

# Letters' To The Editor

## The coffee shop: Not his cup of tea Service at College Coffee slacks on weekends

### To the Editor:

I finally got motivated enough to get off my butt and give my two cents about the horrible weekend service and atmosphere at our favorite downtown coffee shop.

I am talking about College Coffee from 5 p.m. on Friday through 8 a.m. Monday morning. To start off I think Elon and ARAMARK do a wonderful job providing meals for the students in all of the dining facilities on campus.

The coffee shop is a great place to go during the week. It is always clean, the sandwiches are great and the service is wonderful. My problem is on the weekends.

Let me describe the typical scene on a weekend night trying to get a sandwich. When you walk in the door, if you get in the door, you can't even hear yourself think because the music is blaring.

When you get to the counter to place your order you are greeted by a pissed-off student who is tired of making sandwiches for ungrateful students. I understand they are busy, tired and sick of making sandwiches, but is that not what they get paid for!

After you place your order you go sit down and wait. What you find is tables that are dirty and sticky, so you wipe it off the best you can with a napkin and wait, and wait, and wait.

Finally you get your sandwich, which doesn't resemble what you ordered. Now that you finish eating and want to get out of there because the music is giving you a headache, you go to throw out your trash only to find the garbage can overflowing, so now you know why there was trash on the table when you got there.

For all the hard working

people at the coffee shop like Mark and Julia who do a nice job, this letter is not towards you. This letter is for ARAMARK to wake up and hire some decent night help so the coffee shop can be a pleasant place to go on the weekend. At least then I would feel better about paying \$2,550 for the right to be fed by ARAMARK 15 times a week.

Lastly off the topic, all the students who give *The Pendulum* a hard time for spelling mistakes, or for not covering world news, give them a break this is not the New York Times.

This is a paper published by students who also have a full class schedule. If you want a perfect newspaper you have two choices one go by the Times or get involved and write for *The Pendulum*.

Sincerely,  
Cory Wilkinson

## A history lesson in the religious convictions of the 60s

### To the Editor:

A column in last week's *Pendulum* raises issues I'd like to respond to: 1960s activism, intervention in Kosovo, and the teachings of Christianity. A central lesson I try to teach in my classes is that answers to many questions are not simple.

The 1960s, like any other historical period, was a complicated time. It was certainly a time to question authority which told us, among other things, that African-Americans were second-class citizens at best, that supporting oppressive dictators in the name of anti-communism was good, that women belonged in the home not in the workplace and that weapons of mass destruction were necessary for peace.

Were there people, over and under 30, who were selfish, destructive, motivated by factors other than religion? Yes, but that's part of the complexity.

To say that activists did not acknowledge God is a simplification that ignores the parts played by Martin Luther King (in the Civil Rights movement as well as the anti-war movement), the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference, the Berrigan Brothers (Jesuits), Norman Morrison (a Quaker) and Roger LaPorte (a Catholic) who burned themselves alive in protest to the Vietnam War, and many Christian denominations (Quakers, A. M. E., U. C. C.) who opposed, and continue to oppose, authority based on social injustice.

While everyone in the movements against social injustice was not motivated by religion, many were deeply religious and acted because of their religious beliefs.

Christianity teaches opposition to oppression. Our school name "the Fighting Christians" comes from the idea that Christians are able to bring about peace and justice in the world.

Peace, equality and liberation from oppression are all goals Christians can hardly stand against.

A Christian response to developments in Kosovo is based on these same principles. Surely the idea that since we weren't concerned enough to respond in Rwanda we cannot now be concerned with Kosovo is not a worthwhile principle for making decisions.

This would mean that if we

do wrong once, we could never again in good conscience do right, hardly a Christian principle.

John's teaching that if we have two coats and someone else has none, we are to give one of ours to them is a very hard principle to live by, but it certainly says very clearly that we are to help whenever we can as much as we can.

A fundamental teaching of Christianity is that we cannot care enough. Nowhere have I seen a biblical passage saying, "Okay, you've done enough so just sit back and take it easy now."

What I have seen repeatedly in Christian teaching, though all too seldom in practice, is the idea that we are not to be judgmental of our fellow human beings, we are to be loving, forgiving and compassionate, and that we are to care for one another.

And that, just as with the fight against social injustice, this behavior is to be unceasing. Anywhere. Anytime. Period. In my opinion this is a very worthwhile and simple answer.

Sincerely,  
Jim Brown  
Department of History

## Elon academics need speakers like Gould

### To the Editor:

I was delighted to read Mark Richter's column, "Elon students should value speakers..." and the letters from Meg Walewski and Heather Cornell in last week's edition because I, too, was distressed by students' discourteous behavior and by Alan Medeiros' column "Gould brings naptime to Elon."

If any college is to provide an excellent undergraduate education for its students, it must create opportunities for them to hear speakers like Stephen Jay Gould. In fact, Elon has done an exceptional job over the past few years of drawing eminent speakers to the campus to broaden students' horizons and expose them to fresh ideas and experiences.

Our goal is not to provide entertainment but rather to challenge students intellectually. Gould's talk was fast-paced, certainly, and complex.

Would we have preferred that he make it simpler, less challenging? I don't think so. Medeiros and I had a conversation on this subject last week. He maintained that Gould was too difficult for some Elon students. I disagree.

I don't think that you have to understand everything to get a sense for what major scientists like Gould are thinking about at this end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

You don't have to grasp every idea to appreciate the extraordinary range of his thinking. Years ago, as an old man, Nils Bohr gave a talk on my campus when I was a freshman.

I didn't know a thing about physics or quantum theory, believe me, and could only understand a small fraction of what he had to say. But I was absolutely stunned by the fact that anyone could talk about, math and physical laws and the nature of the universe all at the same time.

It was a transforming experience for me, my first real exposure to big ideas. And this, I believe, is what college must do for students, provide exposure wherever possible to the best thinkers of our time. I was pleased at this convocation that the college so adequately fulfilled that obligation.

Sincerely,  
Julianne Maher  
Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

## Faculty opinion: Value of *The Pendulum*

### To the Editor:

The mindless trashing of Stephen Jay Gould and the Spring Honors Convocation marks a new low in *The Pendulum* student journalism and certainly reinforces the recent complaints about a lack of professionalism at Elon's student newspaper.

Isn't there a basic responsibility to be minimally informed before expressing a journalistic opinion about a campus event?

The tone of smug ignorance, false claims and misinformation clearly demonstrate that the writer of the piece ("Gould brings naptime to Elon") had not bothered to read a word of Gould's writing, to find out who he was or why he was invited or even to recognize that this is an academic event intended to honor academic achievement at an academic institution.

Hence the invitation of a distinguished American scientist and writer, who presented an interesting, lively and eloquent presenta-

tion that was much appreciated by the majority of the audience.

Before publishing such trash journalism under the guise of opinion, the editors of *The Pendulum* should have attempted to find someone who was minimally informed and responsible.

*The Pendulum* owes an apology to every student and faculty member who has worked to raise academic standards at Elon College and to make the annual spring academic convocation the success it has been.

Publishing pieces such as this make *The Pendulum* worse than irrelevant. It has become an embarrassment to the entire academic community.

I firmly believe a retraction or an apology is in order.

Wasn't the April Fool's issued last week?

Sincerely,  
Andrew J. Angyal  
Professor of English