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THE PENDULUM

ELON, NORTH CAROLINA | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2008 | VOLUME 34, EDITION 33

www.elon.edu/pendulum

Students ask for DTV test during SuperBowl XLIII

Andie Diemer
News Editor

When Wilmington, N.C. made the early switch to digital television in September, several Elon faculty members and students were on hand to assist with the transition. But as the rest of the nation prepares to make the official change on Feb. 17, many of the same Elon community members are urging for nationwide action to remind and assist with the move.

Connie Book, School of Communications assistant dean, had students in her broadcasting and the public interest class write a letter to NBC President Jeff Zucker on Dec. 4. They asked for a 30-second spot from the Federal Communications Commission that would interrupt the SuperBowl on Feb. 1 to spread the message about DTV.

After the class discussed how to best inform the nation, they eventually agreed that interrupting the SuperBowl would reach the largest number of people at one time, and be the best way to ensure people were aware of the transition, sophomore class member Bryan Rogala said.

"It's something that affects just about everyone in some way or another and not informing the public could prove to be pretty disastrous when you think about the effects of people not being able to watch TV during a natural disaster or similar crisis," Rogala said.

The class, which has been studying the DTV transition that has already taken place in some areas of North Carolina, is also examining the preparation the rest of America is taking.

Their letter was also addressed to FCC Chairman Kevin Martin and President of the National Association of Broadcasters David Rehr and was mailed overnight with a draft of the copy for the commercial spot.

Book echoed her students and said the SuperBowl is the one time of the year most TV households are all on the same signal.

"Broadcasters should seize that moment to alert citizens that the transition is impending," Book said. "The broadcasters' reluctance to interrupt the SuperBowl because of the profit the game earns demonstrates the tension between what is in the public's interest and the media's primary objective to be a successful enterprise."

Book said this is a tension that is often difficult to simply explain in a lecture.

"The letter to NBC made the issue tangible and meaningful to the students in class," Book said.

The 30 students that were present in class that day, as well as Book, signed the letter. No one else was offered the opportunity.

Book said she heard the news of the story made it to New York City a few days later, after several alumni and friends contacted her to say they had heard about the letter being debated on sports talk radio.

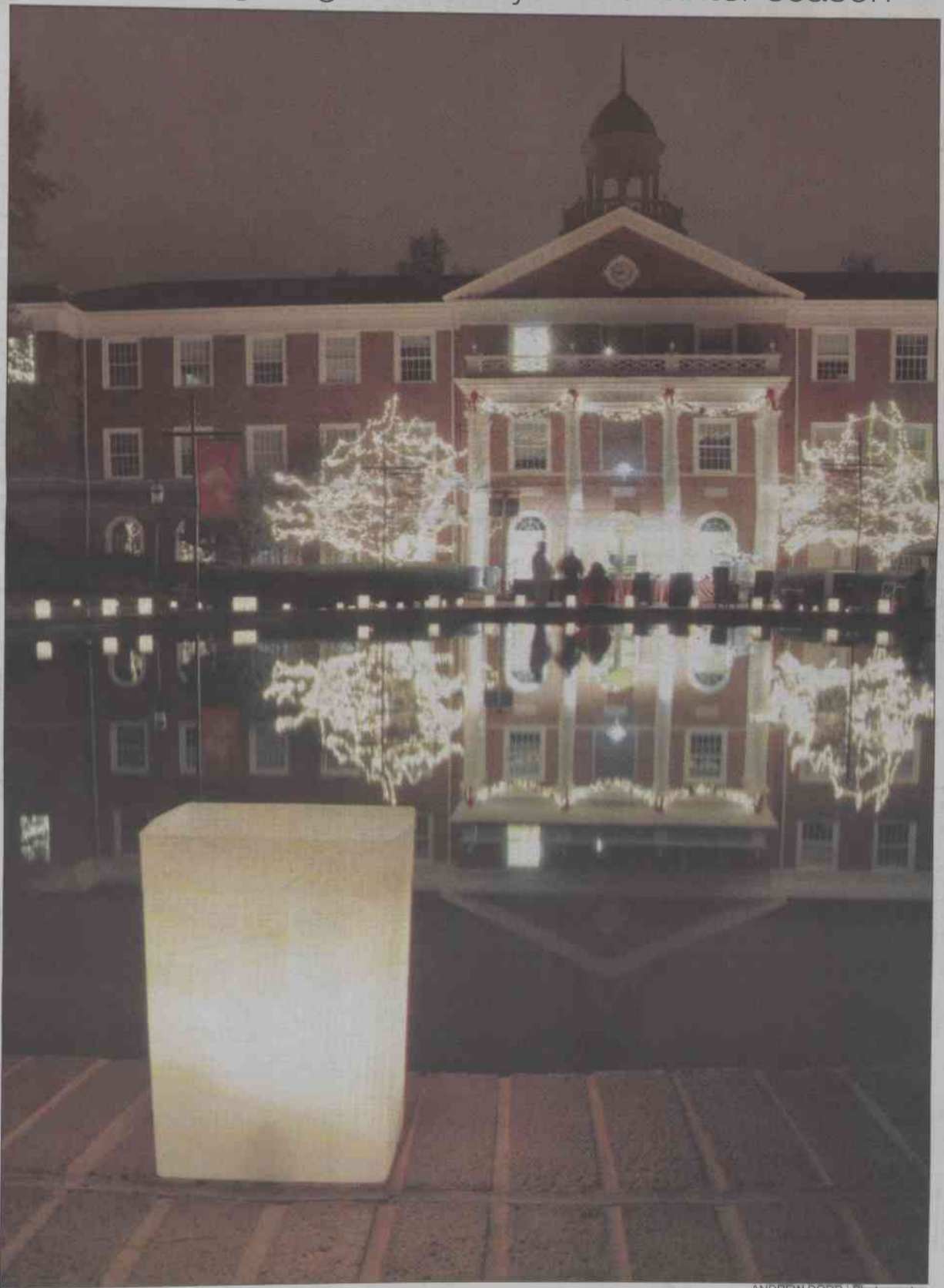
"I was also hammered in a couple of forums," Book said. "One said I was a 'fancy school' professor and needed to learn how media economics worked and there was no way they would interrupt the SuperBowl."

But despite the stretch of their goal, Rogala said the class's wish carries heavy importance.

"The idea is that by interrupting the most-watched television event of the year, a large number of people will see the spot and figure out they need to do something in order to keep watching TV after Feb. 17," he said.

Elon Illuminated

Holiday Lighting Ceremony starts winter season



ANDREW DODD | Photographer

Hundreds of people turned out for Elon's Annual Holiday Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 4. The event is marked by the lighting of more than 2,000 luminaries in the main quad on campus. Santa and Mrs. Claus made an appearance in the Little Blue Choo train, students from Hillel sang a blessing and lit the Menorah and community members watched as the lights on Elon's buildings and in the trees were switched on.

> ONLINE

Visit The Pendulum Web site at www.elon.edu/pendulum for a slideshow and video of the Holiday Lighting Ceremony, Kwanzaa Celebration and the Moravian Love Feast.

> INSIDE

Photos from the Holiday Lighting Ceremony, Kwanzaa Celebration and Holiday Magic. **PAGE 2**

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Greensboro Symphony Orchestra Holiday Pops, 3 p.m., Dec. 21 in Koury Athletic Center. **PAGE 17**