

Guilford's unique environment will leave lasting impression



BY JOANNA BERNSTEIN
FORUM EDITOR

Approximately 24 hours before my senior English capstone last semester, I took LSD for the first time. Under the poor guidance of a friend of mine, I took too much and wound up not sleeping that night and hallucinating through the capstone presentation the next day. Despite my being under the influence of powerful psychedelic drugs, the presentation went relatively well.

After my professor somehow found out that I had tripped through the presentation, she confronted me about it, and I was embarrassed. The fact that I was left embarrassed, and not with a damaged reputation, was lucky.

The luck that I was fortunate enough to encounter was not random — in fact, it was very specific. This luck was a product of the unique environment that Guilford's sense of community perpetuates.

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vides are exceptional because of the compassion and understanding that this community both embraces and projects.

I believe that we learn more from our mistakes than we do from anything else, and that our success is ultimately contingent on how we react to our mistakes and change our behavior in their wake.

We will all inevitably continue to make mistakes for the rest of our lives. At the same time, many of the insecurities that plagued us during college and caused us to procrastinate on papers, drink and smoke excessively, and convince ourselves that our

handy in the classroom — patience, understanding, thoughtfulness — these are the same skills that will guide us through life, and enable us to remember that there will always be bumps in the road, that things are not always supposed to be easy, and that we aren't always going to be happy.

Enduring stress, uncertainty, and unhappiness is not fun. But had I not gone through those rougher periods of time in this environment, I do not think I would have fully realized the power of community. Roommates, professors, caf workers, folks whose names I don't know but who I still smile at every day — the amalgamation of these people's presences in my everyday life, ultimately made me realize what matters to me.

Even though I will be in graduate school next year studying something that I am very interested in, I still do not know exactly what I would like to do for a living, nor do I see myself approaching a certain stage of life over another in five years.

Instead, I see myself yearning to re-create or re-discover the same kind of everyday life that I was lucky enough to encounter here

— one that is less personal and more communal. And for that intangible desire that I will now incessantly pursue for the rest of my life, I cannot help but end on a positive note and say, "Thank you, Guilford College, you've been good to me."

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lives were miserable (even if only for several hours at a time), will continue to pop up at varying levels for the rest of our lives.

But the difference will lie in how we deal with our insecurities and feelings of fear and groundlessness. The skills that came in

The sun never sets on Sarah Palin's Alaska



BY HANNAH SHERK
STAFF WRITER

"Sarah Palin's Alaska" conjures images of taxidermy-endangered species, Zambonis over frozen lakes, and drills off the Pacific — not the stuff of ideal nature programming. This fall, "Sarah Palin's Alaska" will not only be an ecologist's worst nightmare, but also a new reality show starring everyone's favorite ex-vice presidential candidate.

In the documentary-style series, Palin will do what she does best: deliver scripted, prompted, heavily-edited rhetoric while propped against a background of Alaskan wilderness.

Environmentalist, Palin is not. But what the former Alaskan governor, of "Drill baby, drill" fame, lacks in a sense of ecological responsibility she makes up in opportunism.

Discovery bought the rights to the eight-episode series at a reported \$1 million a pop, said Reuters. "Sarah Palin's Alaska" will join the ranks of The Learning Channel's (TLC) family-friendly programming, including "Jon and Kate Plus Eight" and "Little People, Big World."

TLC's Web site released a statement from Discovery's Chief Operating Officer Peter Ligouri, who said, "Discovery Communications is so excited to help Sarah Palin tell the story of Alaska ... to reveal Alaska's powerful beauty as it has never been filmed, and as told by one of the state's proudest daughters."

Palin is famous for shooting Alaskan wildlife, just not with cameras. In her family home in Wasilla, animal skins cover the furniture, an assortment of antlers guard the walls, and stuffed wildlife grace the coffee table.

Putting aside Palin's campy taste in home-decor, her political resumé makes her an even less likely candidate for hosting a

nature show. This is the same Alaskan who consistently fights against expanding the endangered species list to include her home state's wildlife, enthusiastically supports offshore drilling, and denies environmentally-based causes of global warming.

In a 2008 op-ed piece for The New York Times, Palin wrote, "(Polar bears) are worthy of our utmost efforts to protect them and their Arctic habitat. But adding polar bears to the nation's list of endangered species, as some are now proposing, should not be part of those efforts."

