

Sexual mores at UNC

Liberal student attitudes overshadow fears, morals

Sex is natural, sex is good
Not everybody does it, but everybody should
Sex is natural, sex is fun
Sex is best when it's one-on-one

By VICKI HYMAN

These lyrics took George Michael to the top of the music charts in the 1980s, but do they correspond to sexual attitudes at UNC?

Deciding whether to have sexual intercourse for the first time is a highly personal decision. There's confusion about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the old standbys: whatever happened to respect, trust and love?

Virgins: pure and proud

Love, religion, and fear of sexually transmitted diseases — all three are very real reasons Anissa Rogerson, a senior from Raleigh, has decided to wait until marriage to have sexual intercourse.

"Sex is the most intimate act you can have with another person. It belongs specifically for marriage," Rogerson said. "There's the trust factor ... Even if you truly love someone, there's a chance you are not going to marry him and you are giving him the most intimate part of your soul."

Keith Williams, a graduate student from Greensboro, said sex should occur only in the right situations. "Sex is like dynamite — a powerful force for good when used properly, in marriage, but very destructive when used improperly, outside of marriage."

Religious beliefs figure into most decisions to postpone sex until marriage. "My main thing is that sex is for marriage, and God ordained it that way," Rogerson said. "God is up on sex. He knew how vulnerable and intimate it is, and therefore, he designed it for marriage. I have abstained out of obedience to God and the trust factor."

The nineties bring a new era of sexual conservatism because of the frightening numbers of deaths from sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS. "You could get AIDS even if you only slept with one person," Rogerson said. "That person could have slept with only one person. And it goes on. Your one-time act of sex may be like sleeping with 10 other people. That's scary."

From the heart?

Yet others choose to experiment sexually before exchanging wedding vows. "It was a combination of love and lust," said Greg Russell, a graduate student from Summerfield, about his first sexual experience. "I don't think I knew what love was, though."

For most people in The Daily Tar Heel survey, love and lust were the two main reasons for having sexual intercourse the first time. However, curiosity and impatience also play a role for many people. "I wanted to get it over with," said Ben Salemi, a junior from Chapel Hill.

Kenyatta Upchurch, a freshman from Milton, was 15 years old when she lost her virginity. "I wasn't pushed into it," she said. "I was pretty much looking forward to it."

But some teenagers aren't able to handle the responsibility that comes with sex. "Physically, you'll be able to handle it. Emotionally, I don't think people can handle it at 15 or 16," Russell said.

Richard Mason, a freshman from High Point, said no particular age was "right" for sexual intercourse. "Some people are too young in high school, too young in college, too



young at 40. It's a maturity thing."

Most students said they didn't regret the act of sexual intercourse, just their choice of a sexual partner. "I was curious and thought, 'What the hell, let's get it over with,'" said a female graduate student from Philadelphia. "I remembered thinking, 'Is this what all the fuss was about?'"

"I thought sex equalled intimacy. It doesn't," she said. "There's more to intimacy than physical intimacy. Like trust."

Most people agree that sex is better when you love the person, according to the DTH survey. "It's the ultimate experience," Salemi said. "Sex and making love are two different things. They just resemble each other."

The casual approach

The amount of casual sex at UNC can be linked to the "anything goes" attitude on campus. "This college is full of a lot of liberal people," Upchurch said. "It's not a place where parents send their kids to be sheltered."

However, promiscuity doesn't seem like a good idea to some. "For one thing, it's risky," Mason said. "Maybe it's also a moral question. A lot of people talk about sex as a fun thing to do. I don't see it that way. It's fun, but not with anyone and everyone."

It takes maturity and truthfulness to be able to have a one-night stand and not be damaged by it, Salemi said. "I think that the biggest thing that anyone should fear about sex is dishonesty. If you go into a relation-

ship and you are honest about what you're likely to do, you don't stand to lose anything."

Under the influence

The wide availability of alcohol may also be one of the reasons for the relative sexual freedom of the campus.

