

"ARE YOU SISTERS?": RACIAL AND ETHNIC INSENSITIVITY ON CAMPUS, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CREATE CHANGE

By Raji Ward and Grey Grantham
GUEST WRITERS

Hi, my name is Raji and I'm a senior at Guilford. Hi, my name is Grey and I'm a senior at Guilford. We are roommates, we're both adopted from India, and we both grew up in Vermont. We have also lived the majority of our lives in predominantly white communities.

This has been an unique experience fraught with much confusion. It may be hard to believe that more than one Indian woman can live in rural New England at a time, but there are more of us than you would think. Our entire lives we've had to deal with being mistaken for someone else because of the color of our skin. We thought it would stop when we came to Guilford, an institution that promotes, encourages, and values diversity.

From day one we realized that despite

the liberal and conscientious atmosphere at Guilford, people still constantly mistook us for each other.

This article does not come from a place of hate, but rather from a place of caring for the collective integrity of the Guilford community, which we believe can respect and embrace diversity in a more active manner. We must recount our experiences because their implications are relevant to the entire Guilford community.

Imagine arriving at school from your summer vacation and being asked if you're sisters with someone you've only known for a few years, when you only share the same color hair and skin. Imagine somebody insisting that you are someone you're not, only because you are of the same race and ethnicity.

We are not telling you about our experiences to place blame, but rather to raise awareness within the community, so that we can all

attempt to be more conscious of our actions and their consequences.

When people make this mistake, whether they know it or not, they are not taking into account that we are our own individuals with different stories.

Thus, in the future, just ask politely if you are unsure of one of our names and we will answer kindly. It is important to think before you ask, for the consequences and implications of making any racially or ethnically based assumption is far more damaging than asking a polite question.

We realize that we have waited for quite some time to speak out, but we believe it's better to say something now, than to never say anything at all.

We hope that we can leave the Guilford community more aware of the implications of its actions with respect to cultural and racial sensitivity, and our commitment to diversity.

Property destruction counter-productive to demonstrations

By Eric Campbell
STAFF WRITER

The anti-neo-nazi protest that took place on Aug. 29 was intended to be a dignified display of Greensboro citizens' unwillingness to allow such hatred to operate unchecked. The charged but peaceful atmosphere of the demonstration was punctured, however, when someone smashed the windows of a car belonging to a member of the neo-nazi National Socialist Movement.

This incident questions whether such destruction stigmatizes nonviolent demonstration, or whether such instances of vandalism might be justified if the intensity of the protesters resolve fosters cooperation with the opposing party.

Public protests are often predicated, at least in part, on the necessity of affecting public opinion. Acts of destruction against seemingly just people, organizations, or governments can make the demonstrators and their movement look savage, out of control, and hypocritical in their disregard for previously espoused nonviolent principles.

I have found that a protest is not worth attending if it is born of negative feelings. Since humor is one of the most effective assaults on authoritarianism, all of the protests I have attended in Washington,

D.C. have had a buoyant mood. They were a chance to voice disagreement with the war, but they also resembled high-spirited social gatherings.

However, despite the pervasive presence of nonviolent opposition, a few individuals at these protests would inevitably insist on souring the occasion by breaking the windows of nearby apartments and heckling the police.

Mahatma Gandhi's first rule of civil disobedience is that those involved in a nonviolent campaign show no anger toward their opponents. Saturday's vandalism was an instance where anger, either towards the neo-nazis in general, or toward the car's owner, subverted the better judgment of the protester.

Refraining from violence shows the opposition that the demonstrators do not consider them to be a threat worthy of such strong emotion. The demonstrators' calm strengthens their faith.

The destruction of property is harmful to the cause of the protesters. The efficacy of nonviolent action for colossal social change has already been proven in India, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, our own country, and elsewhere. If nothing else, let us remember those movements and their ideals as we strive toward a better world for all.

District Asinine: Shallow message veils cultural ignorance

By Adam Katzman
GUEST WRITER

How is "District 9" not being ripped nine new ones? Yeah, just because the current film is supposed to be about apartheid and xenophobia doesn't mean it is.

In reality, it conveniently ignores actual apartheid history in favor of unearned, juvenile cynicism and, in turn, xenophobic itself.

