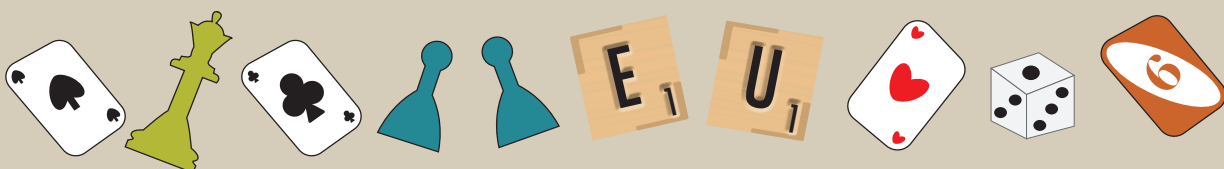




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Local
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Sports
Staff Picks



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**First Year
Parking Lot**

THE **PENDULUM**

A PUBLICATION OF
**ELON NEWS
NETWORK**

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Elon News Network is a daily news organization that includes a newspaper, website, broadcasts and podcasts. Letters to the editor are welcome and should be typed, signed and emailed to staff@elonnewsnetwork.com as Word documents.

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EDITORIAL POLICY:

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.

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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
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CORRECTIONS

There are no corrections from the last edition of The Pendulum.

'Best Of 2026' winners

This annual special edition highlighting campus, community favorites
voted on by ENN's readers

Local

Town of Elon event
Farmer's Market

Annual event
Alamance Pride

Live music series
Music at the Plaza

Downtown Burlington business
Persnickety Books



Downtown Gibsonville business
Maple View's
County Line Creamery

Place to volunteer
Burlington Animal Services

Transportation
Uber

Mechanic
Adams Auto & Accessories

Pet Store
PetSmart

Veterinarian
Elon Oaks Veterinary Hospital

Gym
Koury Athletic Center

Yoga Studio
Feel Better Yoga Burlington

Hair Salon
Brushed | Hair + Beauty

Nail Salon
Magic Touch Nails & Spa

Barber
Blast Barber Studio

Florist
Filo's Creations Florist

Dry cleaning
McPherson Cleaners

Thrift store
Bella's House

Shopping spree
Tanger Outlet Center

Day trip
Chapel Hill

Group activity
MaGerk's Pub Music Bingo

Bookstore

Persnickety Books

Park

Burlington City Park

Campus & Student Life

University tradition
Festival of Lights & Luminaries

Living Learning Community
Communications LLC, Honors LLC

Residential neighborhood
Global Neighborhood

Off-campus housing
Oak Hill, West End

Student band
Yards Davis

Performance group
DanceWorks

Campus initiative
Locally grown produce for Elon Dining

On-campus breakfast
McEwen Food Hall

On-campus lunch
Billy D's Fried Chicken

On-campus dinner
Qdoba Mexican Grill

Between class snack shop
Winter Garden

Student-owned business
Designs by Sky

Fountain
Chandler Fountain



Study spot
Carole Grotnes
Belk Library,
Inman Reading Room

Campus Bathroom
First floor Moseley Student Center

Food & Drink

Grocery Store
Harris Teeter

Downtown Elon Food
Pandora's Pies

Breakfast

Press Coffee + Crepes

Coffee

The Oak House

Tea

The Oak House



Sweet treat
Andy's

Late night food
Cookout

Burger
Blue Ribbon Dinner

Food Truck
Bulkogi

Vegetarian and vegan food
Pandora's Pies

Bar
Paulie's

Italian Food
Prego's Trattoria

Mexican Food
Celito Burlington



Asian Food
Simply Thai

Phoenix sports moment
Tennis winning the CAA

Sports

Championship
Men's varsity team
Basketball

Women's varsity team
Basketball

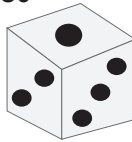
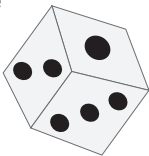


Club Sport
Swimming

Staff Picks

Fast food side
Culver's pretzel bites

Game piece
Dice



ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS ISSUE OF THE PENDULUM WERE CREATED BY
MEGAN WALSH AND SARAH T. MOORE.

Live music series
Music at the Plaza



The Fandinos perform original songs and covers for over 50 people who gathered at Elon Town Square to enjoy live music, food and drinks during Music at The Plaza on May 2 at Elon Town Square.

ENN File Photo

Annual event
Alamance Pride



Drag queen Stormie Daie reads a children book to parents and kids at Alamance Pride on Oct. 4 at the Historic Depot in downtown Burlington.

Venus Soto Castaneda | Staff Photographer

Grocery store
Harris Teeter



Elon junior Rose Baroni shops at Harris Teeter.

Anjolina Fantaroni | Staff Photographer

Park
Burlington City Park



Dentzel Carousel at the Burlington City Park. The carousel was built sometime between 1906 and 1910.

