

Guilford students celebrate autumn

By Holli McClean
STAFF WRITER

For weeks, festive posters appeared in scattered places throughout campus. Abandoned on a table in the Greenleaf, pressed against a window in Frank Family Science Center – all heralding a fall dance festival complete with face-painting, pumpkin decorating, African drums, and good old-fashioned family fun.

The point of the dance festival was to introduce interested Guilford students to various genres of music and dance. Guilford has a dynamic dance program – why not show it off?

Originally designed to be a lakeside event, the fest was forced inside the Alumni Gym by ominous weather.

The event began with a lesson on African drums, set up in a circle and operating under a call-and-response pattern. Practiced drummers then took over and beat out a rhythm to instruct participants in traditional African dance. Informative chants of “Back, back, single, single” filled the air.

I could hear the beat long before I walked into the Alumni Gym. Greeting me, dance director and host Christa Wellhausen said, “Feel free to get closer to the experience, if you want to hear the drums in your chest.”

Latin salsa-band member Steve Blake had a different take on the drums. “It’s like having your head beat with a trash-



Guilford students and visitors practice Blues Dancing moves in the Alumni Gym at the Dance Festival on October 10.

Claire Osterhoudt/Guilfordian

can,” he quipped as he busily set up for his band’s performance.

The salsa band, West-End Mambo, is a local band that Guilford hired for the occasion.

“They asked if we were free, and we were, so here we are,” said band member Cesar Oviedo. For the band, the point of the festival was simply to share their music. As Oviedo put it, they were “here to give the show.”

Despite the energy of the drums and the salsa, the event started out slowly. As the first event of its kind on Guilford’s campus, students weren’t sure what to expect of the Fest.

However, as the evening wore on, more students showed up.

“A lot more people came once the food came out,” said first-year Herbert Mehnert. The food, sponsored by the

German club was a hit – grilled brats and sauerkraut. The feast coincided with a pumpkin-decorating competition, which yielded very colorful and *very* original pumpkins. One of the more interesting sported a gay pride rainbow and miniature hearts.

Wellhausen would like for the Dance Fest to become an annual event. She truly believes in sharing the wonders of all sorts of dancing with everyone.

“To my mind,” said Wellhausen, “there’s no delineation between dancers and non-dancers. That’s my philosophy.”

By the end of the event, the dancing students seemed to share her view.

“Guilford is a really different campus and really quirky,” said Mehnert. “If this thing becomes an annual event, I think it’ll get more ‘different’ and more fun every year. You know, more unique.”

Atheists search for representation

By Eric Campbell
STAFF WRITER

Atheists make up one of the most invisible minority groups in the world. With certain exceptions, they do not wear outward symbols of their non-belief, nor do they convene weekly as many practitioners of religion do.

As such, the movement toward atheist recognition and acceptance has had to struggle to be seen as well as heard.

Atheism, a rejection of the concept of divine entities, has a long history stretching back to ancient India and Socrates’ Greece. Historians consider the atheistic idea to have grown over the Middle Ages and emerged into its modern state in the 19th century.

Europeans generally accept the idea as commonplace. French public organizations operate under a rule of *laïcité*, or secularism. In 2008 the British Humanist Society raised almost £140,000 (\$280,000) to post on London buses the slogan “There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.”

However, atheism is not without its detractors in Europe. In August of this year, Pope Benedict XVI suggested

that atheists, disregarding God, must also devalue the natural world that God created, and thus contribute to global warming more than believers.

Secularists face even more prejudice in the U.S., especially in traditionally conservative environments, such as the Army. The New York Times reported in April 2008 on specialist Jeremy Hall, an atheist soldier serving in Iraq who took a stand against harassment from his Christian superiors.

Max Carter, campus ministry coordinator explained how this antipathy grew out of a reaction to the perceived excision of God from everyday American life in the early 1960s. This anxiety was one of several factors that prompted a resurgence of Christian fundamentalism in the U.S.

“Fundamentalism has created more atheists,” said Carter, referring to atheism’s growth as a backlash against the dogmatic nature of some branches of American Christianity.

Entrenchment in faith has given rise to misconceptions about the tenets of atheism.

“The general fundamentalist public has mysticized atheism,” said senior Max Reitman. “They depict us as

‘seduced’ by Satan or (categorize us) as ‘science-worshippers.’”

Such ideas are antithetical, as atheism is a lack of worshipping anything.

In contrast, associate professor of geology, Dave Dobson voiced his view on Guilford’s welcoming nature.

