

CHANGING GUILFORD, ONE SUMMER AT A TIME

STORY BY NICK BUNITSKY

FOR MANY RETURNING STUDENTS, THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED BY FAMILY, VACATIONS AND SUMMER JOBS. BUT WHILE THEY DREAMT OF RETURNING TO CAMPUS, CREWS HERE AT GUILFORD WERE MAKING IT FEEL NEW FOR THEIR RETURN.

In less than three months, the campus facilities crew, sustainability council, and Meriwether Godsey have made major changes to some highly trafficked areas around Guilford. And whether you think they're more or less Guilford, the plans are in full swing, each and every amendment brimming with opportunity. The most noticeable change is the caf. Returning students recall the ruination that the dining hall had become over the last few years, and had been hearing about renovation for a while. Well, as the announcements towards the end of the Spring semester made clear, a new caf has finally arrived.

"The dining hall itself was gut-

ted down to the walls, everything pulled out - we reset the floor, put new carpet down, obviously painted, and then the big changes are the skylights," said Greg Retz, the general manager of Meriwether Godsey, while looking over the newly shifted and expanded vegan station.

Many students appreciate the new set-up, but recognize growing concern elsewhere in the dining hall. "You can only do so much with new architecture, what really matters is the quality of the food," said junior Wayne Flenniken.

"This is only a temporary set-up ... the second phase is the server renovations, which we introduced to a lot of students last year and

showed them the initial plans. The final plans haven't been rolled out yet, but they'll be out within the next few months," said Retz.

Sustainability is the name of the game this year for Meriwether Godsey. It is clear not only in the continued renovations of the caf, but also in the last-minute addition of an herb garden for the dining hall.

"I dug it out, Greg put the fence in, and I brought in a bunch more dirt. We also have a huge compost pile past the north apartments that we keep going and David Petree and his crew dumped a bunch of it in there and we tilled it all up to make a great soil base," said Jon Varnell, the associate vice president of Operations and Facilities. "Hopefully this week and early next week we'll start getting some herbs planted."

"We will be growing a selection of herbs that we'll use in the dining hall ... blueberry bushes, we're looking into a fig tree and a lot of the flowers that we use for garnishes will go in and so will jalapeño peppers," said Retz.

That is not all. A community garden and a production garden are in the works as well.

Additionally, Hendricks parking lot found the same sort of help. "We took the lot and shifted it over towards Binford ... and we re-did the parking, adding islands to use as a natural filtration process for water," said Varnell.

While the year of sustainability is in full swing here, there is more going on in every aspect of the community.

Former and new residents of Bryan Hall may find that it now feels more personal with the addition of a centerpiece.

"We put a brick seatwall in that breaks up the center and makes it feel less intimidating," said Varnell. In Founders, the lobby and the

mailroom have undergone massive renovations, both aesthetically and functionally. With the info desk moved closer to the door, Dana lounge doubled in size, allowing for a pool table and more chairs, encouraging both study and play.

As many remember, the student mailroom officially became unnecessary last year when package processing was moved to the Mail and Print Services building. As a result, it was removed this summer with student mailboxes put in its place in order to cut down on crowding in the hallway.

"We got the basics in there done, but we're going to upgrade the lighting still... we're not done," said Varnell.

And finally, in a move eight years in the works, WQFS took their biggest step towards webcasting. With the installation of a digital production room and computers in the master control room (MCR) to playback digital formats, all that is left is the proper cable work and service.

"We need to get all the computer stuff installed before we can actually send the digital signal out so the webcasting has to wait until that's all done. We're inching closer and closer," said Jon Hatch, WQFS faculty adviser.

Much time, work and money have been put into this investment and as a result, the excitement of being this close is palpable.

"Hopefully, sometime in the next couple of weeks we'll be done... we have some certain specific tasks we have to get past that could be fast, but aren't right now," said Hatch.

No matter what sort of activities you subscribe to, this summer's changes are bound to impact them in one way or another, hopefully facilitating a greener, healthier, happier, and more open community.