Venus Soto Castaneda | Staff Photographer

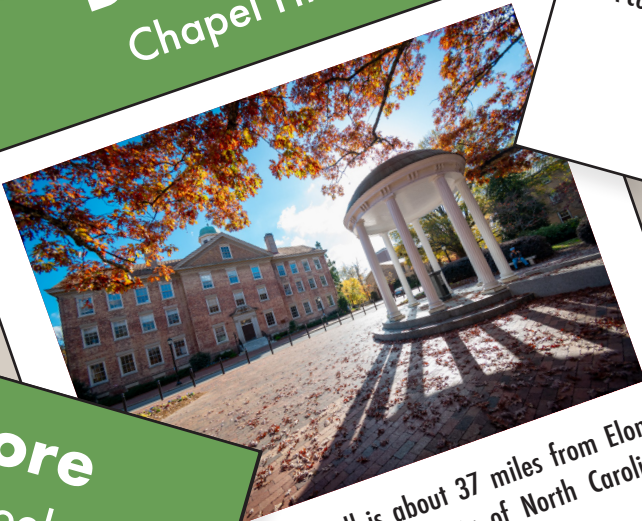
Dry cleaners
McPherson Cleaners



A conveyor belt of clothing at McPherson Cleaners.

Megan Walsh | Staff Photographer

Day trip
Chapel Hill



Chapel Hill is about 37 miles from Elon's campus. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill is located here.

Nate Skvoretz | Courtesy of Daily Tar Heel

Bookstore
Persnickety Books



A display of books at Persnickety Books in Burlington.

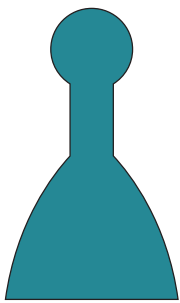
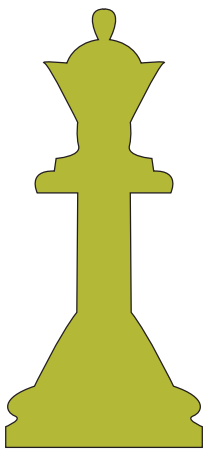
Venus Soto Castaneda | Staff Photographer

Breakfast
Press Coffee + Crepes

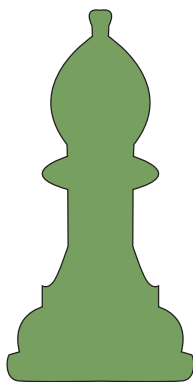
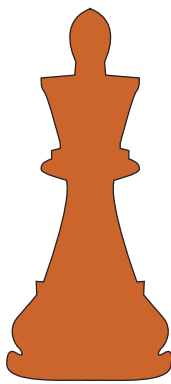


Two employees work behind the coffee station at Press Coffee + Crepes in Graham.

Venus Soto Castaneda | Staff Photographer



Local



Best Town of Elon event Farmer's Market



Elon Farmer's Market on Oct. 23 in downtown Elon.

ETHAN WU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Abigail Haapapuro
Elon News Network

The Town of Elon Farmer's Market, hosted every Thursday from April to October, was voted "best Town of Elon event." The market holds more than 15 vendors selling flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, handmade items, and other local items. What sets this event apart from others, however, is the community that comes with it, something that many vendors say is just as important as the products they sell.

Clark Norman of Rodwell Roots Flower Farm said the broad appeal is what keeps the market thriving. Being held in the Elon Community Church parking lot, the market is centered around pulling people in from all different backgrounds.

"We have a lot of things that appeal not

only to the students of Elon, but the Town of Elon," Norman said.

For many residents, Thursday afternoons are the time to buy their weekly vegetables, bread and flowers while catching up with familiar faces. The steady flow of locals, churchgoers, students and families makes the market a rare space where people from all different backgrounds blend together.

Another longtime vendor, Bob Thomas of Gardner Bob calls it a, "central for community," adding, "during the school year, when the Elon students are around, there's so much life."

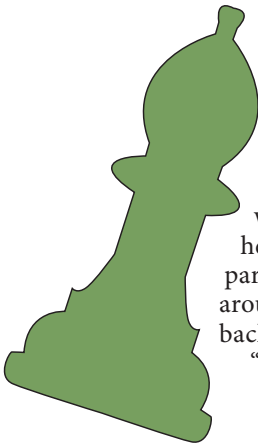
The market has fostered community since 2007 when it was started by the Elon Community Church. The relationships built between the students as the event has evolved, as well as the vendors is what has made the market thrive for the past 18 years. Many vendors said they return each season because of the familiar faces and

updates they get to hear from the people in their community every week.

Jonathan McCauley and his wife, owners of Wild Lavander Apothecary, said their favorite part is "meeting the students and other vendors and getting to form a kind of family with them."

The interactions between the vendors and the towns is what makes this farmer's market so special. Without the community coming out each week in the spring, summer and fall, this market wouldn't have turned into the environment that makes students and Town of Elon residents come back year after year.

As Thomas puts it, "this town is Elon University," and the market is the perfect place to bring everyone together once a week.



Best veterinarian

Elon Oaks Veterinary Hospital



Elon Oaks Veterinary Hospital is on South Williamson Avenue. Clients can book appointments for cats, dogs, rabbits and other animals on ElonOaksVet.com.

Evan Cooper
Elon News Network

Elon Oaks Veterinarian Hospital was voted “best veterinarian” of 2026. The veterinary hospital has served Elon and surrounding communities since 2021. Dr. Kristina Belton, veterinarian and owner of Elon Oaks, said she started the practice because she wanted a local vet that emphasized education and support — for both staff and patients.

“I just wasn’t happy at other practices with my ability to influence the practice culture and really build a place for people to work that was supportive,” Belton said.