"Alcohol has had a lot to do with my having had more than 10 partners," said Amy (not her real name), a sophomore. "It also led me to sleep with guys of a different race, which had totally confused my set way of thinking."

Greg Fountain, a sophomore from Asheville, said the image of the Southern Belle — "I'm soooooo drunk" — is true. "Alcohol is an excuse for the unrealistic sexual inhibitions that have been placed upon them," he said.

Stimulants and depressants may not be an excuse for our hormones, but some people tend to use them as comfort and support in sexual situations.

"Alcohol and drugs and sex are there so we don't have to think about ourselves and our pain. We don't have to face our problems," Rogerson said. "I see these as poor agents of relief."

False hopes

Lisa Lackmann of the Orange County Rape Crisis Center said studies have shown that nearly one-third of college women will be the victim of date rape or attempted date rape. However, this figure may be higher because many women do not report it.

"I feel the college atmosphere makes sex seem too casual," wrote a female sophomore who has been the victim of two date rapes. "When I came to UNC, one of the first things that slapped me in the face was the casual attitudes towards sex. For a while I fell into it. I mean I met all these nice-looking older guys and four times I slept with these nice-looking older guys and hoped something would come of it. Of course, it didn't."

"The guys on this campus that expected sex early in a dating situation caused me to lose a lot of self-respect," she continued on the questionnaire. "Therefore, I decided to exercise my ability and need to say, 'No,' and my efforts resulted in two date rape situations."

"Thanks to all these factors, I now have a hard time letting a guy get close to me and physical contact makes me extremely uncomfortable. I'm not saying that this makes me special and all the men on this campus are animals, but most of the single girls I know could tell you

similar stories ... It means that sex has turned into something ugly and, sadly enough, an expected by-product of a date. Something has got to change."

Another female sophomore wrote that she feels the sexual maturity of the men on campus is low. "Guys who entertain themselves by spreading unfounded stories about women — how this girl took two guys on at once, or how this one is just a plain whore — are thieves," she said on the questionnaire.

"Those who 'kiss and tell,' or ones who don't really get what they want, but tell their buddies they did, — they rob innocent girls of their reputations, self-esteem, happiness, and thwart potential relationships," she wrote.

Taking precautions

Kelly Victory, a contraceptive and health education counselor (CHEC) at the Student Health Service (SHS), works with students who have problems with their sexuality and birth control.

Women are continually made to bear the brunt of birth control, Victory said. "Most men don't even ask if they are protected. Guys just assume the girls are on the Pill," she said.

"It's very short-sighted on the part of males, but women are allowing it to happen. It's difficult for someone to take advantage of you if you don't let them ... Women have to care enough about their bodies and themselves to share responsibility."

But pregnancy isn't the only consequence. Most women think that all they need is birth control, Victory said, not disease control. "Sexually transmitted diseases are rampant everywhere, especially on college campuses. They should continue using condoms once they go on the Pill. It's a very difficult thing for women to bring up with their partners — 'I'm on the Pill, but I want you to use a condom anyway,'" she said.

Devetta Holman, assistant health director of the SHS, said the service offers counseling in decision-making, safe sex and relationships. "We are not promoters of sexual activity. That is not what this clinic is about," Holman said. "We try to empower the students, to give them the power to make decisions. We help them learn about themselves and be more comfortable with their sexuality."

The results of the sex survey were obtained from a questionnaire published in the DTH and distributed to students in the Pit and Student Union. The respondents included 124 males and 135 females. This survey cannot be considered scientific.

Homosexuals combat anxiety, discrimination

By VICKI HYMAN

Staff Writer

When he was 12 years old, David (not his real name) began fantasizing about men. He fought the feelings he knew would horrify his friends and family.

Naked men aroused him, and he realized that he preferred the sight of men over women. His first homosexual encounter intensified his turmoil. "After I had sex with him, I cried for days and days, because I knew how hard it would be when I got older," he said.

