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ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

THE PENDULUM

‘SLOWLY BURNING’

RATE OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING CHARGES IN
ALAMANCE COUNTY TRIPLED
THE STATEWIDE RATE IN 2018

EFFECTS OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING FELT CLOSER
THAN SOME THINK

Emmanuel Morgan
Elon News Network | @_EmmanuelMorgan

THE 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL CRIED in pain as blood gushed from her scalp onto a filthy floor. Moments earlier, the woman who held Alex Herring in a state of servitude — a human trafficker, in other words — attacked the girl with a razor blade for disobeying her. She knew seeing a doctor was out of the question, so she dealt with the gash in her head the best she could. Herring became a makeshift surgeon, desperately pulling the hanging skin over her wound, applying pressure for hours until her flesh adhered and the blood clotted, forming natural stitches. Her trafficker, as she normally did, locked the refrigerators where food was held, so Herring resorted to chewing dog biscuits after the ordeal. She then returned to work on the farm in rural North Carolina where she sensed no one could find her, let alone rescue her. If she rested without permission, the woman would hurt her again. Or worse. “There were days,” Herring recalled, “when she would say, ‘Do you want to die today? Because I could kill you.’ And I absolutely believed it.”

See **HERRING** pg.4

Beto O’Rourke hosts intimate speech in local brewpub

Democratic candidate speaks about HB2 and North Carolina voter ID laws

Maggie Brown, Jack Chambers, Abby Gibbs and Mackenzie Wilkes
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Presidential candidate Beto O’Rourke spoke at Natty Greene’s Pub and Brewing Company in downtown Greensboro on Monday, April 15. O’Rourke also continued his North Carolina campaign circuit as he spoke at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill later that afternoon. O’Rourke is among over a dozen Democratic candidates vying for the party’s presidential nomination as the first primaries and debates approach. On par with his intimate style of speaking, O’Rourke stood in the center of the upstairs bar area amidst the crowd of people to whom he spoke.

In the crowd were students and professors from University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), Elon University and residents of Greensboro and High Point. Lauren Kalo, incoming student body president of UNCG, asked O’Rourke how he would change voter ID laws if elected. He said laws in the country today prevent many people from being able to vote. “This country calls for a new voting rights act that will not allow for voter ID laws to keep people out of the ballot box,” he said. O’Rourke spoke up for the LGBTQ community, reminding the state of the House Bill 142 controversy from 2013. He also addressed one of the state’s gerrymandered districts that cuts through North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

See **O’ROURKE** | pg. 6



Beto O'Rourke addresses marijuana legalization during his speech at Natty Greene's Brewpub in Greensboro on Monday, April 15.

ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR



NEWS • PAGE 7
Students and faculty petition for a train station at Elon.



LIFESTYLE • PAGE 9
Elonthon miracle child receives support from Elon community.



SPORTS • PAGE 10
Felipe Sarraague reflects on four years with men’s tennis.

THE PENDULUM

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ENN seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty, as well as serve as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

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ENN is committed to accurate coverage. When factual errors are made, we correct them promptly and in full, both online and in print. Online corrections state the error and the change at the top of the article. Corrections from the previous week's print edition appear on this page. Contact enn@elon.edu to report a correction or a concern.

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CORRECTIONS

NEWS
In the article titled, "Pride in Progress," multiple paragraphs were left out of the story. These paragraphs referenced sophomore Jay Tiemann's arrival at Elon shortly after coming out as a male as well as Elon's ranking in the Campus Pride Index. Elon News Network regrets the error.

In the article titled, "Former Australian prime minister visits as keynote speaker," Julia Gillard's name was misspelled. Elon News Network regrets the error.

LIFESTYLE
In the article titled, "Celebrating the Elon LGBTQIA+ Community," the Gender and LGBTQIA Center's name was misprinted. Elon News Network regrets the error.

DID THAT REGISTER?



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY - \$1 MILLION DONATION

APRIL 14, 1999. Dusty and Peggy Rhodes donated a \$1 million check to fund the Elon College football stadium on April 14, 1999. Then-President Leo Lambert declared the occasion as "Dusty and Peggy Rhodes Day" during College Coffee on the same day.

Dusty was surprised by the attention the donation garnered.

"Peggy and I did not expect anything like this. We wanted to just slip the check under the door and

run," Dusty said.

As members of Elon's football team lined up to celebrate the donation, members of the team went out of their way to thank the Rhodes family individually.

"The donation is a wonderful gesture of kindness to the Elon College athletic program," said then-sophomore linebacker Mike Hazel. "The football team truly appreciates the Rhodes family's generosity."

GAMES

How to Play: Guess the missing word in the five clues, then find them in the word search below. Words can be found backward, diagonal, etc.

- Potential Democratic presidential candidate _____ O'Rourke spoke at Natty Greene's Pub and Brewing Company in downtown Greensboro on Monday, April 15. *See Page 6 for answer.*
- Assistant professor of philosophy Ryan Johnson believes that a _____ station in Elon would be beneficial for staff and students. *See Page 7 for answer.*
- Through Children's Miracle Network, Josh Holdner became a miracle child for _____. *See Page 9 for answer.*
- Senior Felipe _____ started playing tennis at five years old in his hometown of Buenos Aires, Argentina. *See Page 10 for answer.*
- Junior Steven Mei and sophomore Adam Behrman created the university's first _____ team together. *See Page 11 for answer.*

F J Y R G F A H K U I Y E D
J O Q U G I K Q J C T S W Q
K H F T Q V T A I P O U G T
N T A B L E T E N N I S H L
T L K Z S B S L Z B X J X C
S A R R A S A G U E K S D O
U U U I T L H U V H B V H O
C Q Y A R B J Z D E P Q P C
R H L A A N O H T N O L E O
V B R P I S N O O I R G G M
O V V D N X K R T O E V Y H
O J T M S R Q X A G O G S B
C D F X B I Z N X I M W Z O
I S L V L I U Q S M W A D X
E H L D S T B L H L F Y U N

CALENDAR: APRIL 17 - APRIL 23

MONA HANNA-ATTISHA TO RECEIVE LEADERSHIP MEDAL 4:30 P.M. LaRose Digital Theatre 17	MULTIFAITH SCHOLARS SENIOR PRESENTATIONS 5:30 P.M. Isabella Cannon Room, Center for the Arts 17	TAKE BACK THE NIGHT – SURVIVOR SPEAK-OUT 6:30 P.M. Whitley Auditorium 18	PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE SPRING CONCERT 7:30 P.M. Yeager Recital Hall 18	HOLY THURSDAY MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER 7:30 P.M. Holt Chapel 18
WORLD PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE SPRING CONCERT 'AFROCUBANISMO' 10 P.M. Taphouse 18	GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS 12 P.M. Scott Plaza 19	GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION 3 P.M. Holt Chapel 19	PASSOVER SEDER 5:30 P.M. Elon Community Church 19	EASTER SUNDAY MASS 11 A.M. Alumni Gym 21

Delta Delta Delta Sorority's Epsilon Delta chapter performs at the annual Greek Week Dance on Wednesday, April 10, in Alumni Gym. Delta Delta Delta earned second place in the large group category.



