

## Viewpoint

October 14, 1974, twenty-five years ago to the day, a biweekly tabloid newspaper called *The Pendulum* appeared to the Elon College community for the first time.

The paper was born from a distinguished line of college newspapers including *The Elon College Weekly* and *The Maroon and Gold*. Its penchant for stirring up controversy can be traced back to the late 1960s, and the short-lived Student Government sponsored publication *Veritas*.

*The Pendulum* started as a small, four page paper with a staff of 11 people and minimal facilities. In 25 years it has been the home for over 1000 editors, photographers and reporters. Layout is no longer done with X-Acto knives, rubber cement and a lot of patience, but by a network of ten computers. The newspaper is no longer limited to a readership of just students, but now can be read around the world via the Internet. *The Pendulum* has come a long way since October 14, 1974.

It is important as we reflect on a quarter-century of this newspaper and its duty to "inform the Elon College community" that we remember that there has not always been a paper at Elon. Having a newspaper at college is both a privilege and a challenge. We must strive everyday to live up to the expectations that were laid down for us by our forebearers.

Only by keeping ourselves rooted to the spirit and drive of the past can we hope to have the paper grow strong in the twenty-first century. Like the mighty oak, the symbol of this great institution, *The Pendulum* will continue to stand tall against all difficulties and obstacles, provided it stays true to its foundation and is given room to grow.

It is our desire to see *The Pendulum* consistently improve over the next two and a half decades, and hopefully far beyond into the new millennium.

Elon College is changing to fulfill its destiny. We are expanding at incredible rate with new buildings, new student housing, a new stadium and a new mascot. *The Pendulum* must be ready to accept the realities of being as much a part of the Elon College Vision as it is an observer.

*The Pendulum* must never grow complacent and content with its successes. There will always be new mountains for it to climb. We will stay true to our original mission statement. We are here to be the newspaper of Elon College. We have been for the past twenty-five years and we will be for the next.

• *The Pendulum* Editorial Staff

## Drug legalization: Time to go that route?

Drug decriminalization is one of the issues that the Libertarian Party is best known for. To the surprise of many, the issue is currently one of the hottest in the United States.

Governor Gary Johnson of New Mexico opened the can of worms when he proclaimed that the war on drugs is a multi-billion dollar a year failure. He couldn't be more correct in his proclamation.

It is highly covered up, but so very obvious is the fact that drug laws do more harm than good. The strictest interpretation of the Constitution gives us the right to do whatever we want with ourselves, so long as we are not taking the same right away from anyone else in any way.

I choose not to use drugs, including marijuana, cocaine and heroin. However, if I was a drug user and was using drugs in my own home, not hurting anyone else – should that be illegal? Sure, you can say that I am harming myself and that in itself should make drugs illegal. But is it your right to tell me if it is okay to hurt myself or not? I own my own body; you do not own any part of me. So no, it is not your right to tell me what I can or can not do.

With drugs being illegal, a black market exists. The black market creates a problem in that the drugs become higher priced. When drugs are available at a high price, someone is getting rich.

The monetary power of drugs creates huge drug lords, who corrupt our police department and the youth in our country.

Many law enforcement personnel (cops, sheriffs, FBI, etc.) are paid a healthy sum to keep their mouth shut about where drugs are being pushed and used. Some of the youth in our country sell the drugs for the drug lords in schools.

### Cameron DeJong

*The Pendulum*  
cdejong@elon.edu

They both get a pretty good percentage of the money in return for their "goodwill" towards the drug lords.

Another reason drug usage is prevalent amongst teens is that it is natural for teenagers to walk on the wild side. Teenagers know they are doing something very illegal (and profitable) and that they love the challenge of getting away with it.

Drug prohibition also increases crime. In order to pay the high price for the habit, drug users mug innocent old ladies on the street. In many instances, they kill for money. They are addicted to the drugs and will pay for them by any means necessary.

By legalizing drugs, we take the profit out. This eliminates the drug lords, the pushers in the schools,

and the corrupt cops. Legalizing drugs would reinstate the right for people to do as they wish with themselves – without intrusion from the government. By legalizing drugs, we save billions of wasted tax dollars every year.

281,000 murderers, rapists and

robbers are currently roaming the streets thanks to the Drug War. "According to the Washington, DC – based Drug Policy Foundation, federal and state prisons now contain 281,000 drug offenders," said Libertarian



Party National Director Steve Dasbach.

"Meanwhile, murderers are paroled after an average of 8.6 years behind bars, rapists after 5.2 years, and armed robbers after 3.6 years, according to the Justice Department. So if we pardoned those 281,000 drug offenders, we could instantly lock up 281,000 violent criminals without building one more jail cell – and Americans would be safer.

I ask that you please contact me before criticizing my columns. In the limited space that is allowed, I am sometimes easily misunderstood. Please feel free to e-mail me.



### Informing the Elon College Community

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Elizabeth Butler  
Christine Zon

The purpose of *The Pendulum* shall be to inform and entertain the Elon College community. *The Pendulum* shall be a forum where all members of the college community are able to express their ideas and opinions.

Address all correspondence to:  
*The Pendulum*  
7012 Campus Box  
Elon College, N.C.  
27244.

Phone: (336) 584-2331  
Fax: (336) 584-2467  
E-mail:  
pendulum@elon.edu  
Web page:  
http://www.elon.edu/  
pendulum



## EYE ON ELON

### 'Bryan and Steve' debut



Bryan Skeen (r.) and Steve Snyder (center) chat with Nick Tashjian at their first morning show for WSOE 89.3 fm on Tuesday. "The Bryan and Steve Show" can be heard Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-10 a.m.

photo by Emily MacDonnell