In an attempt to repress his homosexuality, David dated women throughout high school and college.

"I went out with my girlfriend for seven months to try to turn a friendship into an emotionally satisfying love, which it wouldn't do," he said. "When I was having sex with her, I was fantasizing about having sex with a man."

After a painful struggle, David accepted the fact that he is homosexual.

David is a junior from Emerald Isle whose name has been changed for the purposes of this article. Like many others who can't cope with the pressures of hiding their lifestyle, David decided to "come out of the closet" during college.

Having an alternative lifestyle at UNC means facing many difficulties from friends, family and society. It means abuse, both physical and mental, and having to look ahead to a life of never-ending pressures.

Homosexuals discover they are gay about the same time that other people start thinking they're heterosexual, said Pippa Holloway, a senior from Washington, D.C., and co-chairman of the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association (CGLA).

Mark Burniston, a senior from Raleigh and co-chairman of the CGLA, said he fought his identity for six years before admitting to himself that he was gay. "I did not allow myself to fantasize," he said. "I made no admission that homosexuality had anything to do with me."

Bob (not his real name), a December graduate from Asheville, is a bisexual who recently came out of the closet. "It never crossed my mind to be homosexual," he said. "I had no feelings toward that tendency. But this past summer, there was a guy I really liked and it just happened."

After admitting homosexuality to yourself, the next big step is admitting it to others.

"I didn't come out of the closet. I sort of got thrown out," Burniston said. "I had my first boyfriend freshman year. My roommate had gone to play practice, or so I thought. He came back and found us. He was very good at the moment, but he told people. Word got around and it got ugly ... All of a sudden, I was out — everywhere."

David said that when people come out of the closet, it's a self-realization stage. "You're fighting it. You try to fight it by having sex repeatedly with women."

Burniston said he knows firsthand that this campus isn't very tolerant of homosexuals. Other students reacted negatively when they first discovered he was gay. "I had things written on my door. People were talking about me. People threw things at me. I had to change residence. That's not what I call tolerant," he said.

The bouncers at On The Hill refused entry to Bob. "I was taken aback by his (the bouncer's) blatant prejudice, because I've always con-

sidered Chapel Hill to be one of the most liberal places in (North) Carolina."

According to Burniston, about 10 percent of the general population is homosexual. Although an exact figure is hard to get because most homosexuals haven't come out of the closet, he said Chapel Hill may have "a few more than average."

"Chapel Hill is San Francisco without the bridge," David said. "It's a very tolerant, liberal campus. It has to be. There are so many gay people!"

According to The Daily Tar Heel sex survey, more than half of the homosexual men polled said they had been sexually involved with 10 or more partners. Only a quarter of the heterosexual men made that claim. Are gays really more promiscuous?

David thinks so. "Eight out of 10 men are the ones who cheat in a relationship. They are more aloof and are really in it for themselves. Women are more involved, more emotional," he said. "You put two men together and you have a very flighty relationship."

"Homosexual relationships are also very compact," David said. "A month for us is like a year for a heterosexual. It's like dog years."

Burniston thinks gay promiscuity may be a stereotype. "You can't apply that to all men. A lot of gay men on the scene have a lot more sex partners because they meet the ones on the scene and not the ones in the closet."

Holloway said lesbians have the opposite stereotype applied to them. "It would be a fair generalization that lesbians are less promiscuous than homosexual men," she said. "Most women have to be in love to have sex. Most men don't."

No conclusive evidence exists on the factors that lead to homosexuality. "It's hard to say," Bob said. "Studies have said it's inborn, some say it's environment."

According to Mike (not his real name), a sophomore from Greensboro, homosexuality is most definitely something unchangeable. "It's as basic to your personality as the color of your eyes."

This fact that homosexuality is permanent is something that most parents don't understand, David said. "My family had trouble dealing with my homosexuality," he said. "My mother is into control. She thought you could control it, like eating or smoking."