JESS RAFFOGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR

Meredith College freshman Alison Bunce holds a sign supporting Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke during O'Rourke's campaign stop at Natty Greene's Brewing Company in Greensboro on Monday, April 15. [SEE MORE BETO O'ROURKE | PAGE 6](#)

Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity's Mu chapter performs at the annual Greek Week Dance on Wednesday, April 10, in Alumni Gym.



JESS RAFFOGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



CORY WELLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hosted by the Student Union Board, standup comedian Ron Funches performs for the Elon community on Wednesday, April 10, in Alumni Gym.



JARED BUNDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elonthon participants dance in Alumni Gym. The annual 24-hour dance marathon benefits the Children's Miracle Network and took place April 12-13.

[SEE MORE ELONTHON | PAGE 9](#)



NUMBERS FAIL TO CONVEY **TRAFFICKING'S SCOPE**

HERRING | from cover

Herring's fears later ended though. She and her two adopted sisters suffered three years of abuse in North Carolina before an alert neighbor called authorities, who removed the trio from their captor.

Now Herring tells her story freely to make the point that human trafficking, in all its various forms and intensities, is more than a practice common to distant parts of the world or on Hollywood sets. Similar crimes occur across North Carolina, even as close as a hotel room right here in Alamance County.

An Elon News Network analysis of 2018 North Carolina court data found that Alamance County's per capita rate of human trafficking criminal charges is more than three times higher than the statewide rate in 2018.

Alamance County also ranks second in the state for most reported sex-related trafficking charges while ranking fifth in total reported human trafficking-related charges, according to the data.

From federal politicians in Washington, D.C., to social workers, to sheriffs' investigators, to sociologists, those who are trying to stop trafficking say Alamance County struggles to understand its full scope. And until harsher penalties and awareness of the issue grows, the crime will only escalate, they say.

Trapped and enslaved

Originally from Hong Kong, Herring was adopted at 2 years old by her trafficker, a British woman named Mercedes Farquharson. Before Herring, she had also adopted two biological sisters from the United Kingdom, who were 5 years old and 9 years old at the time. In both her adoption pitches, Farquharson promised a prosperous life for the children, providing education and hope in Spain. Instead, she forced them to work.

The trio moved with Farquharson to Monroe, North Carolina — a suburb outside Charlotte — in 2002 when Herring was 13.

There, they worked on Farquharson's three-acre rural farm tucked away in a residential neighborhood. Every day, Herring cared for Farquharson's 300 chickens, 14 dogs and other farm animals with which she also shared living quarters.

Herring's travel visa eventually expired. Farquharson used that as

leverage, saying she'd have Herring deported if she didn't follow instructions.

"I thought to myself, 'There's nothing I'm really able to do except look after the chickens and goats and dogs,'" Herring said. "I felt I deserved some dignity of life, but ... there wasn't any of it around. I felt extremely depressed and suicidal."

In 2005, workers with Union County's protective services department rescued Herring and her two sisters after a neighbor reported witnessing a beating in broad daylight.

The supervisor of the team that saved the trio was so inspired by their story that she adopted the girls, seeking to invest in them and their futures.

Seven years later, Herring graduated from Elon University, an

institution rooted in a county that wrestles with the same crime she experienced.

Herring's life now has structure. At 28, she's married and working as a magazine editor in Greensboro. To explain the real dangers of human trafficking, she appears at regional conferences to share stories of her forced labor — of the years in her youth when she was convinced her existence was "worthless."

"I was told pretty much my whole life that all I was good for was the manual labor she could get out of me," Herring said. "No one knew who I was. There was no record of me really anywhere. It was a pretty hopeless situation."

Understanding the numbers

Carmen Monico's research into

human trafficking spans decades. She has devoted the majority of her career to this issue — including writing her doctoral dissertation on it.

In 2014, the assistant professor of human service studies at Elon mentored a student on a project examining students' knowledge of trafficking. In a survey, only 4% of participants showed a high level of knowledge of the crime; 87% of respondents also said they consider human trafficking only a low or medium-level priority in Alamance County.

But the facts lead law enforcement and advocates to think differently.

Data from Polaris, the non-profit organization that runs the National Human Trafficking Hotline, consistently ranks North Carolina as a top-10 state for hu-

EMMANUEL MORGAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Above: Alex Herring (center) poses with her second adopted family. Herring was trafficked until she was 15 years old.

man trafficking, with nearly 3,000 reported victims and 1,100 reported charges over the past 10 years. Currently, it's ranked No. 8 in the country.

North Carolina state law defines human trafficking victims as being one of three types: minors involved in commercial sexual activity, adults induced into sexual activity through force and children or adults performing labor or services through force or coercion.

Court data show 13 human trafficking-related charges in Alamance County in 2018. Seven of those involved sexual servitude, the second most in the state.

"This is a concern not just for North Carolinians, but this is a concern for cities everywhere," Monico said. "There is human trafficking happening everywhere, including those cities where students are coming from."

Forty million people fell captive to human traffickers last year, according to the United Nations, and more than 8,500 victims are in the United States, according to Polaris.

But data only conveys reported cases. Experts fear more are caught in this cruel cycle.

"I don't think we know the true scope of the amount of human trafficking going on here," said Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson. "But we do know it is here, and it is here in a big way."

Pushed and pulled to a breaking point

How, in 2019, does someone become enslaved?

Victims can be anyone — and Courtney Dunkerton learned that personally.

One evening in the 1990s, she agreed to drive a frightened young woman to a crisis pregnancy center. As they took a stop on I-40 to eat dinner, Dunkerton said the woman revealed she was a "sex slave." The woman, Dunkerton recalls, said she met a man online. But shortly after meeting her, he held her captive in his trailer, selling her for sex with different people across the state.

Dunkerton was shocked. She had never seen a trafficking victim before.

Later, she learned that trafficking doesn't have an ideal victim. But when she was sitting across from this woman, she didn't know



Nearly 50% of Alamance County children live in single-parent homes

Source: American Community Survey



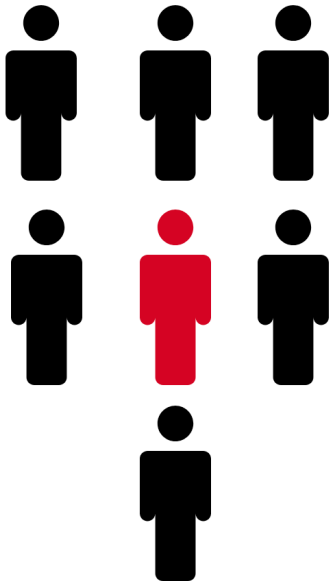
Nearly one -in-5 Alamance County residents live in poverty

Source: Census Bureau



85% of sex trafficking victims in the United States used controlled substances

Source: American Medical Association



One-in-seven reported missing children in the United States fell victim to sex trafficking

Source: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

that.

“This is going to sound terrible, but I’m just going to be real. This person was not what I would expect a sex slave would look like,” Dunkerton said. “I was like, ‘No way, she’s lying.’”

Dunkerton took the woman to the center. That episode, though, prompted her to learn more about human trafficking.

“When I learned about trafficking, I realized, ‘Oh my gosh, that’s what was going on,’” Dunkerton said. “And I didn’t really believe her because it sounded so bizarre. I look back on that incident with a lot of regret.”