The veterinary hospital offers general animal care for dogs and cats, same day urgent care appointments, reproductive care,

and exotic animal care. According to Elon Oaks’ website, the veterinary hospital prides themselves on serving the community. They provide community education and volunteering, and they serve as a partner to local organizations in order to make a difference inside and outside the hospital. One partner is Elon University’s Campus Alamance program, with Elon Oaks offering paid summer internships for students interested in veterinary care.

Junior Anna Hayne has been taking her cat, Estella, to Elon Oaks for almost two years. As someone who didn’t grow up with cats, Hayne said she started with lots of questions about owning a cat. Elon Oaks was willing to answer all of them.

“I would come in every single time with a list of questions, and they’d be ready to help

me figure it out,” Hayne said. “They even helped me figure out how to make Estella not trigger my dad’s allergies.”

Elon Oaks works to make veterinary care accessible for the community. The hospital offers payment plans and wellness plans for some services, helping community members afford veterinary care. By working to keep their location reachable and schedule open for new patients, Elon Oaks works to make animal emergency room visits a last resort for the community.

“There are so many things we see that are interesting, but I think for us it’s just another day,” Dr. Belton said. “We really love being part of the Elon community and partnering with Elon University, and we are really honored to have been voted the best veterinary practice.”

Best place to volunteer

Burlington Animal Services



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Amanda Lucas, animal care staff at Burlington Animal Services, scratches the ears of London, a shelter dog, on Jan. 10.

Charlotte Pfabe
Elon News Network

Elon senior Lucy Burdette said she is a huge advocate for animals, so volunteering at Burlington Animal Services was a “no brainer.”

“Working with animals is right up my alley,” Burdette said.

Burdette is on the pre-vet track, majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry. She has served as the coordinator for volunteers at Burlington Animal Services for three years. In her role, she organizes the list of students who volunteer at the shelter each week, teaches volunteers how to interact with the dogs and cats, and serves as a bridge between BAS and Elon University.

“We just take dogs outside and let them run around and have a great time,” Burdette said. “We really just want to let them go for a walk or let them run around, especially to get their energy out.”

She said volunteers can take the dogs on walks and play with cats and kittens, who need a lot of enrichment. She also said she tries to lead by example, and show the volunteers that even though an animal may be marked as aggressive, that might not be the case.

“There was this one dog, and he was in a solo room, and he was marked as aggressive

and a little violent. I went in there to see he was the sweetest dog ever. He just cuddled up on my lap, wouldn’t stop giving me kisses. He just wanted love,” Burdette said. “And that was one of the first times I led a group of people so they saw I wasn’t scared of a dog if they are marked violent, but also dogs just want love. That’s really all they want.”

Burdette said during the fall semester, each week three Elon students, along with herself, could go to the shelter from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays by signing up on PhoenixConnect. She said she wishes she could take more people, but because the shelter is small, big groups could overwhelm the animals and crowd the space.

“They fill up so fast,” Burdette said. “The second it goes out on PhoenixConnect, in an hour, I would say almost all of them are filled up.”

She said she hopes the opportunities to interact with animals from Burlington Animal Shelter can be brought to campus. Burdette said she hopes she can help organize dog treat making events or events where the shelter brings dogs or cats to Elon before finals week so that students can play with the animals.

“I’m excited to see what else can happen, like, see where it goes in the next couple of years,” Burdette said.

The Oak House named ‘Best Of’ for coffee, tea



The Oak House is a coffee house, craft beer bar and wine lounge on North Williamson Avenue.

KATRINA HOLTZ | PHOTO EDITOR

Abigail Haapapuro
Elon News Network

The Elon University campus voted for The Oak House to win two “Best Of” categories: tea and coffee.

Located just across the street from campus on North Williamson Avenue, The Oak House has been a part of the Town of Elon since 2014. Attracting a large audience of university students due to its proximity to campus, it offers a relaxing atmosphere for students to either sit and work, meet with friends or professors, or take a coffee or tea to go on their way to class.

The Oak House has been one of Elon University students’ favorite places to unwind and caffeinate, feeling like a part of campus despite being separate from it. The Oak House draws hundreds of students daily, according to Assistant Manager Roberto Haimenez.

Haimenez said the shop’s popularity for their tea and coffee starts with their quality and consistency compared to other on-campus coffee shops.

“Us and Irazú, we get the same beans. We have the same exact method of making coffee. We get the same syrups,” Haimenez said. “But we have more space to fill in.”

That extra room gives students a place to linger, meet with friends, or settle in and do homework. The aesthetic of the shop plays a part in their popularity too.

“We have a nice, comfy, wood aesthetic,” Haimenez said, which draws the Elon community to grab a drink and stay awhile.

While coffee orders are more common

than tea, The Oak House has a wide selection of both for customers to choose from.

What Haimenez said really sets The Oak House apart from other coffee shops is their efficiency.

“It’s our ability to move people through the line pretty fast,” Haimenez said.

Despite having several hundred customers a day, the staff typically gets a full line out within five minutes.

The shop’s menu also reflects the campus’s favorites, with their iced vanilla latte, ice caramel macchiato and their classic hot drip coffee among their most ordered. Haimenez said he’s noticed many people hear what the person in front of them orders, and decide to order it as well.

For graduate student Simrin Carlsen, the comfort and familiarity keeps her coming back. She said she orders “a hot drip coffee, and they know it, which is a big reason why I come here.”

Being a graduate student, she said, “I’ve been enjoying it for a year, but I’m glad everyone else gets to enjoy it for a little bit longer.” Carlsen said she enjoys the environment, which was different from what she experienced before.

