

Students and faculty show support for Farm Labor Movement

Elizabeth Sudduth
The Pendulum

Nearly 30 students and faculty gathered on Monday night in McMichael 102 to show support for the current Farm Labor Movement taking place in Eastern North Carolina.

Elon College was host to three speakers who spoke about the current movement and boycott with Mt. Olive Pickles. Representatives from both the Farm Labor Organizing Committee [FLOC] and the National Farmworker Ministry [NFWM] shared with students the need for organizing migrant farm workers to defend their personal rights.

"We are here to help empower farm workers," said Mike Peredes, Outreach Coordinator for NFWM. "Our job is to reach out to people in churches and communities and educate them about what is taking place in on farms in Eastern North Carolina."

Nearly 3,800 migrant workers from Mexico come to North Carolina and are used as indentured servants to maintain and take care of

fields during the harvest season of May to late Nov.

According to Paredes, the workers are generally smuggled into the country by farm growers who pay a smuggling fee. The workers are then entrusted to the growers and serve them until the fee is paid.

"Many of these Mexican workers come to the U.S. to make money and better their lives in Mexico," Peredes said. "Often times, however, they come and give up their dignity."

Many of the farm camps have converted chicken shacks used to house the workers. "They live in 10x11 size rooms with five to six other people," Paredes said. "Many of the workers living conditions would never fit inspection."

The state of N.C. currently has nine inspectors reprimanding working conditions for the state. Only one inspector in N.C. speaks Spanish," said Lee Bailey, Assistant Outreach Coordinator for NFWM. "In addition these nine inspectors are for all businesses through out the state, not just agriculture."

This past year Bailey worked with Wake County Health Department as a volunteer. Her job was initially to

contact as many migrate workers as possible, those who were hurt or needed healthcare were taken to free clinics on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Farming is one of the greatest health risks in the U.S.," Bailey said. "The amount of work done by these workers with tobacco was the same equivalent as smoking about 100 cigarettes a day."

Farm workers suffered from exposure to pesticides and heat exhaustion in addition to back injuries due to the repetitive motion of picking the crops.

Nick Wood a FLOC student representative from UNC provided students and faculty with a way to get involved. Wood discussed with students the current boycott taking place between migrant workers organizers and the Mt. Olive Pickle Company. Wood urged students to join and take a stance with them.

"I urge you to take a pledge and not purchase Mt. Olive products until the company sits with organizers to correct working standards," Wood said.

Mt. Olive Pickle Company was not available for comment; however, the company believes they are in no

way responsible for what has taken place. The company feels as though farm growers are responsible.

Senior, April Hewett along with Assistant Sociology Professor, Sandy Smith-Nonini first organized the two groups to come to campus.

"Much of my interest started from a book I read for my Latin American and Latino Social Movements class with Dr. Smith-Nonini,"

Hewett said. "I then asked the organization of Students for Peace and Justice if I could bring our guests to their meeting."

Hewett along with other Elon students will take a trip on Friday to visit some of the farmer camps.

For more information, Students for Peace and Justice meet every Monday at 8:30 in Moseley's fireplace lounge.

Postal rate to increase

Faith Gaskins
The Pendulum

The independent Postal Rate Committee announced Monday that the cost of mailing a letter in the United States will go up a penny, probably in January. The commission was acting on a request from the Postal Service to raise the price in order to negate rising costs.

Under this action, the cost of a first-class stamp will rise to 34 cents while the 22-cent cost of the second ounce of a first-class mail and the 20-cent postcard will stay the same.

The post office Board of Governors will decide when the new price will go into affect. The speculated date is Jan. 7.

"I don't think that this change is going to make much of a difference," said sophomore Vanessa Kitchen. "However, I imagine it might make a lot of difference to a company that sends out thousands of letters."

The higher rate for a first-class stamp is projected to bring in an extra \$1 billion in revenue. Since it takes so long to print the billions of stamps needed when the new rates take effect, the Postal Service already has interim stamps in the works.



The purpose of *The Pendulum* is to inform and entertain the Elon College community and provide a forum for ideas and opinions.

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Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome and should be typed, double-spaced and signed with the author's name, year in school and phone number for verification. These submissions are also accepted as Word documents on disk or by e-mail. *The Pendulum* reserves the right to edit obscene or potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters or columns may have to be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of *The Pendulum* and will not be returned.

EYE ON ELON



Courtney Johnson represents France in the Model UN conference earlier in the week.

Photo by: Adam Waterson/ The Pendulum