That encounter motivated Dunkerton. After volunteering as a social worker for years, Dunkerton founded Alamance for Freedom, a local human trafficking advocacy organization, in 2013. Last July, the organization merged with CrossRoads, a sexual assault response center, to combine manpower and resources.

CrossRoads now serves human trafficking victims, and Dunkerton leads those efforts as that program’s director. Alongside helping victims, she strives to teach the realities of human trafficking — and to shatter the same uninformed views she once had.

Both Dunkerton and Monico said victim profiles aren’t uniform. CrossRoads has served different races, age groups and sexual identities though Dunkerton said the majority are teenage females.

But Dunkerton said she wants people to understand trafficking is a deliberate, methodical process rooted in societal ills.

“I say any child maltreatment — where there’s child abuse, where there’s abandonment, where there’s neglect — you’re creating very vulnerable situations where their emotional needs are not being met,” Dunkerton said. “You’re sort of setting that kid up for being groomed by someone who could benefit from them financially.”

Experts say “push and pull” factors influence everything.

Family dysfunction, mental health, poverty and drug dependence can push victims into the web. Traffickers then opportunistically pull victims by using coercion — mainly by false promises or violence.

Problems in Alamance County produce ripe conditions for human trafficking, Dunkerton said everyday social and economic issues lead troubled people to becoming potential victims.

“Dealing with poverty, those inequalities, racism — it’s all connected,” Dunkerton said. “When I think of human trafficking, I think of it as a community issue.”

Nearly one in five county residents live in poverty, according to census data. Almost half of county children live in a single-parent household, according to the American Community Survey, a nationwide survey administered by the Census Bureau.

Geographically, two major interstates merge through the county — creating easy access for sellers in their routes across the East Coast.

Bilal Ghandour, assistant professor of psychology at Elon specializing in emotional, behavioral and traumatic disorders, said traffickers can use these things to entrap potential victims.

“They prey on the vulnerability of a person who may not have a role model and may not have a system in protection,” Ghandour said. “They treat them probably very well the first 48 hours and little by little those special favors and kindness go away.”

“It just deteriorates into a situation where it no longer becomes

BY THE NUMBERS

8,524

was the number of reported human trafficking victims in the United States in 2017.

221

was the number of reported human trafficking victims in North Carolina in 2017.

4%

of Elon University students thought human trafficking was a pertinent issue in Alamance County.

“TRAFFICKING IS BASICALLY HUMANS USING OTHER HUMANS IN THE WORST POSSIBLE WAYS.”

ALEX HERRING
TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR

feasible,” Ghandour said. “It’s almost as if you’re slowly burning.”

Establishing law and order

At her bleakest point, Herring remembers praying to God, asking for help.

“I don’t know if You’re real, but if You are real and if You exist, please rescue me out of this situation because if You don’t, I can’t see a way out.”

Deliverance came a few months later.

An alert neighbor who was walking her dog called authorities when she saw Farquharson hit Herring. Union County Department of Social Services workers soon came and interviewed the girls. Farquharson wasn’t home at the time, Herring said. After the social workers came, Farquharson fled the country, but authorities arrested her in Bulgaria in 2009.

A federal jury indicted Farquharson on charges of involuntary servitude and child abuse inflicting serious injury. But after psychiatric evaluations, the court determined she suffered from a mental illness, making her “incompetent to stand trial,” according to court records. The court dismissed her case in 2011 but ordered her to return to the United Kingdom.

Authorities had no trouble rescuing the trio once they knew the situation. But Johnson believes law enforcement often intervenes too late. By the time authorities arrest traffickers, their victims have experienced long periods of stress and abuse he thinks are preventable.

“I think we have failed these individuals simply because we are not getting them the necessary care and resources that they need to bring these girls out of that environment,” Johnson said.

Trafficking operations take longer than standard arrests. They normally consist of undercover work and surveillance, which require more skills, sensitivity and money to do properly.

Rep. Mark Walker (NC-06), who serves Alamance County’s district in the federal House of Representatives, called this issue a “travesty.”

The first bill he introduced as a member of Congress in 2015 dealt with human trafficking, and he’s supported bills to provide better training for law enforcement and tougher penalties for traffickers.

After winning his reelection bid last November, Walker said his focus now shifts to the customers, or “johns,” who receive the services of victims.

He and Johnson both think

federal and North Carolina prostitution laws are too lenient. Unless authorities prove a solicitor of prostitution is a trafficker, they can only charge them with a misdemeanor on the first offense, according to the law. Walker says if “johns” were immediately charged with felonies, it would deter trafficking all together.

“As opposed to just a slap on the wrist, I believe those penalties should be increased,” Walker said. “I have no problem making and enforcing very tough sentencing. This is a problem here and it’s about supply and demand.”

Hope in the struggle

In Herring’s Greensboro home, a wooden sign hangs adjacent to her fireplace. In block letters, it reads, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” a scriptural passage from the biblical book of Joshua.

She sees that sign whenever she walks through the front door. It’s a reminder she now serves a higher power — not someone who exploited her for selfish benefit.

Earlier this year, Herring presented at a conference in Charlotte about her story. It aligned with newly released data from the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission, which is housed under the state’s judicial branch. The state earned an “A” rating for its initiatives to combat trafficking, a stark improvement from the “D” rating it received in 2011.

Since 2016, North Carolina’s General Assembly approved laws

to teach human trafficking awareness classes in all public middle schools and mandated certain businesses to post trafficking awareness signs.

CrossRoads and local law enforcement also work closely on trafficking cases. Dunkerton said her staff hosts trainings with officers on dealing with victims properly. At Elon, Monico started a class on human trafficking and teaches students about the crime, the factors that lead to it and how to prevent it.

Herring said it’s a start, but the problem is far from solved.

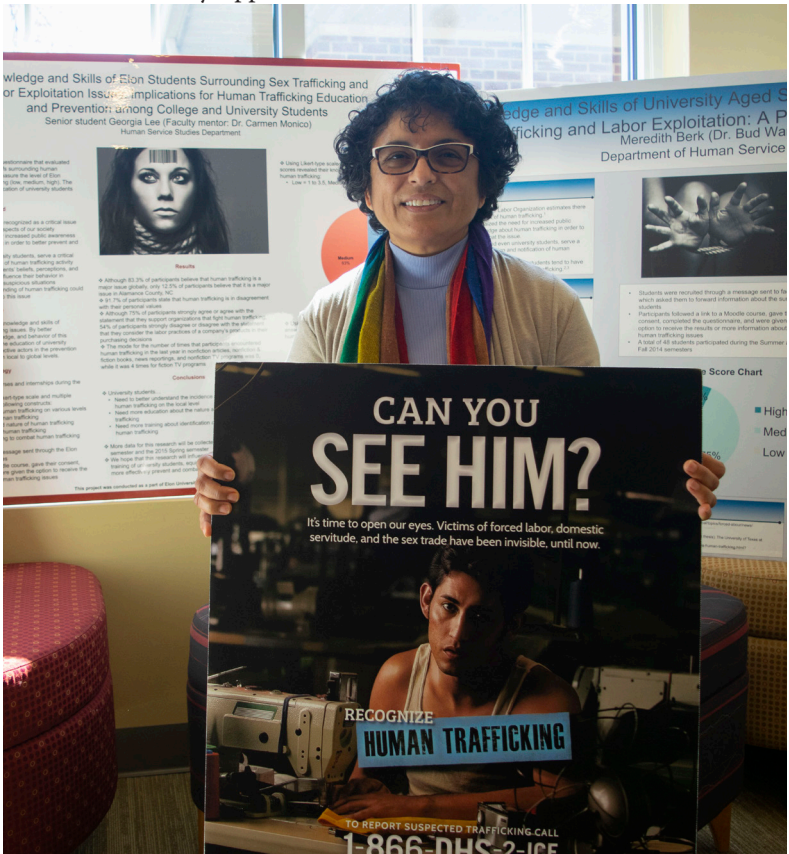
She’s still going to advocate on the issue because she doesn’t want someone to experience her past. And like she did with the gash in her head, she handles the situation as best she can.