“Oak House is a very different vibe, like it’s off campus but kind of on campus which I never got, so I’m super stoked that this is very much rooted in Elon,” Carlsen said.

Braedon Wright, a senior at Elon University, visits most frequently to study and refuel.

“Just to get work done — I grab a croissant or ham, egg, and cheese just to fuel up during the day,” Wright said.

But like many students, he often bumps

into friends, and last semester found himself attending Wine Wednesdays — an recurring event where special offers are on glasses of red or white wine.

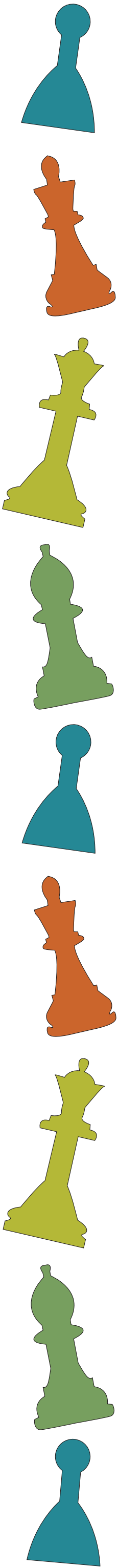
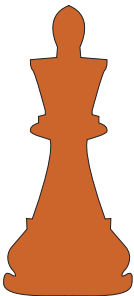
The Oak House is also the latest-open coffee shop around campus, often hosting late night events for students to grab a coffee or tea in after other shops are closed. Haimenez said they draw a decent crowd at the events.

“MOST OF OUR EVENTS ARE EVENING EVENTS, SO THE FACT THAT YOU CAN COME GET A LATE COFFEE AND WATCH A COMEDY SHOW ON A THURSDAY NIGHT DEFINITELY MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

ROBERTO HAIMENEZ
ASSISTANT MANAGER AT THE OAK HOUSE

“Most of our events are evening events, so the fact that you can come get a late coffee and watch a comedy show on a Thursday night definitely makes a difference,” Haimenez said.

Whether students come for the caffeine in a coffee or a cozy tea, whether they grab it on their way to class or stay and relax for a few hours, The Oak House has a space carved out for the Town of Elon.



Pandora’s Pies is ‘Best Of’ across 4 categories

Alice Morrissey
Elon News Network

Pandora’s Pies took home a big win in this year’s “Best Of,” winning four categories.

The local favorite was named “best downtown Elon business,” “best downtown Elon food,” “best pizza” and “best vegetarian and vegan food.”

Owner Kimberly Holt said the secret to the businesses success is their commitment to supporting the local community both in their service and in the food they serve.

“We try to buy as much of our food from local places, local farmers, and try to be as local as possible,” Holt said. “We make everything from scratch.”

The business has been in downtown Elon for nearly 14 years, making Pandora’s Pies a true Elon staple. Holt said that although they love having the Elon students come and dine at their restaurant, the local Elon community is what makes their business so special.

“We do a lot of things for the locals. And we have a big local following,” Holt said. “Like in the summer, we stay just as busy.”

Their commitment to the Elon community is shown off in their food as well with many of the ingredients sourced from local farmers and vendors. The company also works to support local projects around the community, even hosting a fundraiser for the new skate park.

Pandora’s Pies was also recognized this year for its extensive vegetarian and vegan offerings. Holt said the restaurant’s success stems from its commitment to building strong, genuine relationships with customers. Creating an environment where everyone feels welcome is one of the business’s core values, and that inclusivity is reflected throughout the menu.

For Holt, offering options for all dietary needs is deeply rewarding. She recalled meeting an Elon student several years ago who had multiple dietary restrictions and had never been able to enjoy pizza at a restaurant until he visited Pandora’s.

“His mom came in to tell me thank you so much,” Holt said. “He’s 18 years old, and this is the first time he’s ever been able to eat pizza at a restaurant. That means a lot, to be able to go above and beyond to help people out.”

Pandora’s Pies has earned numerous awards for its food recognition built on a steadfast commitment to a fully homemade menu. Everything is made from scratch, with staff preparing fresh pizza dough in-house several times a day. The team has relied on the same recipes for more than a decade, creating the signature flavors that owner Holt believes distinguish Pandora’s Pies from other dining options in the area.

“You can tell when everything’s made from scratch,” Holt said, noting that the restaurant’s dedication to quality is something customers taste in every bite.

Although Pandora’s Pies is best known for its pizza, the restaurant offers a wide range of menu options, including salads, sandwiches and other made-to-order dishes. It was this variety beyond their signature pies, that helped them secure the title of “best food in downtown Elon.”

“We just try to cater to everybody,” Holt said, noting that her goal is to make Pandora’s a place where anyone can find a meal they’ll be happy with.

Pizza Pandora’s Pies



The Farm House pizza at Pandora’s Pies has portobello, spinach, roasted garlic and caramelized onion.

Alexander Siegel | Staff Photographer

Downtown Elon business Pandora’s Pies



The Blackberry Chicken Sandwich has shaved pepper chicken, peppered bacon, sliced brie, lettuce, tomato and mayonnaise.

Alexander Siegel | Staff Photographer

Vegan and vegetarian food Pandora’s Pies



Pandora’s Pies is located on North Williamson Avenue.