“Guilford is very tolerant and open, letting people be who they want to be and how they want to be.”

Though Guilford considers itself a bastion of acceptance, a negative attitude towards atheists still occasionally shows itself.

“(In discussions,) people don’t think I can have legitimate input on religion,” said junior Kelsey Rullmoss.

That disregard is an example of how Guilford atheists are typically met with apathy, Rullmoss said.

Sophomore Madiha Bhatti disagreed, saying that she enjoys religious discussions more with atheists’ input.

“I think it’s fun,” said Bhatti. “Sometimes you don’t know what you believe until you talk about it with someone who has a totally different idea, and then you can sharpen your beliefs against others’.”

Sophomore Sarah Bentley, clerk of the Guilford Council

of Religious Organizations (GCRO), pointed out that many students identify as “spiritual” instead of either religious or non-religious. Indeed, an informal 2008 GCRO survey found that 32 percent of responders listed themselves as spiritual, as opposed to 7 percent atheist.

Bentley emphasized GCRO’s openness toward atheists as well as believers.

“Most of us (at GCRO) do not presume to be right,” Bentley said. “All we have are our own experiences.”

As to what the atheist movement can do to further itself in general, Reitman suggested that works of philanthropy in the name of atheism would draw awareness without proselytizing. At the Guilford level, a campus organization like those in the nationwide Secular Student Alliance might achieve greater atheist representation and recognition. A third step would be to quell the more militant edges of the movement, those who make it their business to attack religion.

Ultimately, the atheist movement needs that which is the balm of all minorities in distress.

In Dobson’s words, “Tolerance is what’s going to help.”

Halloween Events 2009

By Gillian Carroll

With Halloween around the corner, students scramble around town with two important questions on their minds: what to dress up as, and what fun events are going on during Halloween weekend. Here are the most popular attractions around Greensboro on or around Halloween night.

Woods of Terror Haunted Theme Park

This Halloween event is the perfect combination of tragic history and horror, set on a piece of land that has witnessed decades of turmoil dating back to the Great Depression. Woods of Terror has numerous attractions, some of which are not for the fainthearted. These include Heavy Metal Nightmare, Clown Town, and Miner’s Massacre, where a psychopathic miner searches for new victims.

Sept. 25 - Nov. 7

Tickets: \$15 Sundays-Thursdays

\$25 Fridays-Saturdays

5601 North Church Street. Greensboro, NC, 27455

Halloween Tour of Blandwood

Not only is the Blandwood Mansion the oldest original building in Greensboro, dating back to 1795, it also holds the title of a National Historic Landmark. The Mansion is holding its first Halloween Tour event this year, and all who attend are sure to have chills running up and down their spines as they tour the Mansion through the night, listening to harrowing tales of a past filled with death and tragedy dating all the way back to before the Civil War.

Oct. 31 at 10 p.m.

Tickets \$25

Blandwood Mansion

447 W. Washington Street. Greensboro, NC, 27401

Info Phone 336.272.5003 x2

Harvest Fall Festival

What could be better than a festival with hot dogs, pizza, cotton candy, games and more? The Harvest Fall Festival is close to Guilford’s campus and a great opportunity to charge up for Halloween-night festivities.

Oct. 31, 6-8:30 p.m.

4915 Harvest World Outreach Church

Guilford College Road. Greensboro, N.C. 27407

Third Annual Barn Dance

Located at Hodgin Valley Farm, an alumni-owned historic house surrounded by 126 acres of woods and farmland. The dance will give students the opportunity to go on a hayride, taste some of the provided refreshments, and participate in a group dance. Joy Greenwolfe will call the steps.

Oct. 30

Dance instruction: 7:30-8 p.m.

Dance: 8-10 p.m.

561 Hodgin Valley Road

Pleasant Garden, N.C.

Mountain of Terror Haunted Attraction

This chilling place is the site of a mine shaft from the 1940s. After collapsing in October 1948, only 17 bodies were recovered from the rubble out of the 37 miners missing. The rest of the miners were left for dead after six days of searching. If any had survived the collapse, they surely died from either starvation or dehydration. This attraction tells the story of the miners’ revenge and is sure to invoke nightmares for all who dare to enter. Features include the Maze of Mayhem, the Miners Lodge, and the Old Gold Mines.

Tickets \$13

Sept. 25- Oct. 31

Thursday 8-10 p.m., Friday and Saturday 8 p.m.- midnight.

4527 Linda Lane off Hooverhill Road

Randolph County