, who has been on sabbatical for this school year, returns to us in the fall.

We have a long history (as do all educators) of facing myriad challenges and making our program one that excels. For example, consider our successful departmental growth and national re-accreditation during the early 2000s when there were fewer full time tenure-track faculty than there will be in the Fall.

Yes, it will be a challenge to meet every demand, but it is with utmost faith and dedication to the principles of Guilford College that we assure our students, partner schools, and colleagues that the integrity of our programs will not falter. In fact, we expect that we will be stronger as time goes along. Maxine Greene (1997), a preeminent education and literary philosopher reminds us, "to think of things as if they could be otherwise (and to shed) light in dark times." This has been a guiding principle for the department, and this we will continue to do.

David Hildreth, Julie Burke, Anna Oerther, and Caryl Schunk
Education Studies Faculty

"Cuts" misleading

Thank you for sharing the concerns expressed in the front page news story, "Eight full-time faculty cut for 2009-2010" published January 30, 2009. I am writing to keep the community fully and accurately informed.

Because of the economic tsunami sweeping over our country and much of the world, private colleges like Guilford are experiencing a decline in traditional student enrollment and anticipating a continuation of that decline in 2009-2010. The enrollment challenges, created by the economic crisis, make it vital for the college to size its faculty according to student population and consistent with the strategic plan's commitment to at least a 16:1 student faculty ratio and average class size of 20.

Although there will be eight fewer temporary full-time faculty at the college in 2009-2010, they are not all being "cut." Some are leaving because they had no plans to return, some because they are currently replacing tenure track faculty on study leave, and some are applying for one or more of the six tenure track positions for which the college is currently interviewing candidates. If these searches are successful, there will be nearly the same number of full time faculty at the college in 2009-2010 and a higher percentage of them will be on tenure track.

With these factors in mind, decisions about which temporary positions should not be renewed next year were made in consultation with a wide range of faculty and administrators.

As for the specific faculty discussed in the article, both were given two-year appointments with a definite end-date. When David Hildreth returns from study leave he will take up the students whom Nancy Yoder currently advises. When Jerry Joplin returns from study leave and Laurin Flynn from personal leave, the Justice and Policy Studies department will be able to offer additional courses.

I hope this information will help the community better understand why there will be fewer temporary full-time faculty at the college next year and why there are no simple solutions to the challenges we face in this current era of economic stress and pressure.

Adrienne Israel
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean