

Viewpoint

I am Erick Gill, the new editor of The Pendulum. I would like to explain to our readers what our purpose is and what our goals are.

I don't plan to write out a phoney "Declaration of Principles" like some fictional movie character; but, I intend to set realistic goals that our staff can meet.

As editors come and go, so does the style of The Pendulum. This is not how real newspapers work and believe it or not, The Pendulum is a real newspaper. Our publication meets real deadlines, is printed by a real printing press and is read by real people. Those real people that read The Pendulum expect to read news that affects them and the environment around them. They also expect to read the facts.

The goals of this staff are the same as any other newspaper. Our staff strives to report the facts as accurately, as truthful and as fast as we can. The Pendulum works hard to present its readers with news that is happening around locally and nationally.

The purpose of The Pendulum remains the same as it was designed originally almost 20 years ago.

The Pendulum is a weekly newspaper that "Serves the Elon College Community." This means its purpose is to inform our readers of what is going in the Elon College area and how it may affect them. However, this is not always an easy or pretty job to do. The news can sometimes be harsh and shocking; but, it is our job as student journalists to report the facts. It is not our job to make the school or the town of Elon College look good or bad. It is our job to present the facts and let our readers decide the truth.

The Pendulum is just as much part of the media world as any other newspaper. Students, faculty and local residents read our publication and expect to read the unbiased truth about the Elon College area. That is our job.

As student journalists, we will make mistakes, everyone does. However, The Pendulum staff disciplines itself not to make mistakes, to be accurate, unbiased, punctual and honest in reporting the news that affects its readers.

Erick Gill,
Editor

THE PENDULUM

Serving the Elon College Community

Editor Erick Gill	Advertising Beaumont Martin
Managing Editor Rob Mancuso	Reporters Heather Anderson Kelli Bridges Tiffany Edmondson Jeannine Erdmer
Graphics Editor Amy Logerwell	Sports Reporters Tony Carrick John Piontek
A & E Editor Lori Haley	A & E Reporters Rick Galihier Ingrid Quinn
Sports Editor Angie Riley	Business Manager Stephen Good
Opinion Editor Scott Miller	Office Manager Heather Baldwin
Photo Editor Marco Ormaetxea	Adviser Joey Senat
Photographers Stacy Mogol Heather Wessel	

The Pendulum, founded in 1974, is published by Elon students. The Pendulum welcomes your opinions with letters limited to 300 words. Letters must be signed with a phone number for verification. Deadlines for submission is noon Monday.

Single copies of The Pendulum are free. If extra copies are needed, they can be purchased at The Pendulum office.

Office: 102 Lebanon Ave., Elon College, N.C., 27244. 584-2331.

UNCG Fracas Defies Reason

Last week, a disturbing case of infringement upon the rights of others took place near our school in the Triad. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro a student wrote into the newspaper and made several claims about Martin Luther King. One of the things that the letter said was that King "seemed to be against God's way. The very fact that our nation attempts to remember and pay reverence to a man who sought to mix us makes me sick."

It turns out that the individual whose name was typed on the bottom of the letter had nothing to do with it. In fact, the first he heard about it was when someone read it to him over the phone. Then he started getting phone calls. Some called him racist. Others threatened him with bodily harm or even death.

Imagine that, threatening death to someone because they allegedly expressed their opinion. That is the big outrage in this incident. Forget that the letter was flat out wrong and pigheaded. (There is some evidence to suggest that MLK was less than divine. However, it is flimsy evidence at best and really should not detract from his greatness.) It is wrong to threaten someone because they express their opinion.

Scott
Miller



It is sad to note that the focus appears to be on the student who really wrote the letter. Obviously, he should be punished to the fullest possible extent under UNCG honor codes. However, it is unconscionable that other students chose to threaten him with bodily harm and even death. It is no more of a proper action than a Jewish individual threatening the life of Louis Farrakhan for his rabid anti-Semitism. This raises the obvious question: How should society deal with the racists, anti-Semites, homophobics and sexists that are a part of our society?

The most important thing to realize is that a great majority of our society does not approve of those traits in a individual. To some degree, tolerance is a large part of what we are about. Knowing that a great majority of individuals in the United States are not of a hating ilk, we should

not be afraid of public discourse.

A possible example is the letter at UNCG. Let us say, for the sake of discussion, that this was a letter that really expressed the beliefs of an individual. Death threats against the individual are not going to get him to suddenly change his point of view. The solution is to have a responsible individual (head of the BCS, chair of African-American studies, etc.) calmly and rationally refute every point that the offending letter makes.

The way that many individuals responded to the letter at Greensboro would drive the racists and homophobics underground and let the hate fester. If we encourage them to speak, and then calmly refute the diatribe point by point, we can show that the racist argument is invalid. It would be kind of like killing them with logic.

Open discussion in a free society is how problems always have been solved. To understand the opposite sides' argument makes it much easier to discredit it. Violence, or the threat of violence, is going to simply result in the two sides going further apart. Only when there is peace amongst us and a rational exchange of thought can the dream Dr. King so eloquently asked for be fully realized.

1994: Year of the Incapable

Marc Gentile
Columnist

For some unbeknownst reason, 1994 has become the year of the momentarily incapable. This is the new politically correct way to say temporary insanity. The alarming precedent being established daily is the oh-so-American tactic of completely failing to take responsibility for our actions.

This excuse is not a new one, used far back in American history, and also used disguised in other words. These range from the Nuremberg trials to Ollie North, and many other things, but the message is the same, "It's not my fault." We have been forced to accept this decision from afar and, usually, watch the criminal walk.

However, lately, this has been used to get away with such offences as; shotgunning your parents, removing your husbands penis, and, if all goes according to the Plan, putting a hit out on your skating rival. These recent decisions are merely examples of a tendency that has been passed down through generations and become embedded in American nature.

"A new attitude must be passed down from the Courts, and that is if you break it you bought it."

Because of this, I don't wish to put the burden on the American people, but rather on the cloaked shoulders of all which proclaims

itself to be just. I do not support a dramatic toughening of all criminal codes without a restructuring of what is supposedly illegal. My point is that in the case of violent crime such as these sufficient action must be taken.

A new attitude must be passed down from the courts, and that is, if you break it, you bought it. Or something to that affect. When this is done then we will have a sense of responsibility for our actions that will spill over into all walks of life.

Grab your shorts as I attempt to tie this into our daily lives without sounding too conservative. But it is important to realize the importance of our actions. If I have incorrectly represented something in this column, I'm sorry, but remember, it's not my fault.