“Trafficking,” Herring said, “is basically humans using other humans in the worst possible ways. I know what it’s like, and I hated it. I hated living that way, and I would never want anyone else to go through what went through.”

Maya Eaglin, Meagan Lynn and Carter Rayburn contributed to the reporting of this story.

Bottom: After Alex Herring was trafficked, she graduated from Elon University in 2012.

Below: Carmen Monico has devoted decades to researching and advocating about the dangers of human trafficking and currently teaches a class on the topic at Elon University.



EMMANUEL MORGAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX HERRING

O'ROURKE CAMPAIGNS IN GREENSBORO, CHAPEL HILL

O'ROURKE | from cover

O'Rourke spent many minutes discussing education during the meet and greet. Forgiving student loan debt, according to O'Rourke, is especially important for educators. He said that teachers and public school staff who are doing the "most important job" — teaching — should not be burdened by debt.

He also said that educators should be paid enough to live off of their teaching job alone and should not have to work a second job.

"Whether they're a nurse, a counselor, a librarian, work in the cafeteria, pick up as a custodian at the end of the day, drive those kids to school as a school bus driver or are the instructor at the front of the classroom, I want those public school educators focused on those children," O'Rourke said.

O'Rourke spoke passionately about climate change and how it affected Southern states like North Carolina and Texas. He said it has caused "two 500-year storms in the last two years" in North Carolina — referencing hurricanes Matthew and Florence. O'Rourke, contradicting

President Donald Trump's statements, said that there is only 10 years until it is too late to combat climate change before it is irreversible.

Chloe Yoon, a freshman majoring in the School of Education

“

THIS COUNTRY CALLS FOR A NEW VOTING RIGHTS ACT THAT WILL NOT ALLOW FOR VOTER ID LAWS TO KEEP PEOPLE OUT OF THE BALLOT BOX.

BETO O'ROURKE
DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

at Elon, asked O'Rourke how he would combat the "school-to-prison pipeline." She was inspired to ask this question after her alternative spring break trip in Columbia, South Carolina and visiting elementary schools.

She said was excited to hear

from O'Rourke and believes he has a concrete plan in improving education.

"His vision toward education was very impactful towards me especially as a future educator," she said. "His plans to, first of all with student loans that's huge — he's attempting to cut that off, and then also making sure that teachers get fair wages."

O'Rourke also mentioned how inspired he was by the Greensboro Four, a group of African American men who sat at a counter in a chain department store in 1960. At the time, African Americans were not allowed to sit at the counter. Their sit-in caused the store to end its segregation policy. O'Rourke made the claim the Four were able to "shock the conscience of this country" through their sit-in.

But Heather Blackburn, an active member of Democratic Party in High Point, was not satisfied with his talking points. Though she was excited to attend the event, she wanted to know what made O'Rourke different from the 17 other candidates running for the Democratic party.

"I was a little disappointed that I didn't hear anything that set him apart," Blackburn said.



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR

Beto O'Rourke, presidential candidate for the Democratic nomination, speaks to a crowd in Natty Greene's Brewing Company on Monday, April 15. O'Rourke addressed issues such as the legalization of marijuana and reforming the criminal justice system.

Beto O'Rourke, presidential candidate for the Democratic nomination, takes a photo with a fan during the meet and greet in Natty Greene's Brewing Company.



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR

A crowd gathers outside of Natty Greene's Brewing Company as Democratic presidential hopeful Beto O' Rourke exits the brewpub to answer questions from reporters.



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR

University of North Carolina Greensboro sophomore Noah Ambrose signs his name on a support campaign form for Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke. Ambrose attended O'Rourke's campaign event at Natty Greene's Brewing Company because he wanted "to keep his options open" for all of the potential Democratic presidential candidates.



Guilford Technical Community College freshman Dominic Patafie laughs with fellow Beto O'Rourke supporters Austin Perez and Tyler Michels. Patafie was excited to attend the meet and greet on his birthday.



STUDENTS AND STAFF PUSH FOR LOCAL TRAIN STATION

The development would increase accessibility and sustainability on campus

Emery Eisner

Elon News Network | @eisneremery

A TYPICAL DAY IN ELON, North Carolina, might include the hustle and bustle of daily life going on as people rush around, absorbed in their busy schedules. Many sounds might be heard on this typical day: people talking, the wind through the leaves and the roar and scream of the train nearby. But we now know this is not a typical day in Elon. This is a typical Elon day in 1888, during the period of time in which a railroad depot was located in the town.

From the fall of 1887 until 1961, the railroad depot known as Mill Point served Elon in different ways. While at first it “was built to provide rail service to two textile mills,” according to Don Bolden’s book — “Images of America: Elon,” the station later “provided transportation to and from campus for generations of students,” according to a plaque on campus.

In the 58 years since the station’s closing, Elon University students have relied on alternate forms of transportation to get to and from campus over breaks, and faculty have often commuted upwards of an hour each way to get to and from work. This is something assistant professor of philosophy Ryan Johnson would like to change.

“Driving in traffic is bad for physical and mental health,” Johnson said. “As the saying goes, when you are in a car, everyone is your enemy.”

Commuting via train would alleviate this stress, Johnson said, especially as an increasing number of people live in towns like Greensboro, Durham and Raleigh.

“Making it easier for our staff members to get to/from campus by avoiding the worsening traffic seems like a great service to them,” Johnson wrote in an email.

The station would also provide “equity and justice” for students, according to Johnson.

“Some majors, such as education, require internships, which requires traveling off campus. But if one does not have a car, perhaps because a stu-

dent does not come from a wealthier family, then such lower-income students are penalized,” Johnson said, adding that for international students who might come to Elon without driver’s licenses, “confining them to a car-dependent environment is akin to destining them to failure.”

Junior Liam Collins agrees that for students of lower-economic status, a train would be a benefit.

“Elon’s a pretty ritzy-ditzy rich kid space. A lot of kids’ parents are ... from well-off places in the country,” Collins said. Students who are not as wealthy, Collins said, might be excluded.

“If [students] need an internship to graduate and they don’t have the means to complete an internship, they can’t go to Elon, you know, and that’s a problem,” Collins said. “Right off the bat if ... we’re not giving them the means to complete those requirements, then we’re not doing our job as a university.”

A way for Elon to do its “job as a university” would be to “get other students’ foot in the door” and make it easier for students to commute, Collins said.

“We have a responsibility to leave Elon in a better place than when we found it in,” he said. “I think my contribution is to give opportunities to students like me who maybe other-

wise wouldn’t have the opportunity to attend Elon.”

Johnson agrees that giving students new opportunities, among other things, would greatly improve the

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WE CAN PUT UP AS MANY COMPOST BINS AS WE WANT, BUT IT WILL DO NOTHING COMPARED TO THE UTTER CAR-DEPENDENCY THAT IS ELON’S CAMPUS.

RYAN JOHNSON

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

school, which he said is currently not up to par in terms of sustainability.

“Elon is promoting complete car-dependency, while still also calling itself a sustainable place. ... We can put up as many compost bins as we want, but it will do nothing compared to the utter car-dependency that is [the] Elon campus,” Johnson

said, emphasizing that “cars are terrible polluters.” But his dissatisfaction with cars, especially those used around Elon, does not end there.

“Most people drive to Elon, drive alone and in big cars,” Johnson said. “This is such a silly, privileged, entitled way to think about going through the world.”

Instead, Johnson said the use of a train at Elon is an obvious alternative, saying people at Elon and in similar places are bound by what he calls “car-slavery.”

“The hope is to show how wonderful and easy it is to use the train, and to make more converts from car-slavery to train-freedom, who will then spread the word further and further,” he said.

This “car-slavery,” according to Johnson, is also to blame for “the rise of obesity, the unbelievable environmental impact, the huge sway of oil companies, the 40,000 per year car-related deaths.” He even went so far as to say “the American highway system is rooted in Hitler’s plans for Nazi Germany.”

According to associate professor of German Scott Windham, “the connection between the Autobahn and the interstate highway system is too nebulous. ... There are other really good reasons to turn away from cars and toward mass trans-

portation that have nothing to do with Nazism.”

In addition to accessibility and sustainability, Collins said a train station at Elon would significantly decrease the amount of isolation felt by many students who cannot get off campus.

“We talk so much about the Elon bubble, but we don’t really do much to pop it,” Collins said. “Elon’s a very interesting place because you’re here and it’s one place and you travel five minutes that way or five minutes in any direction, and it’s a completely different world. ... I think that if we can introduce students to other ways of living, then that greatly opens up the global experience.”

The path to obtaining a train station will not be easy, Collins said, emphasizing that advocacy is the only realistic way to achieve the goal.

“Nothing happens on this campus unless students say they’re going to do it,” Collins said. “Reach out to your student government representatives ... because they are the ones that are going to be able to advocate for that, and they can pass legislation that says this is something the student body wants. They can allocate money to be able to make it happen down the road.”

But Johnson said it might be easier to get a train station here than one might think.

“The cost will not be outlandish,” Johnson said, noting that the cost would be shared by multiple parties, including Elon University, the town of Elon, Norfolk-Southern, Amtrak and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The impact of a train station, no matter how expensive, would be worth it, according to Collins.

“Elon is going to be known as the town before Elon got the train station and after,” Collins said while reflecting on what, in his opinion, would be a massive change in Elon’s reputation and history.

EMERY EISNER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Top: The railroad tracks that run parallel to campus are a regular fixture and landmark for the town of Elon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Left: The Mill Point Railroad Depot, known as Elon College Railroad Station, in 1922. The depot closed in 1961.



OPINIONS



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE TERRY | DESIGN CHIEF

CAMPUS VOICE

Center for the Arts building conditions are not ideal



Lauren Cash
@elonnewsnetwork

When I toured Elon University for the first time, I instantly fell in love with the sleek, modern buildings that made up Arts West. I was extremely impressed by the facilities and could picture myself sitting in the leather seat behind the mixing board recording my songs in the immaculate studios. I told my parents the same day that I had decided to make Elon my home for the next four years. Many prospective students like myself have found places within the gorgeous buildings of Elon to explore their strengths and hone in on their craft. It wasn't until later on that I discovered not all music facilities were created equal.

My first class in the Center for the Arts was Aural Skills. I was greeted by a warm smile from my profes-

sor, and then I promptly sat down in a dated seat. I was cramped with around 15 peers in a piano lab. It was very shocking to see the substantial deficit in funding. Every other class I'd been in until that point had been clean, bright and modern. The Center for the Arts stands out sorely against Elon's characteristic, classical Greek architecture.

I got a concerned email in November regarding the conditions of the Center For the Arts — the sizable, blocky building adjacent to Lake Mary Nell. While students were rehearsing for Elon's winter show, "Sweeney Todd," many performers were affected by the apparent mold problem at McCrary Theatre.

"From talking to friends and peers, it seems what we have been

told in the past is that the theater has been cleaned and checked for mold, but there was not enough mold present to go in and eradicate the problem completely. That, or the mold problem is not present at all," said senior musical theatre major Alec Michael Ryan. "From my personal experiences over the last three and a half years, I am confident that is not completely true and the conditions in McCrary Theatre need to be reassessed and improved."

In addition to the mold situation, many performance students have complained about the lack of sound proofing in the practice room. Recently, when I went to practice my pieces for Electric Ensemble, I could hear everyone else's voices and instruments bleeding through the

paper-thin walls. I was extremely distracted and couldn't give my full attention to my piece. At the very least, the Center for the Arts should alter their practice rooms so they're noise cancelling and conducive to practicing. Elon has highly esteemed musical theater alumni who have had roles on multiple Broadway shows.

The Center for the Arts should ideally reflect the spirit of the performances being held in it. The art ingrained in the architecture would in turn inspire younger generations to create something great as well. If the Center for the Arts aligned with the irrefutable beauty of the rest of campus, Elon could recruit more students who are looking for a home on campus to cultivate their passion and love of music.

The childish actions of our politicians are harmful to our country



Andrew Resnick
@elonnewsnetwork

The summer between my freshman and sophomore year in high school, I was a counselor at a local Jewish Community Center camp. I worked with a variety of campers ranging between the ages of three to 10 years old. As to be expected, there were countless fights and arguments among the campers on a daily basis.

After each of these fights, I would take both campers into a separate location where we would try to resolve their differences. I would mimic a skill used by my parents when I would constantly get into fights with my brothers as a child. Both parties were able to tell their side of the story, and ultimately, after some respectful dialogue and negotiation, each person walked away happy with the outcome we had eventually reached.

This strategy works wonders for a camp counselor dealing with kids under the age of 10. And this is the reason why I cannot, for the life of me, wrap my head around the fact that our political leaders act as children do with contempt towards any ideas or opinions their colleagues may have.

The people who we elect to represent us are not supposed to be as narrow-minded and intolerant as many lawmakers are today. Each side of the aisle is equally at fault for the extreme amount of animosity and disrespect towards one another, which has now created a wide division encompassing our entire nation. The resentment each side has for each other is embarrassing to our country on a world stage but even more dangerous to our citizens.

Take the most recent government

shutdown, which occurred at the end of 2018, leading into 2019. Instead of rushing to pass a bipartisan budget bill to attempt to reopen the government, Democrats and Republicans alike dug their heels in and pointed fingers blaming each other for the government gridlock. All the while, thousands of Americans were being put on furlough during the holidays while at the same time, politicians were engaging in the childish "You started it" dispute.

