

# Property damage in Smith Hall will have lasting consequences

Residents of the all-male Historic Neighborhood building displaced by flooding

Jackie Pascale

Executive Director | @Jackie\_Pascale

Twenty-three Elon University students were displaced after a urinal was ripped from the wall in Smith residence hall; the only all-male freshman dorm in Historic Neighborhood.

The incident occurred early in the morning Sept. 30 in a communal bathroom on the first floor. Almost three inches of water flooded the hall as a result. Dehumidifiers and fans lined the first floor as part of early cleanup measures. After further investigation, more extreme measures have been taken.

Physical Plant is now using intense drying and heating machines to prevent mold growth on the first floor. Now, residents have either relocated to Danieley Neighborhood, other Smith rooms or a friend's place. There is currently no timetable for their return.

The flood damages are in the "tens of thousands" of dollars ac-

ording to Jon Dooley, vice president of Student Life. Dooley confirmed this in a meeting with Smith residents' parents Oct. 7.

Mark George's and Judy Pepe's sons are roommates in Smith, and they both attended the meeting to ask questions of costs and about their sons' dorm room. Their room is right next to the bathroom that flooded the hall, and both sons are currently displaced.

"They are camped out with other kids in the building who were gracious enough to host them," George said. "For what was thought to be a couple-day interruption, and it's turned out to be more than a full week now with no end in sight."

Pepe said she missed out on part of the Family Weekend experience.

"It's disappointing," Pepe said. "Coming down for the weekend, when you hope to be able to see their room and celebrate that and take them shopping to decorate. Without all that stuff, it's disappointing."

Dooley said in the parents' meeting that he and other Elon administrators are looking into their insurance policies to possibly cover some of the costs. Originally, Dool-



An Elon University groundskeeper packs up after a day of assisting with damage clean-up in Smith residence hall.

SAMANTHA STEINMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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MARK GEORGE  
PARENT OF SMITH RESIDENTS

ey told Smith residents they might be paying for the damages, unless they find the culprit of the vandalism. He said in the meeting he is "confident" they will find the person or persons responsible.

George shared this confidence and belief that the culprit has to be known at this point.

According to Elon's housing agreement for all residence halls, "where the university has deter-

mined that there is theft or undue abuse of university property and the responsible individual(s) cannot be identified, all residents will be held responsible for paying a prorated share of the cost of repairing such damages."

Several parents said they were pleased with the communication from Elon about these incidents, but would still like more frequent updates. "We need to hear more,"

Pepe said. "We need to hear potential dates ... we need to hear when there are other incidents in the dorms."

"The bigger issue is this proud history and legacy of Smith being an all-boys dorm," George said. "Every year, there's been some level of vandalism ... I think the bigger issue is breaking this silly, 'Bro code,' that exists where nobody wants to turn in who's responsible."

## Housing market prospers

High demand for homes in Alamance county combined with limited supply of houses leads to market boom

Jake Lenett

Contributor | @elonnewsnetwork

The Alamance County housing market is booming because of an increasingly high demand and limited supply of homes and apartments. In fact, the Burlington-Alamance area currently stands as the fourth fastest-growing housing market in the state, following Charlotte, Raleigh and Durham-Chapel Hill respectively.

### QUICK GROWTH

The Burlington-Alamance area currently stands as the fourth fastest growing housing market in the state.

their living options more seriously.

According to local real estate executives Jon Lowder of the Piedmont Triad Apartment Association, and John Walker of ReMax Diamond Realty, the basis for the thriving housing market boils down to a simple case of supply and demand, fueled by a wide array of factors.

"It wouldn't surprise me if one of the main drivers is accessibility," Lowder said, in reference to the root causes for increases in housing demand. Lowder, executive director of the Piedmont Triad Apartment Association, also cites Alamance County's proximity to the Raleigh-Durham and Chapel Hill areas, specifically via interstates 40 and 85 as contributors to that accessibility. In addition to the "decent commute times," the Burlington-Alamance district also provides a "smaller city feel" at "reasonable prices" buyers are looking for, according to John Walker, the owner of ReMax Diamond Realty in Mebane.

Because of the rising popularity of homes and apartments in Alamance County, the competition Elon students face for real estate is escalating.

"We see a wide array of buyers in our area from first-time buyers, to those looking to upsize, to those looking at senior living communities," Walker said. "A lot of people are moving to the area for work either in Alamance County itself, or ... a reasonable commute time to Greensboro, Raleigh or Durham."

Consequently, students seeking to lease off-campus housing are confronted with rising rent prices, and those looking to purchase residential properties will have to compete with statewide homebuyers, Walker said. Furthermore, local realtors have identified a trend as former, single-family residential properties are being bought instead of rented. Reasons for this shift are because of growing economic prosperity and a housing resurgence following the 2008 recession; consumers nowadays are generally more confident in making expensive decisions, such as purchasing versus leasing their next home.

Though the housing prices have witnessed a recent surge, listings in the area surrounding Elon University are not unattainable. For students specifically, this just means that they'll have to, "Be flexible, build in some time to look around, and understand that there are some trade offs," Lowder said. Contacting a reputable broker for purchases or property management company for rentals would also be quite wise, according to Walker's expertise.

When beginning the hunt for the ideal off-campus property, both executives advise students to ask themselves pressing questions, ranging from "Is it likely that the music you blast at 2 am will prompt a complaint from neighbors?" to the more practical questions such as, "How far are you willing to commute to campus?" and "What amenities does this property offer?" Regardless of the answers, finding the right property — according to both realtors — is simply a matter distinguishing wants from needs.

makerhub  
DOWNTOWN

## GRAND OPENING!

OCTOBER 19TH • 4-6PM • THIRD FLOOR, ELON TOWN CENTER

All Elon students, staff, and faculty are invited to tour the new Maker Hub location in Downtown Elon. The new makerspace, located above Pandora's Pies, is a creative space where anyone can make ideas come to life using a wide variety of equipment including 3D printers, a CNC router, laser engraver, and more!

TOURS • REFRESHMENTS • PRIZES

### ACTIVITIES

- Customize a hexagon to hang on the Maker Hub wall
- DIY leather bracelet station
- Raspberry Pi demos
- Maker Hub tours
- Laser cutter demos
- DIY sticker station
- Giveaways

@ElonMakers