

Opinion

Students rip-off library

We are developing page 3 for opinions of our readers — thoughtful articles in any field of interest to the college community. We invite your contributions. The Editors.

After the opening of the fall term, several students, including the SGA president, told me that they were upset because as they returned to college, "the town" was trying to close down the taverns and even beer sales within the corporate limits. Such action they said was unfair to students, the main customers, who had no "input" in the decisions.

Rumor vs fact

The purpose of this article is to clarify by separating rumor from fact. The college campus lies within the town which is governed by a mayor and elected five-member board: Mayor Tim Parker, a lawyer and alumnus, and aldermen Nell Snyder, Chuck Gantos, Robert Olsen and Mary Ellen Priestley. Town department heads are Chief Ralph Seagroves, Public Safety; Don Wagoner, Public Works; Sam Campbell, acting chief of the Volunteer Fire Department. Beth Hetzel is the town administrator, overseeing all. Meetings of boards and committees are open and students are welcome. One special committee, set up to improve communications and cooperation, is the Town-College Council of which the SGA president and IFC head are members.

Town Board acts

Current rumors about "closing beer establishments" apparently arose after the Town Board approved a motion on Aug. 26 to request special legislation from the town to the N.C. Legislature for a local bill to allow a referendum on the sale of beer and wine as defined under ABC regulations (under 14 per cent) in Elon College, and if the local act is approved to request a referendum to be held in Elon College in two parts: (1) sale on premises and (2) sale off premises.

This action came after groups of residents, ranging from 15 to 40, came to board meetings to protest the noise of amplified band music from the Lighthouse during late night hours. The tavern does not have a roof over the band area. The noise created a nuisance, the citizens said, and the Public Safety Department cited the tavern owner for violation of the town noise ordinance. The case involving the first of five citations went to

district court where the judge found the owner guilty of violating the noise ordinance. The tavern owner appealed; the case was scheduled for superior court on Sept. 22.

Taxpayers protest

At the last meeting of citizens, other "side effects" of the taverns in the downtown area were chronicled: increased vandalism of benches, lamps, flowers and shrubbery and fences; increased litter; vomiting and urinating on brick walks; and noise of early morning yells and revving motors. They said they felt exasperated and angered that the town of Elon College and the college should be gaining a bad reputation and they are having to bear financial burden of constant repairs and replacement of public property. More than 60 per cent of the town area pays no taxes. It is tough on those who do.

A vote, maybe

Mayor Pro Tem Robert Olsen made the motion to try to put the matter of beer sales to a vote. This motion in no way expressed his or the board's attitude toward beer and wine. Mayor Tim Parker said he thought each town should be able to decide the question of such sales within its borders.

Any action on the proposed referendum can come only after conferences with the ABC Board and legislative representatives in Raleigh prior to the January session. I recall that two years ago when the vote was counted on "liquor by the drink," the majority of the county voted no, but this precinct voted yes.

In all the town board and committee meetings, I never once heard anything but concern over the safety and well being of students, whether it was safety in crossing Williamson Avenue or police walking the downtown area to help prevent boorish behavior by those who have imbibed too much.

Much can be done by students as residents of the town: Avoid drinking too much or too often because alcohol can change your normal good behavior. See that the minority who cause trouble get home before trouble begins. This is your town.

Mary Ellen Priestley

Increased losses of books from the Iris Holt McEwen Library have prompted members of the Library Committee to call for a security system to be installed as quickly as possible. An inventory last spring of three sections of books, with projections of losses to the remainder of the collection, indicates an annual loss of books worth more than \$36,000, according to Dr. David Crowe, committee chairman.

The estimated loss is shocking, but to make matters worse, the missing books are from the heart of the collection, books that are necessary to courses in many disciplines. Because the library has always tried to have duplicate or multiple copies of the most used books, these losses are not always immediately noticeable to faculty and students.

Guy Lambert, acting head librarian, says that recommendations for some kind of security system go back three or four years, to the time of Theodore Perkins, head librarian. There had been losses of books and periodicals before that, but the librarians felt the losses did not signal the need for the purchase of an expensive security system. Even four or five years ago, losses totaled some 200 books in a year, and some of them were not ones the library would replace anyway.

Times have changed, Mr. Lambert says, and the disappearance of books has become extremely serious. Who takes these books? Students and non-students,

It's audition time again. We're doing Little Red Riding Hood on Nov. 24-25. It is a funny musical version with roles for six talented actor/singers [a double cast]. We need imaginative people for costumes, make up, and set. If you are interested in singing or tech, come to Whitley at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 16. If you work with the show we can arrange three semester hours credit.

Terrell Cofield
Ext. 424, Carlton 302 B

Placement office

All seniors are urged to come by the Counseling Office and complete a placement folder. The placement file consists of recommendations, data sheet, a resume and any other supplementary materials that a student wants to include.

but enrolled college students are the chief offenders, says Mr. Lambert. And of the students, the worst book thieves seem not to be the bookworms who love books but the more transient students who come a semester or so, drop out or rate suspensions. Some take books without checking them out. Some check them out but do not return them. At the end of each semester, library books are found in dorms, in trash cans, and even in book-return slots. These are brought back to the library. The real losses are those which are never returned. In 1978-79 a library-wide inventory showed 5,139 books missing.


Last year, Charles Lowry, head librarian, talked with administrators about improving security. One administrator, setting priorities from various recommendations, put the security of the library and the Learning Resources Center high on the list. But lack of funds was given as a reason for delaying purchase. This fall librarians and administrators have examined security systems and have decided that a 3M "Tattle Tape" electronic system is best for the library and a space detection system would serve the LRC.

Under the proposed system, books and other materials would be sensitized. A proper check-out would desensitize the book, but if not properly checked out, the book being carried away would activate a sensing unit which would lock the exit gate. The cost of such a library security system would be \$15,864, excluding the electricians' installation work. President Young says money is not available at

this time for purchase. Still, Mr. Lambert said Saturday that the vice president for academic affairs has asked him to prepare purchase orders. Lambert believes that progress is being made toward acquisition of a security system.

In the long run, students will have to pay for their own or their fellow-students' damage to the library collection at Elon College. With the price of books rising every day, the sooner book losses can be markedly reduced and replacement costs almost eliminated, the better for students and faculty. We are fortunate to have the fourth largest library collection among North Carolina private colleges— or we did have. The family of Royal Spence, Sr., purchased the Stratford College collection when that Virginia college closed and gave the valuable holdings to Elon. The college library budget has never been generous, and so faculty members must choose carefully the most needed books and periodicals each year for their fields. It has not been easy to build a good, well-rounded collection, and there is still much to do. To learn of unnecessary losses of the scale reported makes one reel in disbelief and shame, if not anger. The central repository of history, heritage, and hopes for the future is being gutted by those who cannot care enough to protect books and return them for others to use. I hope that our students in 1980-81 will, to a student, show by their actions that this scandalous situation can and must be corrected from today.

Mary Ellen Priestley



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