

Newspapers as 'watchdogs'



Crying 'wolf' too often

Although pulling the fire alarm may be a "fun" thing to do on a boring Saturday night, it is actually endangering the life of every Elon College student who lives on campus.

With the new campus security system, a monthly fire drill is on the agenda for all residence halls. When the fire alarm is sounded, the residence counselors make sure all students are out of the dorm. According to David Joyce, all alarms must be treated as real. When the drill alarm stops, students may come back in the dorm.

Elon College Public Safety Chief Seagroves suspects that whoever pulled the fire alarm Friday night in Staley called the fire department either before or after pulling the alarm to prevent the

trucks from dispatching. He says that such a false fire alarm is a state misdemeanor — the penalty of which is a fine of \$50 and/or two years in prison.

For some reason, Elon is not wired into the county central communications system that immediately alerts the police in case of a fire. Dean Joyce says, "There is no direct link from the residence hall to the fire department." The *Pendulum* staff questions the safety of such an arrangement. At present, if there were a fire on campus, the fire department would not be notified until they received a phone call. Besides being impractical, this is unsafe and hazardous.

Another problem is that

Recently several branches of the administration have come under fire from various articles in the *Pendulum*. All the articles were written to be constructive and were not meant to be harmful.

Whenever people or groups in society operate without criticism, they assume that their way of doing things is the ideal way and they consequently gain too much power. People who are closely involved with a group cannot see any wrong. Without the help of outsiders, groups or individuals could not improve their jobs.

The *Pendulum* tries to act as an outsider looking in. Whenever any article, letter, or editorial appears in the newspaper, it is meant to be constructive and will consequently result in improvement.

Maybe the groups who have been criticized are not aware of the intent of the *Pendulum*, and need to re-

member the overall rights of newspapers.

Newspapers were developed to be "watchdogs" for the communities they serve. In our case the community is composed of students. The governing bodies it watches are the faculty, administration, and the Student Government Association.

A newspaper is in no way supposed to be a calendar of events or serve the place of a public information bureau. Newspapers have been instrumental in making changes worldwide and will continue to ignite constructive changes.

Whenever newspapers are silenced, then the democracy of this nation will be no more. Truth is the primary objective of every newspaper. Truth will always win out, regardless of the consequences or circumstances.

And if administrators, faculty or students are disturbed by truth and/or

criticism, then they lack the maturity needed to survive in our present-day world.

Maybe one problem with people becoming so defensive is that they refer to *Pendulum* journalists as students. They are training to be professionals first, and students second. And somewhere between one and two they are humans who do err.

The new English-journalism major will not only increase the number of students who want to work on the newspaper staff but will increase competitiveness and directly result in better *Pendulum* coverage of all aspects of life at Elon College. And as responsible journalists, it is our obligation to search for the truth through research, interviews, and witnesses. And if the found truth hurts, then maybe there is a wrong in that particular organization—for starters, it lacks mature professionals.

One view of registration

To the Editor:

After my years at Elon, I have become totally frustrated with the system of pre-registration and registration. There is a better way. It takes Elon the same amount of time to register 2,500 students that it takes larger schools to register 20,000. I realize that the new computer system has speeded the process up, but it still takes forever.

If Mr. Albertson would consider any serious suggestions, I would like to talk to him.

Chris Christopher

'Messiah' to be presented

The traditional community performance of Handel's "Messiah" will be held Sunday evening, Dec. 7 at 8 p.m. in the Alumni Gymnasium.

Participating in the per-

formance are the Elon College Choir, Elon College Community Orchestra, and members of various church choirs from the surrounding area.

University grants speech M.A.

Dear Editor:

Even the most talented graduates of small liberal arts institutions sometimes have difficulty making the transition from undergraduate study to professional careers or advanced work in large, highly competitive megaversities.

The University of Wisconsin at Superior is a small institution of 2,000 students which grants an M.A. in speech with emphasis on

speech communication, theater, and radio-television-films. There are four working theaters on campus, an FM radio station and a television production studio.

With its sister city, Duluth, Minn., there is an urban area of 140,000 people which serves as a production base. Interns are placed in commercial production.

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available, and the recipients

of these are given positions of responsibility which help to prepare them for careers in a highly competitive profession.

For more information write to me at Department of Communicating Arts, University of Wisconsin-Superior, Superior, Wis. 54880.

William H. Stock
Chairman

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