

Award-winning poetry sucks at Bad Feminist Poetry Contest

By Hannah Sherk
STAFF WRITER

At the sixth annual Bad Feminist Poetry Contest, held April 15, the men in the audience were not the only people made to feel uncomfortable.

A record high number of 25 poets slammed men, underwear, and sometimes each other at the Greenleaf event.

"If it's bad, but feminist, you get high points," explained contest organizer and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen. "If it's a quality poem, you get low points. And if it's misogynist, then we just throw you out."

At this year's judging table, staff member Fatma Dogen, Assistant Professor of Philosophy Lisa McLeod, and senior Casey Thomas held the scoring cards. The three faced the difficult task of rewarding ugly imagery, disjointed rhythms, and contrived rhymes.

Competition was fierce, and poets used forms from haikus to free verse, and techniques from spoken word to chocolate bribes. With poetry scribbled on napkins and margins of homework, some competitors wrote winning works only minutes before taking the mic.

This year's first-place prize was awarded to senior Nancy Klosteridis, who admitted, "I wrote this a half-hour ago in Lisa McLeod's class."



After initial disapproval with her distracted student, McLeod and the other judges awarded Klosteridis three 10s for her artful lamentation of America's patriarchal status quo.

"Stripping free of my gender norms/ I'm ready to blow my feminist horn," Klosteridis read



from the back of a postcard. "I run through full moonlight, naked, thighs slapping with glee/ Not entirely what Americans told me to be."

Some poems were too bad even for a bad poetry contest. The unruly audience tried, without success, to clap sophomore Ben Sepsenwol off the stage as he recited, "Pineapple, pineapple, pineapple good/ I eat feminism instead of food."

But not all the feminist verses were awful. When first-year Ashley Escobedo recited her politically charged poem, one heckling audience member shouted, "You failed at failing!" For the first time in the history of the Guilford's Bad Feminist Poetry Contest, the judges rewarded a quality poem.

"We reversed the rules and gave Ashley honorable mention," said Mortensen. "It was just too good."

Sophomore Arthur Wood admitted to writing his poem with the help of the Pines' female residents. Points were deducted from Wood's performance "because clearly, women did all the work and the guy took the credit," said McLeod.

"Bras are like constraints of patriarchy upon my breasts/ Chafing these nipples of sustenance," said Wood in a denouncement of gendered underwear. "Thongs are a wedgie into my world/ Cutting off the circulation of my womanhood."

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Jane Redmont examined identity in a parody of a performance art piece.

Beginning in a flannel shirt, floor-length skirt, and oversized coat, she left the stage donning a leather jacket, black lace gloves, and riding crop. Her performance warranted 10s across the board.

Redmont shared her second-place prize with colleague Parveen Hasanali, assistant professor of religious studies, who also utilized props. Like Redmont, Hasanali received three 10s from the judging panel.

"Warm gooey chocolate, brown and sticky!" Hasanali yelled, unwrapping and licking a vagina-shaped chocolate while the audience of students laughed, cheered, and gasped.

But shock-value was not the sole purpose of the event.

"It's a great space to examine feminism in a critical way — in an appreciative way," said Thomas. "And we also get to talk about thumping and thwacking."

Mortensen, the night's master of ceremonies, acknowledged the delicate line that poets walk in mocking feminist poetry.

"It's important for people who are learning to negotiate the boundaries of feminism, and to do so in part through humor," said Mortensen. "It's a pro-feminist event."

"Each year, everyone does a good job of keeping the lines clear about laughing at how we do feminism in not-so-constructive ways. and laughing at feminism," said Thomas.



(Right) Yuri Woodstock was one of 25 participants in the Bad Feminist Poetry Contest on April 15. (Left) Assistant Professors of Religious Studies Jane Redmont and Parveen Hasanali won second place. Assistant Professor of Religious Studies (Top) Eric Mortensen hands the prize to contest winner Nancy Klosteridis, senior - her first Barbie ever.

WQFEST

WQFeSt brings musicians to Guilford for two-day celebration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Beginning on April 23 at 9 p.m. in Sternberger Auditorium and lasting through April 24, WQFeSt will feature 14 bands and will involve not only the current WQFS staff but also the alumni who helped make the station what it is.

The two WQFS promotions directors, junior Alethea Leventhal and sophomore Adam Katzman, along with first-year DJ Amit Gordon, were the primary organizers of the event.

"They have done a lot of hard work setting up the contracts required for each band, establishing a company to run sound for the event and promoting the event online and locally," said WQFS radio personality Josh Neas, who helped book Chapel Hill's Lake Inferior for the event.

The event was booked to coincide with the previously

scheduled performance of The Tallest Man on Earth, a Swedish folkie enamored of not just Bob Dylan, but general '60s Americana.

"He's one dude and a guitar and a whole lot of emotion," said Katzman.

The Friday night kick-off party features Guilford's own Superteam, composed of MCs Daron "Dante CK" Whitmore, senior, and first-year Beau Young, a.k.a. Young Prince, as well as their DJ, senior Reid Blomquist.

"In preparing for WQFeSt we have been experimenting with new sounds and further exploring the chemistry of the band," said Young. "Serendipity was our first show together so the experience was monumental. This performance will include

more vocals, a live set, and songs that truly highlight the dedication and hard work of all members in the band. We've come a long way from simply recording tracks to incorporating world influences in our music."

"In preparing for WQFeSt we have been experimenting with new sounds and further exploring the chemistry of the band."

Beau Young, first-year and member of hip-hop group Superteam

As for future works, Dante CK is releasing his solo EP soon, and Young Prince is working on a mix tape for the summer that includes collaborations with other Guilford musicians.

"These guys are Guilford students," said Katzman, "but they know that outside the classroom after hours, it's a whole other thing going on."

Superteam opens for a crew of rappers from Alabama.

"There's a whole independent scene down there blurring the lines between mainstream and underground," said Katzman. "They have day jobs so all the rap about grinding and hustling is retrospective analysis, an attempt to process and transcend."

The mostly hip-hop-oriented line-up will play in Sternberger Auditorium, starting April 23 at 9 p.m. In addition to Superteam, the Friday night line-up includes Kristmas, G-Mane, Jackie Chain and G-Side.

The April 24 concert starts at 5 p.m. on Founders lawn and features Mixxed Signals, Savant, Acidosis, Lake Inferior, Future Islands and Greensboro's own Casual Curious and the Bronzed Chorus.

The final two bands of April 24, Nurses and The Tallest Man on Earth, will play in Sternberger Auditorium.

"Having been present for the 30th anniversary festival in 2000, it's nice to see the station still a strong force in the community at Guilford and in Greensboro at large," said Neas. "I know plenty of people are excited to see a rising artist like (The) Tallest Man on Earth here in Greensboro when it would normally involve traveling to Chapel Hill or further."

It all stands to be a fabulous weekend for the Guilford community. Everyone should come out and enjoy a taste of what WQFS has to offer.