Sarah T. Moore | Staff Photographer

Downtown Elon food Pandora’s Pies



The Garlic Parm Chicken Wings at Pandora’s Pies.

Alexander Siegel | Staff Photographer

Campus & Student Life

Best university tradition

The Festival of Lights and Luminaries



Students write wishes on lanterns and float them in Fonville Fountain outside of Alamance Building at the Festival of Lights and Luminaries.

KATRINA HOLTZ | PHOTO EDITOR

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

For more than the last 5 years, the Festival of Lights and Luminaries has been named “Best University Tradition,” and this year continues to show the event’s popularity.

The festival, hosted by the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, offers students to sip hot chocolate and apple cider while strolling through luminaries around the historic neighborhood and the Academic Village. Additionally, the event features booths by clubs and organizations sharing different holiday traditions from different cultural backgrounds.

Director of Multifaith Programming and Engagement Hillary Zaken organized this year’s event and said she thinks the event

continues to win best campus tradition because the event helps to celebrate the community’s different cultures and interests.

“We’re all coming together around something that’s so positive and uniting,” Zaken said. “The best way that I feel like we can celebrate who we are is to show it, right, to let our light shine.”

Senior Kate Rohan has attended the festival each year since she began at Elon. Rohan said she loves how the event unites the campus.

“It’s a no-brainer in my mind, why it won. It’s my personal favorite tradition, just because it brings so many different people together from all these different areas of campus,” Rohan said. “It really just unites us as a campus during a stressful time, being finals week.”

For Rohan, the event feels extra special, with the event happening around her birthday

each year.

“It’s always on or near my birthday,” Rohan said. “So I personally take it as a birthday present from the school, but it’s something that I make sure to be at every year.”

Rohan said she loves attending the event so much that this year, she even rearranged travel plans to be on campus when the event got rescheduled.

“I was supposed to fly home for my birthday, and then luminaries got moved, and I stayed here,” Rohan said. “That, to me, says how special of an event this is. All my friends from home know about it. This is truly just such a light-hearted event, and I love it.”

Managing Editor of The Pendulum Sarah T. Moore served on the Festival of Lights and Luminaries planning committee.



KATRINA HOLTZ | PHOTO EDITOR

Students pose in front of Fonville Fountain for photo at the annual Festival of Lights and Luminaries.



KATRINA HOLTZ | PHOTO EDITOR

Sophomores Harrison Lynn and Sarah Moughon pose for a photo at the Festival of Lights and Luminaries.



ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The members of Yards Davis preparing for their performance at Paulies Pub and Grill. From Left: Silas Coley, Daniel Hoyle, Lucas Velasco-Shen, Maya Spencer, Theo Loeher, Alex Nettles, Chason Lane. Nettles is also a member of Elon News Network's reporting staff.

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

Elon senior Lily Gooding originally started to attend Yards Davis performances when her friend started as the band's pianist. Since then, Gooding has even gone as far as making her own Yards Davis merchandise. "I took one of my big old white t-shirts, and in Sharpie, I think I wrote, 'you can Yards my Davis' on the front," Gooding said.

Gooding said watching the band over a couple of semesters and being able to hang out with members has been a great experience.

"They're all phenomenal at their own instruments, but the way that they interact as a band, like, just watching them live, I freaking love," Gooding said. "I love going

to the band's little house shows, and it's just so personable."

The band began in February 2023. In January 2024, Daniel Hoyle, a member of Yards Davis, began commenting on then-Elon freshman Maya Spencer's Instagram posts, writing things like "fire song." Two years later, Elon junior Maya Spencer is the band's lead singer.

"Then he slid into my DMs one day," Spencer said. "He was like, 'Hey, I'm in a band. I love your voice. Would you want to come to a rehearsal one day?' So I met them there, and that's how I joined."

Spencer said she loves being a part of the band because of its hectic vibe and mix of personalities.

"I do enjoy it a lot, but I will say it's like a different experience every rehearsal, every

show, because we end up doing so many different things, but it's just a lot of fun," Spencer said.

Spencer, who also writes music on her own, said the band's goal is to have fun, help others have fun through music and serve as a creative outlet.

"It's really exciting and interesting, because the way that I write songs for myself and then the way that I write for the band are two very different things," Spencer said. "So it's challenging, but also very inspiring."

Yards Davis had the opportunity to open for the Plain White T's at Elon's Homecoming Rock the Block concert in October. Spencer said the band practiced extensively for the mainstage show.

"After we found out, there wasn't really a lot of time for celebration," Spencer said. "It's just like, 'Okay, time to start working.'"



Best performance group

Elon DanceWorks



Kate Gray
Elon News Network

Student-run dance club, Elon DanceWorks, was voted "best performance group" this year. According to DanceWorks president Mackenzie Perry, the organization prides itself on hosting classes in a variety of styles such as ballet, contemporary, jazz, tap and hip-hop that are accessible to any student with an interest in dance.

"DanceWorks is truly inclusive, that's not just a word we throw out there," Perry said. "You literally could have danced for two seconds or 10 years, and we do a really great job of making sure our classes reflect that."

DanceWorks is also one of the largest clubs on campus with over 300 members, according to Perry. She always looks forward to the first class of the year to reunite with current members and encourage interested students to stay.

"The energy in the room of the first class is always just such a fun time," Perry said. "I end up meeting so many new people and so many new dancers. There's a lot of dancers on our campus, so I love meeting dancers in general. I would say the first class of every year kind of sets the pace and the tone for the rest of the year."