Scenarios like this, unfortunately, are not unique in our politics today, nor do they take place only in the politics at a national level. All around the country, in different state and local legislatures, divisive back-and-forth arguing and failure to recognize legitimate ideas and policies from either side has widened the rift in our nation even more. The

sad difference between the arguments, between these legislators and the campers I worked with at camp JCC is simple: the politicians are many years older than the campers. Their arguments are virtually the same, and both sides blame the other while refusing to listen to what the other side has to say.

This is why I implore the lawmakers in our political system today to stop acting like children and to grow up and compromise with each other in a respectful manner. It is exhausting to hear about all of the negative sentiment, which has poisoned our political theater nowadays. Even if it takes a camp counselor to mediate both sides, all I want is less fighting among our politicians and, instead, more willingness to negotiate with each other — just as any 10-year-old is capable of doing.

LIFESTYLE



MIRACLE CHILD FINDS SECOND HOME IN ELONTHON

Josh Holdner has been working with Elonthon for 12 years and with a rare liver disease for life

Maeve Ashbrook
New Member Coordinator | @ashbrookmea

20-year-old Josh Holdner has Tyrosinemia Type 1, a rare liver disease. His body does not possess the enzyme needed to break down protein, and therefore he cannot eat it. Instead, he takes a pill containing 12 grams of protein each day.

Holdner is treated at Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center, a North Carolina Children's Miracle Network hospital. Through Children's Miracle Network, Holdner became a miracle child for Elonthon.

Holdner has been working with Elonthon for 12 years and is now on the executive board. His family said he talks about the event all year, and

on the way home, he always says: "I can't wait for next year."

"When Josh is here, he's in his element," Josh's father Mike Holdner said. "He is with family. He feels like he belongs somewhere. He feels like he has a purpose, and so this does wonders for Josh emotionally, spiritually and physically."

"I think it's an important event for the miracle children, especially because it kind of gives them a little time to be quote-on-quote normal or try to be normal and not have to kind of deal with doctors and hospitals," Mike said.

When Holdner was just a year old, his mother Teri Holdner said doctors told her she was crazy for thinking something was wrong with her son — until she took him to Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center.

"If it wasn't for Duke, Josh wouldn't be here," Teri said.

Danielle Holdner, Josh's sister, was three years old when Josh got

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WHEN JOSH IS HERE, HE'S IN HIS ELEMENT. HE IS WITH FAMILY. HE FEELS LIKE HE BELONGS SOMEWHERE. HE FEELS LIKE HE HAS A PURPOSE.

MIKE HOLDNER
JOSH'S FATHER

sick. She said she remembers going to the pediatrician knowing something was wrong because Josh would never stop crying.

"I remember that moment when we went to Duke, and it felt, really different," Danielle said. "You know, we weren't going there every single day, which was a change after a

while, and you know, I felt like my family became happy again."

Both Josh and his family said their favorite memory from Elonthon was interacting with Leigha Martinelli, another Elon miracle child who passed away this January. Josh and Martinelli knew each other for 15 years.

"They just clicked right from the start," said Josh's father Mike Holdner. "It was magical. It was great to see."

On his journey with Children's Miracle Network, Josh said Martinelli is one of the most important parts.

"She just tried to be positive 100% of time, and I've just tried to live up to what she wanted to live up to as well," Josh said.

However, Martinelli was just one part of his large support system.

"If it wasn't for my parents and my family, I wouldn't be here today," Josh said. "They fought so hard for me at the time of my diagnosis.

JARED BUNDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Top: The Elon community dances at Elonthon 2019 on Friday, April 12, in Alumni Gym. The annual 24-hour dance marathon benefits the Children's Miracle Network.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH HOLDNER

Inset: Josh Holdner hugs fellow Elonthon miracle child and friend Leigha Martinelli at Elonthon 2018. Martinelli passed away this January.

Duke wasn't taking patients outside of Durham County, and we live in Wake County. So, we got on the phone with Duke, and we just begged and begged and begged and then they finally let us go."

Josh is currently in his second year at Wake Technical Community College and hopes to transfer to a four-year university in the next year. He is majoring in communications and wants to work for Children's Miracle Network.

REVIEW

Spectrum's "Rocky Horror" proves raunchy yet respectful



Emery Eisner
Elon News Network
@eisneremery

On Friday, April 12, Jules Weingold, the introducer for Spectrum's production of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" and cast member playing Magenta, welcomed "guys, gals and non-binary pals" alike to attend a live lip-sync performance in front of the cult-classic film starring Tim Curry and Susan Sarandon.

The film has developed a reputation as an LGBTQ anthem of sorts, centering around Brad Majors and Janet Weiss, a vanilla couple that discovers the cross-dressing alien Dr. Frank N. Furter and his sexually free gang of companions.

Given the significance of the film within the LGBTQ community, Spectrum's performance served as a grand

finale to the organization's spring pride celebration, which included "Dragstravaganza" and "BBQueer."

Upon entering the theater, each guest was treated with "Rocky" traditions. Everyone was greeted with a red lipstick "V" on their forehead and given a cheat sheet of phrases to yell at the screen during key points of the movie — including "castles don't have phones" every time Majors mentioned using the phone.

After an introduction that provided a list of trigger warnings and rules of participation, Spectrum's rendition of "Rocky" began with a competition between "Rocky virgins" who had never attended a performance of the film before. The two hosts of the evening,

Weingold and Joe Rodri, called audience members to the front and asked them to make their best sexual noises. Later, the audience-chosen winner would be featured as a minor role at the beginning of the film.

Throughout the performance, cast members playfully engaged the audience in the "Time Warp" dance routine and ran through the rows of seats during various scenes. Each cast member also took on their respective characters with great intensity. Though everyone in the production came together to create a well-rounded performance, some cast members especially shined: Kira Se-dayao oozed confidence as Dr. Frank N. Furter, dancing on beat and serving strong facial

expressions; Rachel LeFrock channeled Janet's demureness to a T; and Joe Rodri's sly demeanor and posture made for a classic Riff Raff.

Audience participation remained crucial throughout the performance, especially since the experience was new for a majority of those in attendance. Murmurs of doing research ahead of time and dedicated studying of the cheat sheet that was provided made for a rowdy rendition of the film that included ad-libbing beyond the classic callbacks. During Rocky's birthday dinner scene, one audience member felt compelled to shout, "Hey, it's my mom's birthday!"

This amount of comfort felt by the audience is a triumph for Spectrum, especially given

the explicit nature of the film and its traditions. During the opening contest, "Rocky virgins" who were not comfortable making sexual noises were simply passed over without complaint from the cast, an element that is essential in fostering trust and the supportive environment many students have come to expect.

This kind of environment is a key aspect of Spectrum's platform as inclusivity and respect are pillars of the organization. In this way, it was relieving and refreshing to see a balance of pure raunchiness and complete respect from the players to the audience.

Overall, Spectrum's "Rocky" left audience members wanting to do the Time Warp again ... and again and again and again.

