

Viewpoint

Welcome to Elon, parents and other sundry legal guardians! It's been a whole month since you've last seen Junior or li'l Suzie and I'll bet you are all just dying to know how they are doing.

But alas! Your little all-star is not quite the same. They no longer have that innocent aura around them. Their eyes have lost that wide, trusting glow and are now nothing more than tired slits that allow light to touch their brains. They are changing and you don't know what to do.

Fear not brave parent, this change is completely normal and it is okay to be scared. If you need to hold someone's hand, I'm there for you. Shhh. There, there. It'll be all right. Feeling better? I knew you would.

There is nothing to worry about, thirty plus days of total freedom tends to change people. Finding out what they have become is tough.

As you go through this weekend and see your child in their natural habitat, there will be many tell tale signs of how Skippy is really doing in college. *The Pendulum* is only too happy to provide you with a simple guide to help you interpret what you may see.

• You notice that your child has erected a small but complex shrine in the corner of the room to a pair of gods called Jack Daniels and Mary Jane. — Don't worry, your child is fine.

• You notice that your child has bags of uncut cocaine under their bed, they have messages from people named "The Enforcer" saying the deal is on and for some reason they are driving a Porsche that you don't remember them owning. — Don't worry, your child is fine.

• You notice that your child seems to be worshipping the devil. They don't recognize you but they can still smell the evil on you. Their roommate is nowhere to be found, but there is distressing amount of blood in the room and your child won't let you near the shower. — Don't worry, your child is fine.

• You notice that you cannot find your child. When their friends are questioned about it, they shake their heads, pull their coats around them and walk away quickly. — Don't worry, your child is fine.

• You notice that your child is happy and healthy, they have a group of friends, they seem to be doing well their classes and they try to sponge as much money off you as humanly possible. — Call the police. Now! Your child is involved in something that the FBI should know about. Hopefully we can save them before it's too late.

• **Chuck Buckley Senior Editor**

Let little Timmy Videogame drive

I like to think that being good at video games makes up for my lack of social skills.

Sure, the awkward silence that ensues whenever I try to interact with other people can be unsettling to say the least. But when conversation is lacking, I can always reflect back to that shining moment in eighth grade when I conquered "Ninja Gaiden II."

But video games have done much more than helped lonely newspaper columnists cope with their social inadequacies. Nintendo, PlayStation and Sega have made a positive contribution to society by improving the reflexes and hand/eye coordination of millions of pre-pubescent video gamers.

I propose that as a direct result of playing video games, the hand/eye coordination of today's middle-school students far exceeds that of adults.

Therefore, children should be afforded responsibilities and privileges that correspond to their newfound abilities. Namely, kids should be able to obtain driver's licenses at an earlier age.

In North Carolina, you can't even get a learner's permit until you're fifteen. *Fifteen!* Today most six-year-olds know how to pop a wheelie in a Camaro thanks to driving games like "Destruction Derby

2." To these kids, executing a K-turn or merging into highway traffic is mere child's play.

Of course, six is a little young to be operating a real motor vehicle. Let's be realistic.

Eight-year-olds, on the other hand, are definitely capable enough to get behind the wheel. By age eight most kids have endured four to five years of video gaming. This intense condi-

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tioning doesn't just teach motor skills - it teaches *motor-vehicle* skills. Today's eight-year-olds can operate automobiles as well as adults and better than the elderly.

Lowering the driving age in the United States to eight would be beneficial for three reasons.

First, it would help American children compete in the global marketplace. I often hear statistics supporting the notion that elementary school students in Germany outperform their American counterparts. Well I can assure you that Klaus won't do as well on his algebra tests if Timmy from Haw River is blowing doughnuts out in the parking lot.

Second, lowering the driving

age would be good for the American economy. Most eight-year-olds can't reach the pedals of a conventional automobile, so a fleet of tiny cars would have to be manufactured in order to accommodate the influx of mini-motorists. The ensuing economic growth would surpass even the World War II boom that lifted the United States out of the Great Depression. The action figure and doll industries would also prosper because kids could drive to toy stores whenever they want.

Finally, letting eight-year-olds drive would also prove beneficial for the environment. Children would no longer rely on air-polluting school buses for transportation. Instead, kids could drive to school.

The argument for lowering the driving age to eight is both undeniable and irrefutable. From this day forth, I will not rest until America's littlest citizens have the rights that they deserve. I may lack social skills, but when I get this thing passed I'm going to have a lot of friends in the third grade.



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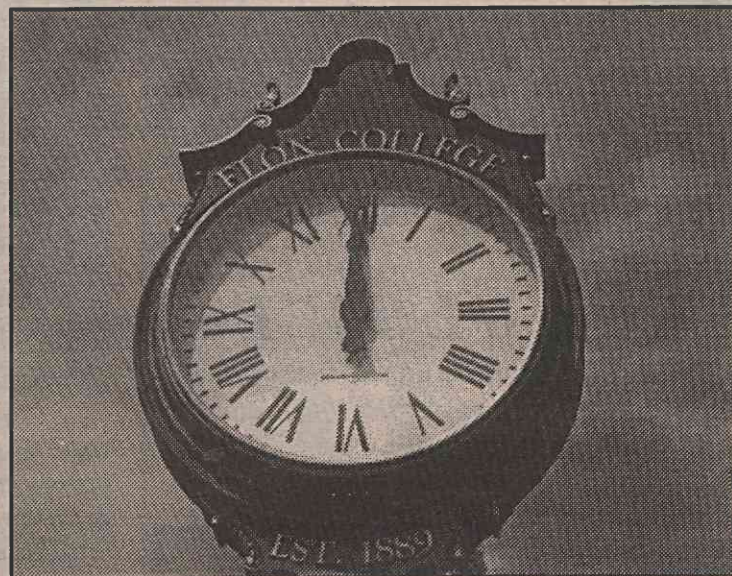
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EYE IN ELON

Keeping time with Elon



The new Elder Clock in front of Belk Library gives a Main Street, U.S.A feeling to the new Elon quad.

photo by Emily MacDonnell