Perry first heard about DanceWorks on a tour of Elon's campus, and knew she wanted to join as soon as she enrolled as a



COURTESY OF MACKENZIE PERRY

freshman. Now in her senior year, Perry has served on the DanceWorks board for three years and is always looking to ensure the club remains a welcoming and enjoyable place for dancers.

"We're always talking about ways to either improve the organization, or things we want to implement, or new ideas, new events or new collaborations for our shows," Perry said.

DanceWorks puts on two showcases each year that feature student choreography. Freshman Christa Jenkins said the fall

showcase was a highlight of her first semester at Elon.

"Performing in the showcase was a lot of fun because I got to see all the other dancers, which I hadn't seen," Jenkins said. "The shows are really hype. I feel like it's something everyone can participate in — the weekly classes anyone can do, and it's no commitment."

Perry encouraged interested dancers to follow DanceWorks on Instagram at @ElonDanceWorks and look out for upcoming classes and events.

Best campus initiative

Locally sourced produce



SARAH T. MOORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
A sign in McEwen Food Hall advertises locally sourced food, including eggs and tofu.

Sarah T. Moore
Elon News Network

Elon Dining partners with more than two dozen local partners to source food for dining halls, convenience stores and events, according to Elon Dining's 2024-25 annual sustainability report.

Sustainability Manager Leslie Bosse was unavailable for an interview, but wrote in an email to Elon News Network that she's thrilled to see the Elon community recognize and support the local produce initiative.

"Supporting local is an essential part of what we do here at Elon Dining, and we love that the Elon community cares about where their food comes from," Bosse wrote.

According to Bosse, Elon Dining defines "local" as "within 150 miles of campus or within the state of North Carolina."

As part of Elon University's Sustainability Master Plan, Elon Dining plans to reach 35% local spend on food by 2035.

"Supporting local has been a core value of Elon Dining for years, but we've been consistently increasing our focus and prioritizing local vendors over time," Bosse wrote.



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
A sign in McEwen Food Hall advertises local grade B fruit in support of campus partners in Western North Carolina.

On-campus breakfast

McEwen Food Hall

Students walk into McEwen Dining Hall, which includes McEwen Food Hall, Nolé Ice Cream Shop, Billy D's Fried Chicken and Village Juice & Kitchen.

Anjolina Fantaroni | Staff Photographer

On-campus lunch

Billy D's Fried Chicken

Billy D's Fried Chicken is on the second floor of McEwen Dining Hall.

Anjolina Fantaroni | Staff Photographer

On-campus dinner

Qdoba

Qdoba has an on-campus location in the Danieley Student Center.

ENN File Photo

On-campus snack stop

Winter Garden

Winter Garden Cafe includes Flat Out, Biscuitville and Freshii. The market also sells drinks, snacks, pre-made meals and candy.

Anjolina Fantaroni | Staff Photographer

Sports

Best Phoenix sports moment

Tennis team wins CAA Championship



The Elon women's tennis team celebrates winning the CAA Championship on April 27. MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

The women's tennis team's Coastal Athletic Association win was voted "best Phoenix sports moment" by the campus community after their first CAA championship in program history. Elon beat CAA rival William & Mary, who had won the last three years, 4-2 last season to secure the championship. Head coach Elizabeth Anderson said the championship was a culmination of the team's hard work. "I was just extremely proud of the team for coming together and hard work that they had had throughout the whole year,"

Anderson said. "They were all willing to sacrifice the 'me' for the 'we.'" Junior Simone Bergeron, whose 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 victory clinched the championship, said it was great for Elon to be able to host the tournament because it allowed for so many fans to show up. "We had all the people we loved supporting us; family, friends, other teams, other students at Elon, they were all here supporting us," Bergeron said. Bergeron said it was probably the happiest moment of her life and something she'll remember forever. Bergeron said she distinctly remembers the match point where she hit an impressive return to secure the win.

"I knew exactly the shot I was gonna hit, the shot I hit a million times in practice. We practice this deep ball through the middle. It's high percentage. It's really tough to return. I crush a backhand through the middle. She can't get it back," Bergeron said. "I was feeling everything: shock, excitement, just this relief, I was like, 'Oh my gosh.' Then, tears come and like feeling my team all swarm me." Anderson said that championship win has helped motivate the team even more going into this upcoming season. "They got a taste of it, but now they want to be able to do that consistently," Anderson said. "We're seeking for another one."



Then-sophomore Simone Bergeron hits a slice backhand in her win in the CAA Championship. MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Then-sophomore Simone Bergeron and her teammates celebrate winning the CAA Championship. MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Best men’s varsity team

Men’s basketball



Junior Randall Pettus II dribbles the ball as he thinks his next move against Belmont Abbey on Nov. 5.

LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lilly Molina
Elon News Network

With a brand new team this season, Elon’s men’s basketball team takes the crown for best men’s team. Ned Hull, redshirt sophomore and guard, said it’s exciting to know that the community supports the Phoenix.

“We’ve really felt the impact that they’ve had in the games this year,” Hull said. “It’s really great to see the Schar Center fill up more and more each year that I’ve been here.”

With a record so far of 11-6, the team gears up for their latest Coastal Athletic

Association season.

“We have a good group of guys, and I think that they bring a lot of life to not only the court, but also the campus itself,” said sophomore and team manager Connor Yarborough.

