

Viewpoint

Are we all walking time bombs?

Last Friday, in the heartland of America, Iowa City, Ia., a graduate student went on a rampage and shot faculty, administrators, a fellow student and finally himself.

The week before, an unemployed seaman in Killeen, Texas, crashed his pickup truck through a cafeteria window and jumped out shooting those who ran to assist him.

At one time, it was unusual for the country to have a crazy man on the loose shooting up innocent people, but these days it has become commonplace. If someone isn't shooting everyone up, he is torturing them in his apartment full of human bones.

In the late sixties, a man named Richard Speck killed eight student nurses at a college in Chicago. Speck's name is remembered today because it was such an unusual and shocking case for its time. Today, Richard Speck would just be one of the crowd, another nameless killer.

What's the guy's name in Killeen, Texas who murdered 23 people? Can anyone name him?

The graduate student in Iowa was Chinese, what was his name? No one knows. Just another stressed-out student.

Is the stress of living today just so much that the only relief is to take it out on whomever or whatever one perceives to be the enemy?

The student in Iowa was upset because he did not receive an honor he felt was due him. The man in Texas was apparently driven by a hatred of women, for lack of any better explanation.

Walking time bombs.

We are all walking time bombs, put under a great deal of stress in our school, professional and personal lives. No one has the definitive answer to relieving our stress, but it is understandable if students drink too much, or miss classes occasionally or just stay in bed for a day.

Those choices, though perhaps not the best, are preferable to continuing in the stressful situation until one explodes with it. Life is hard and we all need to take better care of ourselves.

A few minutes set aside to pray, or play, or exercise or hug someone in stressful times, may keep us from becoming some nameless crazy person on the news.

The Pendulum

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Some traditions must be abandoned

To the Editor:

Three cheers and four stars for Elon's production *Fiddler on the Roof!* Fred Rubeck, Catherine McNeela, and Jon Drina deserve a handsome bonus and the student cast an A+. Visiting performer P.T. Kerr and choreographer Rosemary Howard added a brilliant luster to the jewel.

The production set me to thinking about (what else?) the role of tradition, especially in a time when we prize pluralism.

Elon's faculty and administration are intentionally reaching out to bring to Elon a more culturally diverse faculty and student body. And *Fiddler* is but one example of a wonderfully rich and diverse set of cultural programs.

In the same way that Tevye's daughters present challenges to his view of tradition, Elon's announced intention to embrace pluralism presents challenges to Elon's traditions.

Tradition provides the balance by which we play the tune without falling off the roof. It provides the stories by which we know who we are and maintain our integrity. Tradition enables us to keep our sanity when the programs and the eviction notices come. "Our people survived much worse than this."

However, Tevye discovers that a narrow holding to tradition cannot absorb the challenges life

LETTERS

To The Editor

"Let's find a truer name for the Elon mascot, one that does not trigger associations with the darker side of Christian history."

Richard McBride
Chaplain

presents. With daughters one and two, he is compelled to embrace a larger view and finds ("On the one hand, on the other hand") that his tradition is resourceful enough to include the changes.

Tevye is deeply torn by the decision of his third daughter to marry outside the faith. She asks for his understanding. He laments: "If I bend this much I will break!" (I will lose my balance and fall from the roof.)

In their final parting, however, he is able to call out: "God go with you." This is the largest frame within which to see himself, his daughter, and her husband the gentile. It is the only frame large enough to hold the universe of relationships between

ourselves and outsiders.

So, dear Elon, I offer the following proposal regarding an Elon tradition, one that I believe no longer serves us well: let us lay to honored rest the "Fighting Christian" mascot. For the sake of openness to genuine pluralism as well as for our integrity as a liberal arts college, let us embrace a grander view of our Christian tradition.

Once upon a time our world was local. Elon's universe was students from North Carolina and Virginia and everyone understood the joke - that Baptists had their "Demon Deacons" and Methodists their "Blue Devils" so Elon's Christians were no wimps; they were fightin' fierce.

But today that language no longer serves us well. It is alien to our best practices. Elon does not discriminate against people of other faiths in its hiring (as some "Christian" colleges do) nor in admissions.

I find it noteworthy that we have at least five faculty members from the Jewish faith tradition. They enrich us enormously. But in a student body of 3200, we have only 28 students who so identify themselves.

As Chaplain I have been called numerous times by Jewish parents wanting to know whether their son or daughter will feel welcomed at Elon. Yes, they will, I assure them. But the Fighting

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