

# FEATURES: College and community



**FRIENDLY FELLOW**—"Wild Bill" Reavis likes working with Elon students in the gymnasium.  
Photo by Nader Hamidpour

## Tobacco-chewing 'Wild' Bill Reavis: an incurable girl-watcher

by Joy Hamilton

"Wild" Bill Reavis, college employee in the athletic department, has been working at Elon for only one year, but according to him, "It seems like 10 years." Bill is well-known in the gym and on campus for his jovial attitude with students.

His work activities include looking after the gym, athletic department, pool, weight room, racquetball, basketball, and football facilities. "We have a hand in all sports," said Bill.

Other specific activities include setting up the gym for basketball, working football games, parking cars, and checking I.D.'s for the press box. But as "Wild" Bill put it, "I'm not an athlete. I needed a job, and Dr. White hired me.

"I like the people and like the work. Although I don't think it's a good idea to close the gym on weekends,

many people go home and we do need a little time off."

Besides working, Bill loves to fish. "I fish here and yonder on farms and in creeks. I like to hunt a little bit and I love to travel. But mainly I love people — the students are just like my son or daughters. They're friendly and they speak to me."

He added, "I love people and I try to be good to them and treat them right. The people 'round here treat me nice. We are all just one big family, I reckon."

According to some of Bill's colleagues in the athletic department, "Bill is wild and the biggest girl watcher in town," or "Bill works hard and is friendly with all the girls." However, as Bill puts it, "There ain't no harm in looking at them and hugging them. My wife don't mind."

Bill has three children of his own: a son, aged 5, and two daughters, 12 and 14. Before working at Elon, he worked with the Protection Service, which is based in Greensboro.

Chewing tobacco is also a favorite habit of Bill's. "In the gym you can't smoke. I just like to be chewing on something, I reckon. I've chewed for 10 or 15 years. When I started, it probably made me sick, but I actually don't remember."

Bill is also a sports spectator. He loves to watch the Elon athletes in action. "I love to watch the games. We get all psyched up for the games," he said.

As for his general happy state, Bill said, "I don't know how I stay happy, but being around people helps. I like to pick at people, and I come in this world picking and I guess I'll leave it picking."

## The South: a short course for Yankees

By Mary Ellen Priestley

If you have come to the South for the first time as a student or faculty member, you may feel that you are in a new world, be it "the New South" or the old one. Chances are you'll find it a mixture of both. North Carolina is certainly not New Jersey or Ohio or Vermont. But just what it is will depend much on the people you talk with.

The "New South" may be little more than the successful efforts of some to get the South into mainstream America — raising per capita income, eradicating pockets of poverty, coaxing in industry, and smoothing out the most obvious regionalism.

But deep down, there is still pride in a heritage from the Old South, its pride in background, its British roots, its way of life. No matter how much of this has been exploded by various writers and historians, it is there — pride.

Coming into the area today, one still finds much good mannered behavior, people who say "Sir" or "Ma'am," a warm welcome

*"Ya'll come back now, heah?"*

*"I'll fix the fried chicken while you tote the sweet taters to the fire."*

*"Gimme that gunny sack!"*

*"Could you carry me to town?"*

*"Put the book own the desk."*

*"Hey, there! You sho look purty."*

by neighbors, a slower pace of life and speech. Some of its culture goes back to Jefferson, Washington, Lee — those Virginians who lived and promoted cultured homes, the arts, and pride in family and country. Or the same goes for people of Charleston, Wilmington, New Bern.

On the other hand, the South has been explosive, loving a good fight, a strange mix of Episcopalian and fundamentalist (Bible Belt) faith, the rich horse farms of the Lexington, Ky., bluegrass area and the bleak cabins of eastern Kentucky mountains, the flowering gardens of Mobile and the red clay of northern Alabama; Nashville, the Athens

of the South and Music City, recording capital of the world. What is "the South" besides a geographical area?

You have doubtless already found that its fiction rates among the best in the United States. William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Carson McCullers, Thomas Wolfe, Flannery O'Connor — most have exploited the conflicts of the South, its racial mixture, its plenty and poverty, its defeat in the Civil War (War Between the States), its violence, simmering summer heat, and code of protection for women. Senator Ervin still doesn't believe a woman can know what is best for her. Don't lift that child! Senators Helms and East decide

she must do as they say.

You've noticed, in general, softer voices, a rising intonation for each segment of non-questions, not heard in any other region. The Southeast has two major dialects: Coastal Southern and Southern Mountain. Coastal speech has little "R" coloration so that "bird" and "bud" or "first" and "fust" sound almost identical. Speech is slower, softer.

Southern Mountain dialect, on the other hand, impresses the hearer as being spoken with more speed. The "R" in words as "first" is distinctly pronounced. Vowels tend to become diphthongs, so that "ice" or "nice" or "past" or "dance" are said with the mouth only about half open and the split vowel to the front of the mouth. The final "g" in "-ing" words is rarely pronounced.

Since the Piedmont lies between the Appalachian Mountains and the coast, dialects of this area tend to have a mixture of the two. Idiom, too, is different from that of the North and Northeast. Linguists ask a

few key questions to determine one's native speech. For example, they talk about breakfast. If you "fix" the meal, you are southern or have southern "kin" around you. If you are a Southerner you naturally use a tow-sack or a gunny sack, but not a burlap bag. You may put something in a "poke," a paper bag. You may like something "right much," you "guess."

The Southerner grew up eating summer okra, fried or boiled, watermelon, hominy, grits, barbeque, corn bread or corn pone, hot biscuits and hush puppies. Perhaps the least tempting to a "foreigner" is okra. My English family will not touch the stuff, but I still cook it for myself!

Shaded front porches, rocking chairs, magnolia and chinaberry trees, honeysuckle and jasmine, camellias and gardenias, swamp cyprus and trailing Spanish moss and rows of cotton — nature gave the South beauty and perfume.

Elon College is in the South, as y'all probly know.