SPORTS

ONLINE:
Stay up to date on
men's tennis at
elonnewsnetwork.com



SARRASAGUE SERVING IN STYLE

Star tennis player deals with pressure going into his final CAA tournament

Alex Reynolds

Sports Director | @reynolds14_

Senior Felipe Sarrasague is undoubtedly one of the most special tennis players to ever step foot on Elon University's campus.

His incredible, raw talent has grown throughout his four years at Elon, and in response, he has been showered with accolades and awards. But these accomplishments have been a blessing and a curse for Sarrasague.

Sarrasague started playing tennis at five years old in his hometown of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Having been taught how to play by his father, Ignacio, Sarrasague quickly developed a deep passion for the game. While being a professional tennis player had always been his dream, it took some time for this dream to get off the ground.

"I used to go to school from 7:30 in the morning to 5 p.m., so I couldn't really play many tournaments at least in South America," Sarrasague said. "I tried to go around Argentina, but the school was giving me a hard time to go and play tournaments."

After proving himself as a legitimate rising star in Argentine tennis, his school, Fray Mamerto Esquiú, gave Sarrasague academic leeway to pursue his athletic passion. This freedom allowed him to compete in international tournaments where he became the No. 7 ranked U-18 singles player in Argentina. Now a sought-after college athlete, the high school senior chose Elon under the guidance of head coach Michael Leonard to continue his tennis career.

Sarrasague stepped onto Elon's campus in January 2016, and his presence was immediately felt. In spring 2016, his first time playing in the United States, Sarrasague tallied 15 singles wins and was named First Team All-CAA and CAA Rookie of the Year. This all came from playing primarily in the No. 1 and No. 2 positions where he would be consistently matched up against the opposing team's top players.

By the time Sarrasague arrived from Argentina, Leonard was in his 12th season at the helm and already a legendary Elon tennis coach. Between 2005 and 2014, Leonard led the Phoenix to eight SoCon finals, winning five of them (2006, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014). From the start, Leonard could see the talent Sarrasague had on the court.

"He was always a great competitor with regards to hustle, fire and scrap, but his game got a lot bigger over the years," Leonard said.

By his sophomore year, Sarrasague was the undisputed top dog in Elon tennis. Between the fall and the spring, he won 21 matches, all from the No.1 position. He was named First Team All-CAA for the second year in a row.

Sarrasague was not always competing on the court alone. In his sophomore year, he started teaming up with his classmate Mario Paccini. Together, they finished 9-5 overall and 5-2 on the tour. Paccini was injured in their junior year, but the two reunited for their senior season. During this time together, the two became close on and off the court.

"We'll eat together, we'll have dinner with the entire team, and Felipe and I will just talk doubles or watch tennis. We watch a lot of



highlights, and it's good we talk a lot about tennis," Paccini said.

Now in their senior year, the two still share a court for doubles where they are the top doubles team and hold a record of 7-1. Their relationship is now also one of competition. Since Sarrasague plays at the No.1 position and Paccini plays the No. 2 position, the two constantly go head-to-head in practice.

"We push each other hard, but we understand that it's tough to compete against each other, but we like it, so that's what we try to do as much as we can," Paccini said.

His early success and development culminated in a career-defining junior season. He tallied a team high of 20 singles matches and added 15 more wins in doubles competition. Once again, he was competing solely from the No.1 position where he went head-to-head with three Intercollegiate Tennis Association top-150 ranked opponents. This impressive season resulted in the high honor of CAA Player of the Year and his third consecutive

First Team All-CAA nomination, the first such mark in program history.

Though the accolades are reinforcements of Sarrasague's greatness and, to an extent, proof of his dream coming true, they bring unintended consequences. Behind all the glory of being ranked, there is a great amount of pressure that falls on the shoulders of the Argentine superstar.

"I feel that I put extra pressure on myself when, for example, when I am ranked, I think that puts some extra pressure on me, but I decide to put that pressure on me. I shouldn't," Sarrasague said.

Sarrasague said the pressure he puts on himself often comes out on the court. During matches, he said he gets "tight" when he thinks about losing and what that will do to his ranking and status. This lapse in focus leads to mistakes, and the fire he plays with turns to frustration. He is then forced to pull himself out of that rut and refocus on the match itself.

"I'm kind of like a rollercoaster, and I'm trying to stay in balance.

PHOTOS BY ALEX REYNOLDS | SPORTS DIRECTOR

Top: Elon University senior tennis player Felipe Sarrasague (middle right) is recognized during the Senior Day ceremony prior to the team's match against East Carolina University on Saturday, April 13, in the Piedmont Indoor Tennis Center.

Left: Elon University senior tennis player Felipe Sarrasague hits a forehand shot during his match against East Carolina University during Senior Day on Saturday, April 13.

That would be my goal," Sarrasague said.

This mental instability has been a focal point of the coaching staff's coaching of Sarrasague. Leonard understands that to get the best out of his star player, it all starts with his mentality going into the matches.

"Hitting the ball wise, we feel like he can play with anybody, but if he starts to become negative, things start to get away," Leonard said. "Most of his matches are all about psychology: it has nothing to do about hitting the tennis ball; it's about how he handles adversity."

In order to keep Sarrasague on track, Leonard brought back his former player and Sarrasague's former teammate Neal Port '18, as an assistant coach. And part of Port's role is to stand in Sarrasague's corner and reel him in when his emotions start to get the best of him.

"He needs someone to feed off of. He plays with energy, he plays with positivity, he plays with fire, he's tough and he can change all that energy to something negative. You need to try and quickly get him to reset that mindset," Leonard said.

With the CAA conference tournament set to take place Thursday at the Jimmy Powell Tennis Center, the hope of both Sarrasague and the coaching staff is for him to enter the tournament in the right mindset in order to finish his Elon career on a high note.

"I am trying to find the balance in between that so I can hopefully play my best tennis in the most important competition that is the conference," Sarrasague said.

Students start Club Table Tennis team at Elon

Newest club sport seeks new competition and connections at upcoming tournament

Caitlin Rundle
Elon News Network | @caitlinr_21

Junior Steven Mei and sophomore Adam Behrman met when they both competed in the fall 2018 intramural table tennis tournament hosted by Elon University. Now, they not only consider each other good friends, but they are also now teammates after creating the university's first Club Table Tennis team together.

"I saw Adam practicing with a friend and asked, 'Could I hit some with you?' and I could tell that he had some training like me, but that's where we really started to hit it off and play table tennis together," Mei said about the first time he remembered meeting Behrman. "We just got together and started playing a lot, and we were like, 'Oh, we should start a club,' and here we are."

Table tennis is something both members are passionate about and were excited to become more involved in on campus in a more competitive manner.

"I've been playing with my parents in my basement my whole life, and I originally met with Steven at a tournament that must've had 30-35 people just to play and 20 other people were just showing up to watch," Behrman said. "I was like, 'There's already a huge following of table tennis here. We should start a club.'"

Behrman then went to President Connie Book and told her about his and Mei's vision to form a table tennis team. President Book was so thrilled by the idea that she agreed to become the team's faculty advisor.

"It's kind of surreal. When you talk to her kind of like a friend, it is a very respectable relationship because you have to understand that she has a very prestigious title," Behrman said. "But on the ping pong field, it's almost like we're equals."

