

Tea Party vs. Coffee Party



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Conservative versus Liberal. Republican versus Democrat. Now we have ... Tea versus Coffee?

When I heard of this recent political conflict, the first thing that went through my mind was "Seriously? Do we really need another title for these two groups?"

However, while each party seems to connect more with either the liberal or conservative mindset, these parties cannot be classified under just these two categories.

The Tea Party has been operating for about a year now. It began when thousands of people gathered to protest government taxation. Since then, thousands more have joined in their battle against taxation, national health care, and any other federal government programs.

To put it simply, the Tea Party's mission is every man for himself. They believe Americans should make their own living without the aid or intervention of the federal government.

It sounds harmless enough. Every American has the right to express their opinion about the way our government is run, after all.

However, upon visiting their Web site, I encountered several phrases that uniquely defined what makes a "true American." It gave me the impression that only these "true Patriots" could join this party and seemed completely unwelcoming to anyone who did not share their views on government control.

Obviously, I am not the only one who sees this in the Tea Party's mission. Several people have also met to discuss

government.

Guilford College operates with the principle of promoting diversity and accepting all perspectives. In this environment, I do see differences but I mainly see community. In this environment, I see disagreement, but I also see patience, tolerance, and acceptance. We make progress when we can.

Perhaps we don't make as many changes as we might hope for, but we do make things happen. We try to improve ourselves and our community.

From my experience here at Guilford,

I can relate more to the party that screams, "We don't care who you are; we just want you to be here!" instead of the one that demands "You are an American. Prove that you are worthy of being American!"

The Coffee Party and the Tea Party are

still relatively new to me, so perhaps I am making too quick a judgment. However, if we are to really make changes that we so desperately need in the way our government is run, we cannot approach this through a narrow, one-sided gaze. We cannot respect some opinions while turning a blind eye to others.

If the people are unhappy with the government, then we aren't going to make any progress by satisfying certain citizens while ignoring the others. Otherwise, we will be stuck in a never-ending cycle, where there is always some resentment toward our government.

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their opposition to the Tea Party's ideas. Thus the Coffee Party was formed.

Over the past few months, people have met in coffee houses all over the nation to discuss some of the same issues that the Tea Party is trying to tackle. But they offer different solution than their rival party.

The Coffee Party's mission is to address issues that people have with the government through cooperation and unity instead of the opposition and rejection the Tea Party utilizes. Members of this party strive for greater diversity in hopes of finding a solution to the problems that the citizens have with the

Letter to the Editor

Article misses point of Gender Bend

As members of PRIDE, we appreciate The Guilfordian covering the Gender Bend ("PRIDE hosts Gender Bend.") However, we feel the article focused on the dress code at the expense of addressing the central themes of the Gender Bend itself.

We were offended that transgender issues, the primary focus of this event, were not even addressed in the article. In fact, the word "transgender" did not even appear. This year, PRIDE almost did not hold the dance because we felt the focus had shifted away from gender expression and towards this article's main focus; clothes and partying. While we want the Gender Bend to be a fun event, we worked to bring education to the forefront this year. We showed a PowerPoint of transgender icons and activists during the dance and added more LGBTQ songs to the set list. We also had six drag performances during the dance. None of these features were covered in the article, making the event seem frivolous.

Instead, the article focused on what people wore. The author wrote, "Students took a night to play with their day-to-day gender expression, giving a direct example of how much gender performance is merely costume." That these words were followed by a quote from a transgender person is especially demeaning. For many transgender people, gender presentation is central to their daily existence and others' discovery of their gender variance has resulted in ostracism, violence, rape and even murder. There is nothing "merely costume" about these realities.

The article reflects the views we were trying to avoid, plays into the stereotype of gay people as shallow and only concerned with appearances, and ignores the deeper issues surrounding the dance. We hope that in the future The Guilfordian will provide more balanced coverage of our events.

Officers of PRIDE

Staff Editorial

Turf, vigils, final four and elections: A year in review

Every year at Guilford, there are events that test our dedication to our core values, test the strength of our bonds with each other, and reaffirm our dedication to social justice, peace, and community. And sometimes, we just have fun and learn things.

This year was no different.

It began with a campus transformed: summer construction projects brought us a more sustainable cafeteria, vegetable gardens, and the finest of turf football fields. The swim team was forced to trade high dives for hiking shoes as a new fitness center spelled the end to Guilford's only pool and brought daily exercise to our front door.

Another record-size first-year class had campus housing bulging at the seams, and the changing demographics left some of the community wary of what was to come. Hodgins Retreat promised and delivered relief for the overflowing dorms, and threw Guilford's social scene for a loop with its raucous Animal House atmosphere. At the same time, Guilford mourned the loss of a piece of its history as Keiser House became a smoldering pile of rubble.

Midway through the fall semester, the homophobic hate speech in Bryan tested our community's resolve and gave us a chance to rally in support of diversity and equality. The vigil and resulting dialogue were both productive and peaceful, and the Laramie Project performance showed that we were part of something bigger.

With spring came sports. The men's basketball team made another inspiring run into the Final Four. Softball made waves in the ODAC, tying for first place with a 13-5 record. Golf rocked the regular season taking first place honors.

We took a huge step forward with the full implementation of the Diversity Plan, the core of the college's commitment to present and future diversity efforts that for semesters had languished under-funded.

The Founders project promises to be one of the most important physical additions to the campus since the construction of the South apartments. The administration announced that the enormous renovation and addition will include 88 new beds, more space for student organizations, dining, and a new courtyard.

Community Senate made its own contribution to the campus fabric in the form of \$302,000 for better wireless infrastructure, finally bringing Guilford out of the technological dark ages.

Senate also contributed a great deal of controversy in the form of disputes over election processes and by-laws, testing the practical application of our Quaker values. After an outpouring of community interest and several marathon meetings, a constructive and inclusive dialogue prevailed.

And next year, it all starts over again.