

Local police parade remembers 9/11



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Multimedia Editor

On the 14th anniversary of Sept. 11 on Friday, it was difficult to imagine that it has only been 14 years since the attacks. Then again, it was hard to realize it hasn't been longer. The police and fire departments came together Friday to ensure that no matter how long or short the time may feel, the nation remembered the nearly 3,000 people who were killed in the terrorist attacks.

With the parade, several of the Burlington Police Department officers offer reflections.

Officers present at the parade said they appreciated the acknowledgement for law enforcement that the event brought.

Chief Jeff Smythe of the Burlington Police Department, who has been an officer for 30 years, said 9/11 is a good reminder for people to appreciate police officers.

"The silent majority is too silent too often," he said. "As the negative national media directed toward the police comes to the forefront, we're starting to see some folks step up and say, 'wait a minute, we need our police.'"

Many of the officers felt the direct effects of the 9/11 attacks as they were working in the U.S. Military at the time.

Jerry Christian, a patrolman for the Burlington Police Department, served 28 years in the U.S. Military prior to his work with the police department. He was deployed to Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"It gives me a lot of thanks that I was there at the time and maybe able to change some things in that part of the world, but now we're here trying to help our own country [as police



Local children and their families line the streets of Downtown Burlington Sept. 11 in support of the police within the community and all who lost their lives in 2001.

officers]," he said.

Christian simply urged the public to continue acknowledging Sept. 11, "Just try to remember... we don't really want nothing [sic] in return," Christian said.

"The kids seem to appreciate us coming through, and as a result they are more aware of this day than the adults sometimes are."

Graham Sappington, Master Police Officer, served six years in the U.S. Airforce prior to his current eight years of service for the Burlington Special Response Team.

"The country's never been closer than in the days, weeks and years after Sept. 11," he said. "Sometimes we stray away from that, but we're all in this together. We just got to figure that out, and maybe this parade will help that happen."

"As we get further removed from a tragic event we tend to forget how bad it felt that day,

and how we all came together as Americans — not as different types of people — but as Americans. We all held hands under one flag. If we get back to that, it'll be nice."

While the day marks a time of sorrow felt across the nation, all the officers agree that the parade gives a sense of renewal and connectivity — especially with the school children.

David Carter, chaplain of Alamance County Sheriff Department, said he appreciated youth support.

"The kids come out wearing red, white and blue while waving flags," he said. "They make banners during art class, and they show their patriotism. They're just really excited to see us. Really, as officers, it makes the hair on the back of our necks stand up because they are just so excited to be a part of this."

And the Elon Elementary students chanted, "U-S-A, U-S-A, U-S-A."

BSU from cover

discrimination on campus during his time at Elon. Race relations incidents occurred in 2013, when a student drew racially and religiously offensive symbols on two students' whiteboard, and in 2014-2015, when multiple racial slurs were directed at students. There have been a host of similar instances in recent years.

In a similar vein, sophomore Alonzo Cee, BSU's special events director, said he is often asked about how it feels being a person of color at a predominantly white institution while he serves as a campus tour guide.

"I would love to be able to tell [prospective students] that we have a spectacular community here that will accept them straight away, but it's something we are continually working on, and that is the truth," he said. "BSU is trying to help expedite that process."

Bohannon said while the name-change was necessary to expedite this process, it doesn't mean that the organization is retracting its 45-year-long history as the Black Cultural Society.

"We have learned from our history as being BCS and we will continue to keep many

of those traditions alive," he said "But with the organization's recent reputation for having a lack of unity, and with everything going on nationally and on campus, there was a need for change and rebranding to make a statement."

To Bohannon, the word "society" doesn't quite capture the purposeful power that the word "union" does. But of all the connotations associated with "union," the one that he feels matters most is "unity."

Cee agreed and said BCS was lacking in its ability to provide unity.

"BCS last year was a home for the black community, but in my opinion as a first-year student, it did not seem that inviting," Cee said. "The connotation behind BCS wasn't very positive, at least according to people who have been at Elon longer."

To Cee, "union" promotes a firm statement about solidarity — something he said he thinks is necessary on a campus where there are more than black students on a campus of more than 6,000 students.

"We want BSU to be a space where we come and celebrate all different identities and intersections of what is under the spectrum of 'black,'" Bohannon said. "Our goal is to educate the greater community but also provide an avenue for unity and solidarity for black students."

Bohannon hopes the newly branded

BSU will also serve a more centralized role as the umbrella organization for all other black organizations on campus.

Other changes in the organization include a restructuring of executive staff roles and positions, as well as the creation of several member-led committees.

While changes are in store, Bohannon hopes the organization can continue collaborating with departments and other groups on campus.

New events and initiatives coming

From a "Black Student Success Week," which culminates in a pool party to future rallies to their most popular event, the Fashion Show, BSU has already executed and will continue to plan themed educational and cultural events throughout the year.

Cee urges the entire community — not only those who identify as black or people of color — to participate in these events, since the educational component is what he believes can create a more accepting community at Elon.

"There are people who are there for the cause and are willing to learn, but there are a lot of people who silence our voices and are just coming to events just to feel good about themselves," Cee said. "That's why education is so important."

New IFC fraternity coming to Elon

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A new Interfraternity Council (IFC) organization is coming to campus as one of the changes new Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life Dan Fail is implementing in his first year at Elon University.

Fail said in an email that Elon has decided to add a new IFC organization, but the school is still in the selection process. The finalists will be on campus the week of Oct. 19, and the presentations are open to all.

This decision comes after two IFC organizations were suspended from campus and a third had activities suspended for a portion of last year because of hazing investigations.

Fail said nothing is solidified yet, but changes in the recruitment process for IFC and Panhellenic Council (PHC) organizations are pending.

For IFC fraternities, Fail said the dates for fall recruitment have changed to end on a Monday, which he said will allow for deeper conversations with recruits.

"While no decisions have been 100 percent set in stone, we are looking to make all of the processes more valuable for the members and potential new members, in both information and conversations," Fail said.

Fail said the change doesn't specifically relate to National PanHellenic Council (NPHC) fraternities and sororities because "their intake process is very different from the recruitment processes."

Fail said the PHC has unanimously voted to adopt a two-tier total system, which means the fall members — or maximum chapter size — will be adjusted by semester to account for graduating seniors and new members.

Fail, who arrived on campus in the summer to take over for Shana Plasters, the former director, said he's been meeting with departments and directors on campus to understand the perception of fraternity and sorority life at Elon.

After hazing allegations, the Epsilon Theta chapter of Sigma Pi and the Epsilon Alpha chapter of Pi Kappa Phi each received suspensions that will last until 2017. The Lambda Lambda chapter of Kappa Sigma's new member activities were also suspended during the spring.

Some of the events Cee is leading surround topics including diversity, racism, micro-aggression and the N-word.

Bohannon also previewed an "Intersection Series," a program featuring discussions around holding intersecting identities within the black spectrum. This, he hopes, will highlight the diversity among black students at Elon.

A brief snapshot of Black Cultural Society

BCS was established in 1975, 12 years after Glenda Phillips Hightower became the first black student to attend Elon and the same year John Roscoe became the first black individual appointed to Elon's board of trustees.

Its purpose, written by inaugural chairs Rodney Evans '75 and Don McLaughlin '76, was to "promote understanding and a sense of unity among Black students; encourage Elon College to achieve a greater awareness and appreciation of the culture and achievements of Black people; attack with vigor all injustices and inequalities that may exist on the campus of Elon college with respect to Black people; and support and assist in any way possible the communities immediately surrounding Elon College." Membership was open to all regularly enrolled full or part-time students.