With not only the permission from Campus Recreation and Wellness to form the team but also the approval from President Book, Behrman and Mei were then faced with the challenge of how to get more people involved in the club when most had already committed to other organizations.

"Technically, there's 30-40 members, but members that actually show up? There's around nine," Mei said.

"I knew it would be really tough because people are already involved in other organizations, but the executive team was aware of that, so we try to focus on events," Behrman said, echoing Mei.

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WHEN YOU CAN REACH PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT MAKES EVERYONE ENJOY AND RESPECT ONE ANOTHER, IT CREATES A LOT MORE OPEN DIALOGUE. I'VE REALLY SEEN THAT OVER THE PING PONG TABLE MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE.

ADAM BEHRMAN
SOPHOMORE

In that spirit, Behrman and Mei thought it would be a good idea to cohost a Club Table Tennis tournament similar to the one that brought them together. This tournament, they said, would be open to all students and faculty and serve as an opportunity for current members to make new connections and help grow the team. With help from the rest of the executive officers, they scheduled the club's first tournament to take place at 2 p.m. Friday, April

IF YOU GO...

What? The Elon Open table tennis tournament
When: Friday, April 19, at 2 p.m.
Where: Moseley Center, first floor
How? Register for free at bit.ly/elonopenspring2019

19, in the Moseley Center.

Both Behrman and Mei are proud of the work they've put into the team and the memories they've made so far in the club's first semester.

Mei still recalls the day they received new tables before practices started in the Koury Center Concourse. "When we got new tables for Koury practices, Adam and I were really happy about it because we realized that this was becoming an actual thing," Mei said.

For Behrman, he holds the first practice close to his heart. "Seeing all of the work that was put in over a few months and all of the advertising and getting tables and all of this planning — to see it all come together during this practice and having all of these people come out just to play ping pong was really unreal," Behrman said.

Looking beyond their first tournament, Behrman and Mei are excited about the potential of the club and what they hope they can accomplish next year.

"I would like to have more people to come out to have fun and develop as players," Mei said. "Right now, we have a core group of players that play consistently, but I would love to see that number grow and have more people become passionate about playing."

Behrman also hopes to see more people come out and play, but he stressed the value of making connections with people he wouldn't have otherwise.

"When you can reach people in a way that makes everyone enjoy and respect one another, it creates a lot more open dialogue," Behrman said. "I've really seen that over the ping pong table more than anywhere else."



ZACH OHMANN | PHOTO EDITOR

Sophomore Adam Behrman, president of Club Table Tennis, hits a forehand during practice Friday, April 12.



ZACH OHMANN | PHOTO EDITOR

Junior member of Club Table Tennis Blake Fang prepares to hit a forehand during practice Friday, April 12.

Kirby is starting to turn Major League heads

Elon pitcher's "savage" mentality draws national recognition

Jon Sarver Jr.
Elon News Network | @sarver_jon

With just under a month to go in the season, Elon University baseball has a winning record and currently sits atop the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) standings. One of the reasons for the team's success is junior pitcher George Kirby.

Kirby has been racking up accolades in his third season as a Phoenix. He has been named CAA Pitcher of the Week three times this year and was placed on the midseason watch list for the Golden Spikes Award, which is given out to best amateur player in the country.

One of Kirby's best performances of the season came on March 10 when he pitched a complete game shutout against Bryant University, striking out 11 hitters

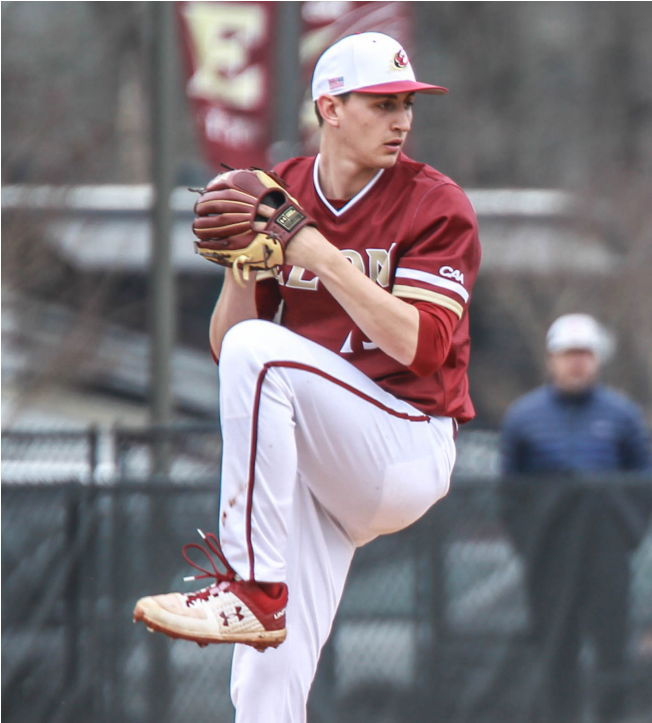
in the process.

In his career at Elon, Kirby has racked up more than 200 career strikeouts. Kirby also has strong command, allowing only five walks in 55.2 innings pitched this year. When it comes to attacking hitters, Kirby said he has an aggressive mentality.

"I just go out there and try to be a savage," Kirby said. "It is something I think about a lot on the mound. I just try to go throw strikes, blow it by them. That's the basic mentality."

That mentality showed in his most recent outing on April 14, when he struck out seven hitters in a 4-1 victory against the University of Delaware. This pushed his strikeout total to 65 on the year.

Kirby has been drawing attention from Major League Baseball teams since high school. He was selected by the New York Mets in round 32 of the 2016 MLB Draft. But Kirby chose Elon over an MLB career, and he said he was happy with his decision.



ABBY GIBBS | MANAGING EDITOR

Junior pitcher George Kirby throws the ball in the first game of the doubleheader against Bryant University on Sunday, March 10. The Phoenix ultimately split games with the Bulldogs.

"I just wanted to come to a school with a great education and somewhere where I knew I could play and compete as a freshman," Kirby

said. "I just didn't think I was ready mentally or physically for pro ball. So I'm glad I came here. It was a good decision."

“

I JUST GO OUT THERE AND TRY TO BE A SAVAGE. I JUST TRY TO GO THROW STRIKES, BLOW IT BY THEM. THAT'S THE BASIC MENTALITY.

GEORGE KIRBY
JUNIOR PITCHER

Sean McGrath has been the team's pitching coach since 2017. He said Kirby is a very coachable player.

"I say something, and he gives me a look, and boom. He goes and does it," McGrath said. "He has the innate ability to go and do it in one or two pitches, which is really awesome to see. Which kind of speaks to his level, his ability."

Head coach Mike Kennedy said Kirby has become a more steady pitcher in his time at Elon.

"He's been more consistent, more aggressive," Kennedy said. "He knows his

fastball is good. He's been much more aggressive in terms of attacking hitters."

Kennedy also praised Kirby's improved mental toughness.

"I think mentality-wise, he's gotten tougher," Kennedy said. "You know, that's a big goal for him."

With 16 games left in the regular season for the Phoenix, Kirby said he wants to maintain his competitive edge on the mound.

"Just keep that same intensity going on the mound," Kirby said. "Just got to compete every time I am out there."

5/24/19

**READY
OR NOT,
HERE IT
COMES.**

go.wfu.edu/524ready