Features

Homophobia: college should address issue

Kirstin Stump The Pendulum

homosexuals, is an irrational fear found on all college campuses, including Elon's.

frequently used. Heterosexism is going on." the behavior which makes individuals the target of oppression, harassment or discrimination based upon their homosexual or bisexual orientation.

David Atkins, dean of student fraternity," he said. affairs, said heterosexual students feel threatened by homosexual and bisexual students. "The fear has a lot to do with family upbringing and environment. We are taught at through support/networks, an early age who to love and who changing the Mission of the to hate," Atkins said.

The fear of AIDS has increased negative attitudes toward gay and bisexual communities. "AIDS is not a gay disease. It originated in a heterosexual community in Africa. As a result of homophobic attitudes, AIDS has filtrated the entire population," Atkins said.

Atkins said education is the key to understanding and preventing the spread of AIDS.

Ten percent of the American population are homosexual and 24-26 percent are bisexual. Atkins students at Elon is equal to the national level. Atkins is aware of only two AIDS cases that have occurred at Elon in the past.

so wide spread that it affects all aspects of college life. Atkins said Lisa said.

"When you're straight, affairs in the Homophobia, the fear of bedroom are kept private. But when you're gay, everyone Heterosexism is a term more wants to know what is

> the Greek community as a whole is homophobic.

> "At one point in time, I knew of at least one gay or lesbian person in each sorority and

Atkins said Elon needs to address the issues of homosexuality and bisexuality College statement to include cultural diversity among people, changing Elon's Equal Employment Opportunity statement to include sexual orientation, and most importantly, educational programming for all older, accepting her sexual students.

"Lisa," a former student and lesbian, said she had dated males from high school through her junior year at Elon. She then became involved in a two and a half year relationship with another because you could lose your job," female and realized she was gay.

Today, only three straight people know she is gay.

Lisa said the stereotypes about homosexuals run rampant. She said gay males are expected to be feminine and females are expected to be more masculine, but the stereotypes are false.

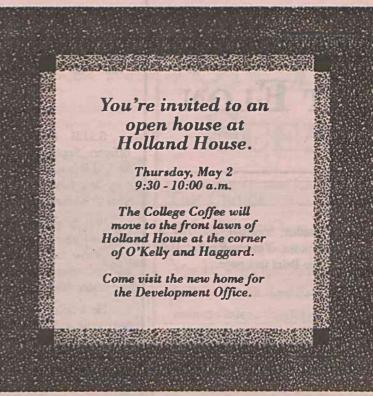
Lisa is waiting a while before telling her family about her sexual orientation. When she was a junior, she found out her twin sister was gay. She wants to make sure she can come to terms with the denial and rejection her sister experienced before telling her parents.

Lisa said Elon needs to address the issues of homosexuality and bisexuality through education. She said Elon 101 classes and campus-wide programs would be a good place to start.

"Support groups wouldn't help because Elon is so small and everyone (who is homosexual) is afraid of being threatened."

She said as she has gotten orientation has become easier but the stakes have become higher. "I've been through the 'coming out' stage and I feel comfortable with my sexuality but in the real world you need to watch your step Lisa said.

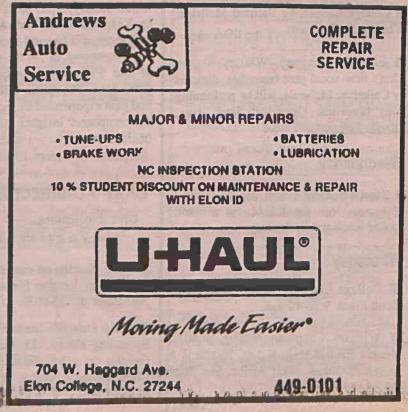
"The advice I would give to At first she only told other someone who is 'coming out' is to said the percentage of homosexual homosexuals about her sexual know what you are getting into; orientation because she was afraid friends by day, lovers by night. to lose the support of her friends. Know that what you are about to When you're straight, affairs do is completely against what in the bedroom are kept private. society believes in. Think about The issue of homosexuality is But when you're gay, everyone the things it is going to cost wants to know what is going on," because it will cost you a lot," she said.



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Awards Day is an annual event sponsored by Omicron Delta Kappa. This year it will be held immediately after the final faculty meeting of the year in the Yeager Recital hall at the Fine Arts Building at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 3, 1991. Everyone is invited to attend this event. Refreshments will be served after the ceremony. For more information call X2219 or visit Alamance 118.