

Ehrenreich speaks about poverty, lower class struggles



Leighanne Ellis / Photographer

Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Elon's* common reading book, "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America" spoke in Alumni Gym on Tuesday night.

Leighanne Ellis

Reporter

Shaming, shocking, terribly relevant. Readers of the social critique "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by In America" could apply any of these words to the novel. Yet this 230-page social report is only a continuation in Barbara Ehrenreich's life-long battle to shed light on lower-class struggles. The book serves as *Elon's* 2004 common reading.

Appearing before *Elon* University on Tuesday night, Ehrenreich had no pretenses to offer the student body, instead offering distressing truths gleaned from her reporting — America's poor encompasses not 12 percent of the population, but a number much larger.

Passing herself off as a fellow disadvantaged, recent divorcee, she entered a world where colleagues slept in cars, and drinking water on the job was frequently prohibited.

"The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer," as the middle class continues to shrink, Ehrenreich said, imploring the wealthy to give to those in need through charity programs and other types of organizations aimed to help underprivileged people.

Fresman Kaley Chenot felt that Ehrenreich "should have been more nonpartisan when speaking to such a broad audience."

Chenot also added that people like Bill Gates provide jobs, echoing one comment made by an audience member during a question-answer ses-

sion following the speech.

Beginning during the Vietnam War, Ehrenreich latched onto political activism, quickly specializing in the fields of wealth and poverty.

Later in her life, she turned her attention to medical care. With books such as "For Her Own Good" and "Complaints and Disorders: the Sexual Politics of Sickness," she helped carve the groundwork for the women's health movement of the 1970s.

In the late '90s, when Ehrenreich was honing her journalistic skills, she did the undercover work for *Nickel*

and *Dimed*. Passing herself off as a fellow disadvantaged, recent divorcee, she entered a world where colleagues slept in cars, and drinking water on the job was frequently prohibited.

Even as an upper class woman entering the lower class work force, Ehrenreich was forced to pull out of her project early when she could no longer find housing. In her Evaluation chapter, she swears that she will never again call another job "unskilled."

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Breaking through the bubble

Man dies in crash after tossing baby from car

A man threw his fiancée's 8-month-old daughter out of a car as he fled Wisconsin police after being accused of domestic violence. The baby, strapped in a car seat, was not injured. The driver of the vehicle crashed into an unoccupied squad car and died three days later from injuries.

93-year-old woman skydives for first time

Polly Gifford jumped out of an airplane at a height of 14,000 feet over the weekend to celebrate her 93rd birthday. It was her first jump, and probably her last, she said. Gifford was inspired by former President George H.W. Bush, who jumped in June for his 80th birthday. She says that she shook as she fell during her skydive — not from fear but "just from the fun of it."

9/11 anniversary remembered

Relatives of those who lost someone on Sept. 11 stood at the World Trade Center site Saturday and marked the third anniversary of the attacks by reciting the names of the 2,749 people who died there. Reading the list took more than three hours. Four moments of silence were observed at 8:46, 9:03, 9:59 and 10:29 a.m. — the times that the two planes slammed into the buildings and when they collapsed on Sept. 11, 2001. Bells also tolled at the moment hijacked Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pa. and a moment of silence was observed at the Pentagon for the 184 victims there.

At least 59 killed in two attacks in Iraq

A car bomb exploded near a police station in Baghdad early Tuesday as Iraqis were applying to join the force, killing at least 47 people and wounding 114. In a separate attack on Iraq's

police force, gunmen in two cars opened fire Tuesday on a van carrying policemen home from work in Baqouba, killing 11 officers and a civilian. The attacks marked the latest attempts by insurgents to disrupt U.S.-backed efforts to build a strong Iraqi police force.

Republicans looking for the black vote

Republicans are urging blacks to vote for President Bush. The majority of black have historically voted for Democrats in presidential elections. They hope Bush's credentials help shake the impression that blacks must vote Democratic. They believe Bush's support of school vouchers and a constitutional ban on gay marriage make him an attractive candidate to many black voters.

Oprah opens new season with car giveaway

Oprah Winfrey celebrated the premiere of her 19th season by surprising each of her 276 audience members with a new car. Gift boxes with a set of car keys to a new Pontiac G6 were given to all the audience members. Audience members were chosen because their friends or family had written about their need for a new car. The cars retail for \$28,000 and Pontiac will pay for taxes and the customizing of the cars.

Trump's 'You're fired' top TV buzzword

Donald Trump's "You're fired" from "The Apprentice" replaced "The Sopranos" "Fahgeddaboutit" as the top TV catchphrase for the 2003/2004 season. Global Language Monitor, a group which tracks word use, named Trump's line as the number one buzzword while "Mess O' Potamia" from "The Daily Show" and "girlie men" from Arnold Schwarzenegger came in as third and fourth, respectively.