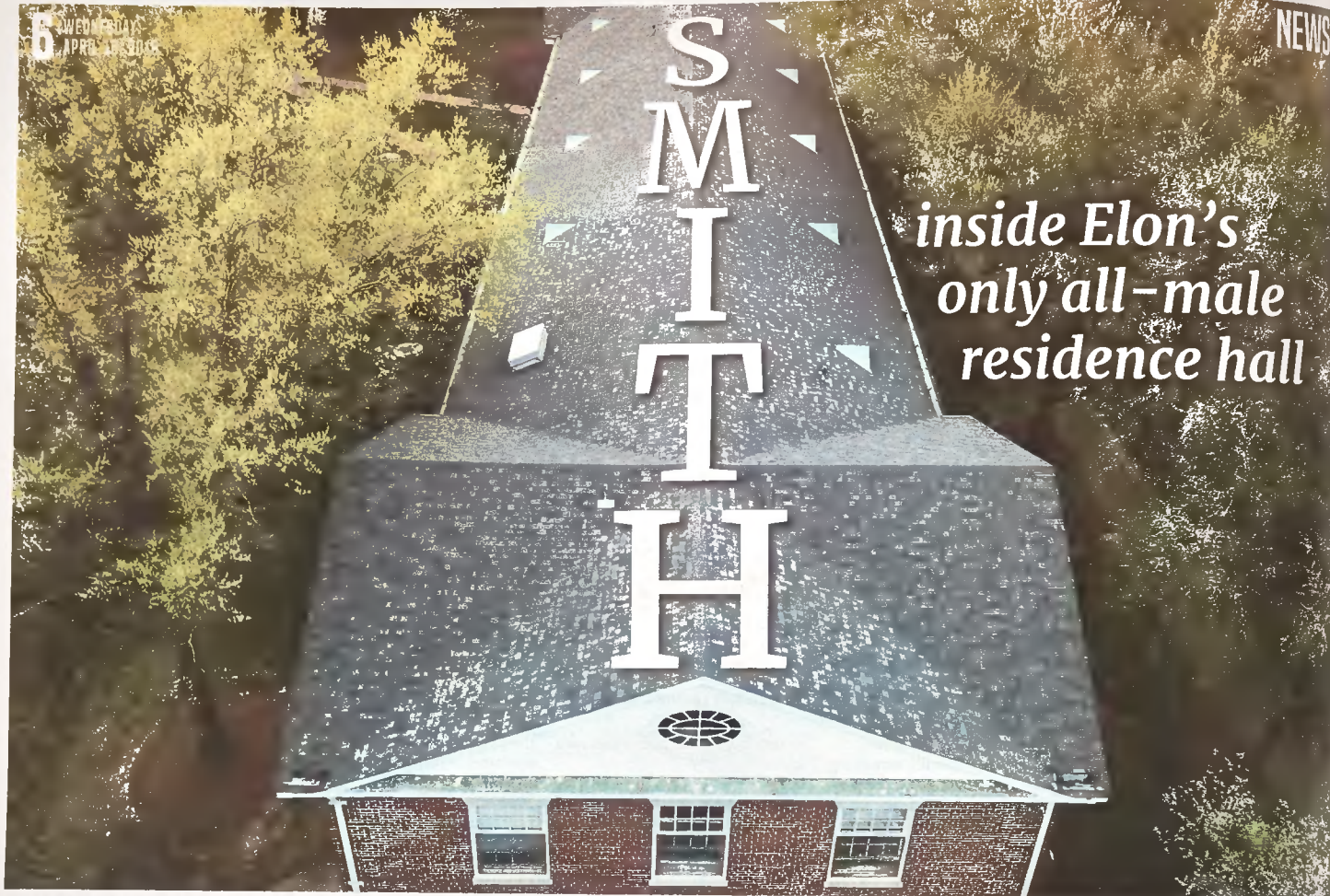


inside Elon's only all-male residence hall



An aerial view of the Smith residence hall, an all-male residence hall known for being one of the oldest buildings on Elon's campus.

CHRISTIAN GALVANO | ELON NEWS NETWORK

Breaking down the stereotypes, residents and traditions of Smith residence hall

Christian Galvano
Elon News Network | @chrisgalvano

Though many call it gross, some call it the best place to live on Elon University's campus.

Nestled between the Duke building and Carolina residence hall, Smith Hall is the Historic Neighborhood dormitory that has a unique characteristic.

It's the only place on campus where only males can live.

The residence hall has a history of broken water fountains and costly vandalism but is attractive to incoming freshmen that want the all-male experience. A 2012 YouTube video entitled "Elon University Dorms: Freshman Residence Life" included interviews of freshmen talking about what they think of Smith Hall and got over 45,000 views.