Fathers have even more difficulty. "My father feels that if I get into a heterosexual relationship, I'll be 'cured,'" Mike said.

Bob said he had not told his parents yet. "My mother will not like it, but she will be tolerant. My father will probably disown me. My father is very prejudiced and doesn't understand," he said.

But if it were possible, would homosexuals switch lifestyles?

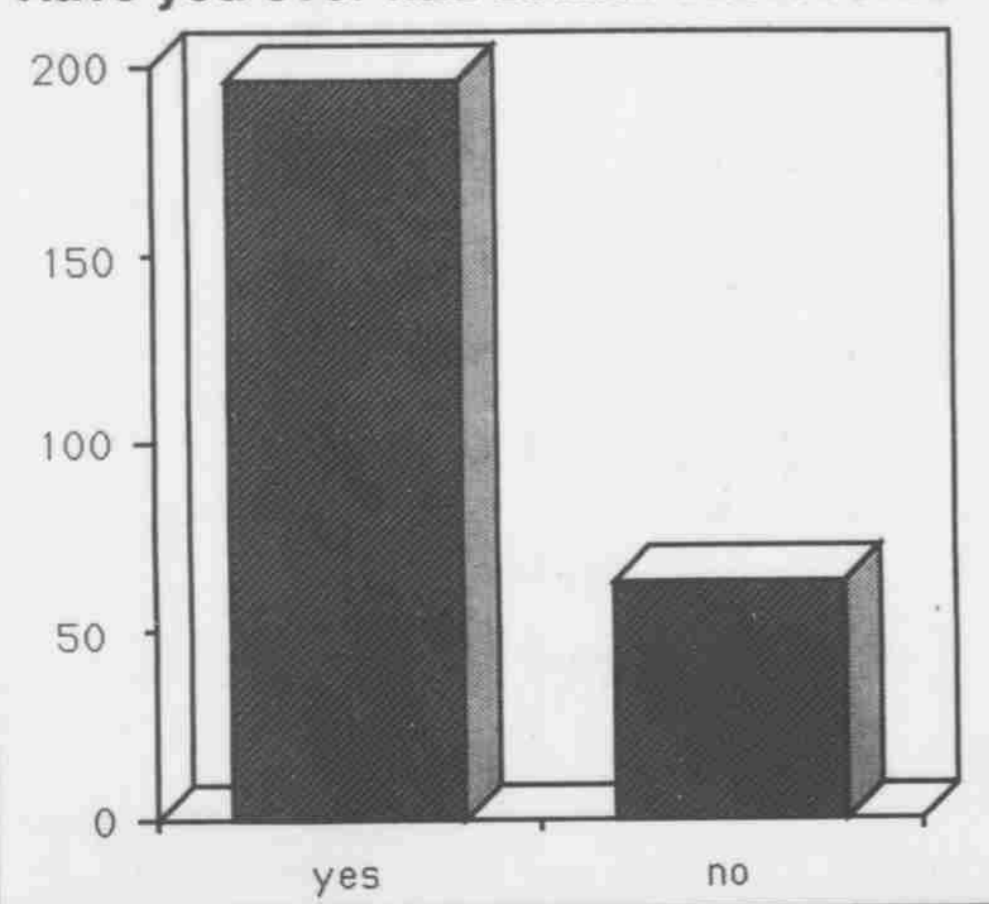
"If I could change myself, I would," David said. "I wouldn't have family pressures. I wouldn't have to go around hiding my boyfriends. I just think life would be a lot easier if I were straight."

On the other hand, Mike said he wouldn't. "I like men too much," he said.

Burniston said he would not want to be completely heterosexual. "Given the choice now, it's tempting to say I would ask for my sexuality to be a little more in tune with women," he said.

"If I were to wake up straight, it would be a nightmare. It would be like waking up reincarnated."

Have you ever had sexual intercourse?



Reasons for Initially Having Sex