As a team manager Yarborough does a lot of the behind the scenes work for the team whether that is keeping track of materials or being a stand in during a practice drill. Yarborough has been a team manager since his freshman year and this year he said he really noticed how much the team has bonded.

“What sets us apart is how much the guys love one another, and how much our

team actually enjoys being around each other,” Yarborough said.

Hull said it has been fun to get to know everyone who is new on the team this year.

“Everybody plays very differently, but we all play very well together, move the ball, and it’s just really fun to go up and down and shoot a bunch of threes and protect the room with everybody,” Hull said.

Yarborough said the players support each other when they are doing well and pick up their players who are falling behind.

“We’re always together,” Yarborough said. “That’s like the first aspect of our team.”

Best women’s varsity team

Women’s basketball



Tamia Watkins looks to see who she can pass the ball to in a game against Chapel Hill on Nov. 6. The Phoenix lost to the Tar Heels 71-37.

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

The women’s basketball team was voted “best women’s varsity team” by the campus community after their first .500 or better season in three years.

The team finished with a 15-15 record in the 2024-25 season. One of the highlights of the season was the Phoenix’s upset victory on Senior Day over North Carolina A&T, who was ranked first in the Coastal Athletic Association at the time. Then redshirt sophomore guard Raven Preston was the team’s lead scorer last year and was named CAA Scholar Athlete of the Year. Head coach Charlotte Smith praised this accomplishment.

“That’s the best of the best in the conference,” Smith said. “Not only was Raven Preston a great player, but also, and more importantly, a great student. So it’s a really good thing when you can balance your sports and academics.”

Preston scored a career high 31 points in the game against A&T. Smith also said that forward Iyce Adams was a key contributor to the team. Adams averaged 8.1 points and 6.3 rebounds.

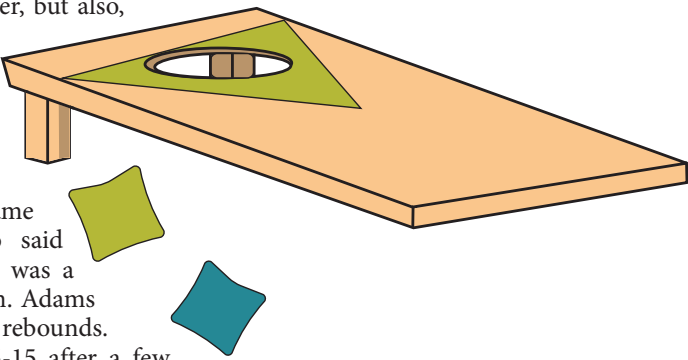
Smith said finishing 15-15 after a few

losing seasons in a row meant a lot.

“When you’ve gone through seasons where you’ve had tons of injuries and you’re trying to gain some momentum, it was just good to have a healthy roster, have everybody back finish .500,” Smith said.

Redshirt senior Kamryn Doty said she enjoyed having then redshirt freshman Ava Leroux back on the court after coming back from injury. She also enjoyed getting to know the freshmen. She said the fan response to the team was great and meant a lot to the team.

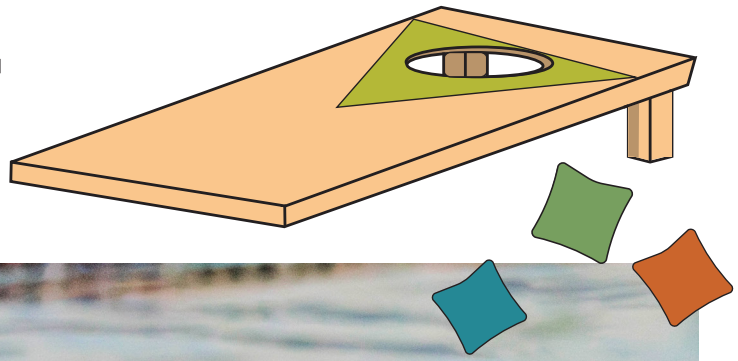
“Our fans are very loyal. They show up,” Doty said. “They’re always in good spirits, regardless of the outcome. Sometimes, when we have time to greet the fans before we go into the locker room, they’re always greeting us with smiles, telling us we did good, trying to lift us up.”



Best club sport

Club swim

Club swim



ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Practice coordinator and sophomore Nick LaChapelle leads a club swim practice.

Alannah Klingsporn
Elon News Network

Elon's club swim is a coed team that competes against other colleges and universities and is open to all skill levels.

Club Swim President Senior Zach Heath said fostering a welcoming environment to Elon students is the biggest goal for the club.

“We try to be as competitive as possible, having some swimmers go to the college club swim nationals,” Heath said. “But our main goal is just providing a welcoming environment for students who want to have a social outlet, as well as then having the physical health aspect within swimming.”

Heath credits community involvement such as volunteering opportunities with

the growth of club swim. Club swim volunteered this year with events like Trunk or Treat, and engaging with other campus organizations

"We're also just trying to be a little bit more well-known on campus, really trying to work with other clubs and organizations. In years past, it just hasn't quite worked out with timing, and so that's something we've really been working to push towards," Heath said.

Sophomore Nick LaChapelle, who serves as club swim's practice coordinator, said bonding during the meets add a social aspect to the team.

"The meets are really fun," LaChapelle said. "The meets are long, so you get to bond with the team, and it's more of a social aspect, and you also just get to swim."