It seems that the hunter is Palin's cause, her endangered species of choice. The former governor's efforts against the polar bear are only slightly less obvious than her support for aerial hunting. In this sport, pilots take to the sky and chase fleeing wolves to exhaustion while hunters shoot at the animals from the safety of the helicopter. Palin has promoted legislation and even offered bounties to uphold this decades-old tradition.

An educational documentary series should be a welcomed addition to the nature-programming scene. But for a politician who sides with oil companies in discussions of endangered species, this show is yet another exploitation of Alaska's natural beauty.

Since leaving her post as Alaska's governor in July 2009, Palin would seem to have put her political drive on the back burner. But many speculate that Palin is utilizing the blurring separation of Hollywood and state to her political advantage.

In the time since her summer resignation, Palin published a best-selling autobiography, joined the right-wing ranks of Fox News as a regular contributor, and made numerous television appearances, perhaps most notably on the "Oprah Winfrey Show."

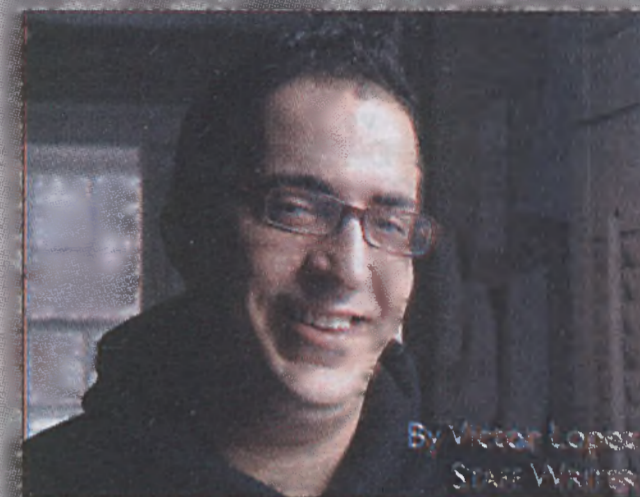
Creeping her way into the mainstream consciousness, nothing Palin does between now and the 2012 election (in which she is speculated to run) will be politically neutral. And "Sarah Palin's Alaska" is just another kissed baby in the course of her political career.

This nature series will work to erase an environmentally unfriendly political history from the minds of TLC's family viewers. The campaign trail begins here.

As Palin's name becomes a brand bought by an increasing number of networks, it is less likely that the sun will ever set on Sarah Palin's Alaska. Viewer, beware.

GAY AFTER OBAMA

The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow



By Victor Lopez
STAFF WRITER

President Obama recently began to show his opinion of homosexual relationships to be unlike those of past presidents. He ordered a change in America's hospital visiting rights. He wants to grant same-sex partners the right to visit their loved one in the hospital when they once could not, because they were not considered family.

My mother, a doctor, saw the first cases of HIV/AIDS to appear in gay patients in Los Angeles. Even then, same-sex partners were sneaking in to see their loved ones who were dying of these horrific diseases.

Though many patients can have their loved ones visit in the hospitals, there are countless others who are denied visitation rights to loved ones who are sick or dying.

The President has also vowed to reverse the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which prohibits gays and lesbians from being "out" in the military.

Finally, Obama is also working towards creating anti-discrimination legislation which will secure the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) employees.

Gays don't have to look far to see the discrimination that lies ahead of them. Living in the South, we often hear how "wrong" it is to "lay with" someone of the same sex — that we are going to hell for our sins. Being discriminated against is a heavy burden to bear for the GLBT community, forcing some to grow up repressed and feeling unloved and disrespected.

The GLBT community has suffered at the hands of bigots — which sometimes include their families and friends — for decades. Unspoken on this campus are the stories of families who have stopped supporting their kids once they learn their kid is gay. Imagine if an unsupported gay man or woman is denied visitation from their significant other just because of their sexual preference.

Obama has the insight to say "hell no" to this discrimination. He has made it clear gay Americans will not be denied medical visitation rights.

When I hear the slanderous poison being spewed by the anti-gay movement, I wish they were in my head as I stroke the hair of the person I love, watching him with an affinity that is unobstructed by gender-bias and unmoved by the bigots of my time.

All types of Americans deserve rights, even if they happen to be gay. The President's memo is a start, which I'm hopeful will cause a domino effect.