Not much has changed about the dormitory since then.

"One word to define Smith is sketchy," said Carolina resident Reese Karras. "You go in there, it smells kind of funky. There's been a lot of vandalism issues like the urinal and the water fountains. There's always cops walking through there, and you don't see that in Carolina."

Freshman Julia Reed, a friend of Karras, said, "But our best friends live in there."

This is widely understood about Smith Hall on campus. Though the hall is seemingly known for controversial vandalism, there is an aura of brotherhood and a sense of pride to live in the only all-male residence hall.

"I just like the community in Smith," said freshman resident Jack

Gormley. "I went to an all-guys high school, and this is an all-guys dorm so it kind of reminds me of that."

The dorm has been under heavy scrutiny from Residence Life following the recent 2017 fall semester incident in which a urinal was ripped out of the wall on the first-floor bathroom. Elon News Network published a story reporting a total of 23 students displaced because of the incident, which exceeded \$100,000 in damages.

The residence hall also carries a certain stereotype, one that every male who lives there is thought to embody. Freshman and second-floor resident Jack Martinides hates the stigma that Smith kids receive.

"When things happen in Carolina or HBB or Sloan or Virginia, they always blame Smith, and we don't really leave here that often. Whenever exit signs go down in other buildings, they just assume it's a Smith kid," he said.

Residents don't let the alleged stereotype dictate how they really are as individuals.

"I think I am a little different than most of the guys who live in Smith," said sophomore Alex Mock-Rossi. "I don't think it defines me."

When it comes to damage, some residents think the incentive to destroy university property comes from an idea to "continue the tradition" of Smith vandalism.

This tradition is not a new one. Elon alumnus Tom Bass '67 recalled an act of vandalism when he lived

in Smith.

"A fellow — we called him Goose — took the doors off his closet, on the third floor, turned them sideways, put them inside shower, and put towels between them, and turned the water on, and made a four-foot deep swimming pool," Bass said. "Until they broke. A tidal wave came down the stairwell!"



The laundry room in Smith residence hall also functions as the building's trash room.

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"There was a football player who shall remain nameless, who was in our class, who came in one night, late — he needed to go, and he didn't make it to the bathroom, he just went in the laundry room and went right there in the sink," Bass said. "I didn't do my laundry there the rest of the year."

To combat vandalism, security cameras were installed to ensure whoever acts against the university would be held responsible.

"[Smith] not only has the reputation of producing kids that essentially join fraternities but also producing damage and being reckless," Mock-Rossi said. "People want to live up to this reputation."

Jon Dooley, vice president of Student Life, called Smith residents together last fall to call attention to the vandalism, but nobody claimed responsibility. Since the meeting, students questioned if the university will take action by turning Smith into a coed dorm.

Residents and students living in Historic Neighborhood don't like this idea at all.

"I want it to stay the way it is," Martinides said. "Whenever you hear of someone that lived in Smith, you always have that bond."

The community Smith Hall resonates is too strong not only in the

residence hall itself but especially with its sister dorm: Carolina Hall.

"What would Carolina be without Smith?" Reed said.

"It's like asking, 'What would Jack be without Jill?' It's a tradition. They can't break the tradition. There's Carolina, and then there's Smith," Karras said.

In an April 14 email to Elon News Network, Dooley said the university has no plans to turn Smith into a co-ed dorm as of now.

"It is not actively under consideration at this time," Dooley wrote.

The all-male residence hall is known for being run-down and dirty. Residents know the dorm is like that, but it's just another aspect that adds to Smith's charm.

"It's always an adventure to walk out of my door and see what's new," said second-floor resident Benjamin Wartars. "Really noisy, really hard to get anything done, it's always hot and humid in there."

"It's really disgusting. The bathrooms are disgusting, the hallways are disgusting, but you get this sense of brotherhood," Mock-Rossi said.

Despite the obvious history of vandalism, the noteworthy dirtiness through the hallways and the constant craziness, residents still love the beloved hall they call home.

"It's the best place to live on cam-

SMITH BY THE NUMBERS

125
current residents

3
floors in the building

\$100,000
plus in damages so far this year

pus. I love Smith," Martinides said. "I mean, coming to college can be nerve-wracking if you don't know many friends and want to meet people. Coming to Smith, you are put in a position where everyone is in a similar spot as you."

As for the future of Smith, Dooley wrote the hall will go through minor changes in the summer but is due for a more significant upgrade in the summer of 2020 that compares to "those that occurred in Sloan and West over the past two summers."

Until then, the modern reputation of Smith Hall will continue.