For starters, you can't have an allegory set in the place or thing it's supposed to be about. Therefore, an allegory about South African apartheid set in South African apartheid is counterintuitive.

The more parallels drawn, the more insensitive and disconnected the story's foundations appear to the reality it's supposed to relate to. Basically, as commentary, the film presupposes that if aliens landed on earth the black South Africans would act like the white ones and therefore, Hobbes-lite, mankind doesn't deserve the "enlightened" two-hour moviegoer's sympathy.

The aliens and district 9, as stand-ins for black South Africans and the Soweto district they were forced to relocate to, have no link to their real-world counterpart aside from being maltreated by everyone.

In the film, they're unintelligent drones (don't get me started on the one noble savage) who urinate on their shacks and breed like rabbits, they can't operate their own weaponry, nor communicate anything but primal needs.

In reality, their counterparts were able to rise up, organize a revolutionary political party (The ANC) with a set of rightful demands (the charter), and eventually gain an international recognition that called into question the human pedigree of their oppressors.

Spitting on the victims of South

African apartheid because in the hypothetical event of aliens they'd behave no worse than the whites is not enlightened. Historically, they never got the chance to exact revenge on their oppressors.

As it turned out, because of the enormous bills required to clean up the mess of Apartheid, the African National Congress was forced to abandon the Freedom Charter in favor of IMF-approved structural readjustment, which, by privatizing everything, put in the hands of the white-owned banks the central tenets the movement had sacrificed itself for i.e. public housing, electricity, redistribution of the stolen wealth. Thus begetting a South Africa that is now Apartheid without "Apartheid."

Further, the movie doesn't even work in the present political context, only indirectly reflecting on the hysterical waves of violent xenophobia existing there now where Zimbabweans and Nigerians are treated as a common threat to South African welfare.

That that represents a desperate response to the structural inequalities carried over from apartheid is completely mangled by the film's treatment of Nigerians.

Culled from the worst possible anti-immigrant propaganda floating around SA, the Nigerians the aliens are forced to live with are depicted as primitive, tribal, superstitious, hypersexualized and unintelligent scam artists, brutal thugs, and inter-species prostitutes.

Don't lie to yourself that the movie is an equal opportunity excoriation of corporate malfeasance and rotten humanity. The white run Multinational United is intelligently evil and intellectually superior, the black South Africans are portrayed as "Yes Massa!" lackeys and the Nigerians are vicious, repugnant Sambos.

Staff Editorial

Students engaged in Greensboro community

Many Guilford students have established genuine connections with the Greensboro community and they strengthen these ties year after year. But while some are exposed to and engaged in history, politics, and current issues surrounding Greensboro, and are deeply involved in the community, others still live in the confines of the Guilford bubble.

This year the Guilfordian staff will work to significantly increase coverage of local news so we can help bridge the gap between the college and the Greensboro community.

We have the potential to educate Guilfordians on current issues that are significant to Greensboro and North Carolina and create an outlet where we can build connections with local organizations and individuals.

Bonner students, project coordinators, and others volunteer at several Greensboro sites including Glen Haven, Pathways, African Services Coalition and the Newcomers School. At these sites volunteers tutor children, play with them and provide English language training and support for their families.

Several art students are involved with art galleries in Greensboro, while others are politically active with Jorge Cornell's campaign, labor unions, the Beloved Community Center, and others. These students learn firsthand about the politics of North Carolina and the issues that are coming up in the Senate.

Some Guilfordians work with Food not Bombs and local vegetable co-ops, while the Hunger fellows work to support sustainable farming and the local food movement. The Hunger fellows and other student volunteers have collaborated this past week to collect non-perishable foods to donate to the Greensboro Urban Ministry as part of the annual Soup Bowl vs. Greensboro College.

These are only a few examples of the work that our students do off-campus. We do not need to search far for story ideas. Many students have taken an interest in these causes and have been instrumental in connecting Guilford directly with the local community.

We hope that being open to their stories and publicizing their efforts we will be able to inform others on campus of these opportunities. If you are working on a specific project, anticipating an upcoming event or concerned about issues such as health care, immigration reform or social justice, email us at guilfordian@guilford.edu and tell us your story or come to Monday night staff meetings at 7:30 p.m. in the Founders gallery.