Freshman Ellie Patton said the welcoming environment creates a good sense of community.

"We foster a really good environment that's very welcoming to those in the community," Patton said. "So if anyone's looking for a community to join, club's very open to them."

Heath said he has loved to see club swim's growth since when he first joined.

“One of our biggest goals has always been retention. We always have 50 people sign up at org fair, but if we only keep ten of them throughout a year, that’s not great,” Heath said. “This has actually been one of our biggest years. I think we, right now, we have about 50 people on our roster. We have a huge first year class that has come in that’s really dove into swimming, which has been great.”

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Staff Picks

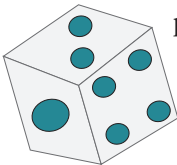


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MEGAN WALSH

Best board game piece Dice

Nia Bedard
Elon News Network

When you play a board game and prepare to move your token across the colored squares of the cardboard, the first thing you grab is your dice. You shake it between your hands and throw it into the air, playing the odds, literally rolling the dice.

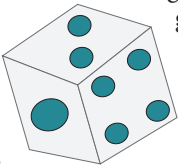


This over 5,000 year-old piece of technology comes in more shapes than just the traditional six-sided die. From the triangle-shaped four-sided die to the multi-

faceted 20-sided die, dice are what moves your game forward.

Sometimes they can be at the center of your entire game such as “Yahtzee”, where players roll dice to get certain combinations, or table-top role-playing games such as “Dungeons and Dragons”, where each and every action players’ make is determined by a roll of the dice.

I find that there’s beauty in any or every action, movement or decision be determined by a three dimensional shape with different values on each side. Without dice there’d be no movement, no progression or in some cases, no

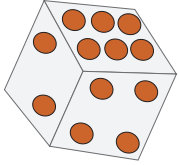
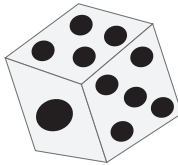


game. While not every board game requires dice, the board games that do utilize dice are rendered meaningless without.

How would you move around the board in “Monopoly”? How would you make it into the kitchen in “Clue”? How could you even play “Yahtzee”?

It is in my opinion that the movement and forward progression that dice put onto the players of games makes dice a necessary board game piece, further more this makes this multi-use game board piece the best across the board.

Best fast food side Culver’s pretzel bites



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A large serving of Culver’s pretzel bites at the Culver’s on University Drive in Burlington.

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

A newer chain restaurant that opened in Burlington last year is easily the best choice for a fast-food side. Culver’s, which originated in Wisconsin, may be known for its burgers, custard and chicken entrées, but does anyone talk about its sides? They deserve as much attention, if not even more.

Especially one of them.

The Culver’s pretzel bites are out of this world, and they’re the reason Culver’s earns the title of “best fast-food side,” in my opinion. They are better than any fast-food side I have ever tried. Even beating McDonald’s fries, and those are tough to beat.

I remember the first time I tried them. I was with another Elon News Network staff member, Nolan Williams. I love a good soft pretzel, but I was wary of trying the bites because other restaurants’ versions have disappointed me. Too many restaurants offer pretzel bites that are overly salty, rubbery or baked to the point of being inedible. I prepared myself for disappointment.

But for just over \$4, I received a medium

box of pretzel bites, which also comes with cheese at no additional charge. That’s something you don’t see every day.

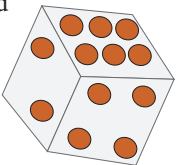
They’re fresh and hot when they come out, and they’re not overly greasy. I can eat them with my hands, or I can opt for a fork, which is my personal preference, so I don’t accidentally dip my fingers into the cheese sauce.

I also love the different sizes. A medium is perfect for just me, myself and I. A large is great to split with someone else, or even a few people. Then there’s the family-size option, which I haven’t ordered yet.

The Culver’s pretzel bites have now been introduced to most of my friends and even my dad, who works in food service. He liked them, too.

Culver’s also has solid cheese curds, onion rings and a limited-time mac and cheese, but the pretzel bites still reign No. 1 for me.

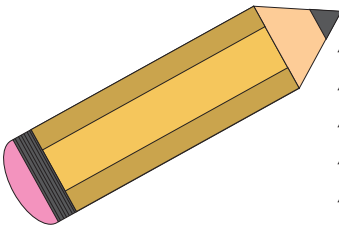
I am writing this on my notes app while eating Culver’s pretzel bites. I needed to write my feelings in real time.





Down

- 1. Annual event
- 2. Live music series
- 3. Transportation
- 4. Student performance group
- 5. Nail salon
- 6. Place to volunteer
- 7. Veterinarian
- 8. Campus bathroom
- 9. University tradition
- 10. Bar
- 11. Shopping Spree



Across

- 1. Varsity sport
- 2. Gym
- 3. Town of Elon event
- 4. Late night food
- 5. Asian food
- 6. Thrift store
- 7. Pet store
- 8. Mechanic
- 9. Pizza
- 10. Day trip
- 11. Group activity
- 12. Bookstore
- 13. Student band
- 14. Living Learning Community
- 15. Burger
- 16. Coffee
- 17. Food truck
- 18. Grocery store
- 19. Between class snack stop



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ABRERB

ONTFANIU

BORHOGHNEODIH



Find the names of the 30 “Best Of 2026” categories that were clues in the above crossword.

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Brunch!



Reserve!



Cheers!



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