

FOCUS SECTION

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC: **Homosexuality at Elon**

What you don't discuss

Tisk, tisk. Shame on me. It's common knowledge that there are three things you don't discuss - religion, politics and homosexuality. Oh well, I've never been very good at doing what I'm supposed to do anyway.

The argument for not discussing such matters is that you won't change anyone's mind. But is that a valid reason for avoiding heated topics? Of course not. What fun would that be?

College is supposed to be an environment where there can be a free exchange of ideas and opinions. The idea is not necessarily to spark heated debates about the ethics of sexual preferences or to convert anyone. A two-page spread will hardly change anyone's values or beliefs. Entire books have been written on this touchy subject. Two pages are barely enough to offer a cursory glance.

Rather, the idea is simply to look at a percentage of Elon's population.

As for my personal belief concerning homosexuality, an arrow has nothing on me. And I am a Baptist. Enough said.

Oh my. Another blunder. I am speaking of religion. But it is difficult to speak of homosexuality without tossing in a bit of religion.

Allow me to clear up what I believe are a few misconceptions. Despite the adamant "you're going to hell" statement many "religious" people hurl at homosexuals, homosexuality is not the determining factor of entrance into heaven or hell.

Now that I have hit upon two of the three unspeakable topics, I will offer one final argument for my defense. It is, at times, a journalist's job to bring out things that make people uncomfortable, and to look at all sides of an issue.

-Tammy Tripp
Focus Editor

Campus organization open to all kinds

Lisa McChristian
The Pendulum

When Elon says that they have an extracurricular organization for everyone they are not exaggerating.

Since the spring of 1997 Spectrum, Elon's Gay and Straight student organization, has worked to educate the Elon College community and provide a place for students to be themselves.

Other than several opposing letters to the editor and the opinion of one former *Pendulum* columnist, Spectrum has managed to avoid major opposition on campus.

Most tension comes from confusion in the religious community. Elon College has an affiliation with the United Church of Christ.

The U.C.C. has a history of supporting gay and lesbian individuals including blessing same sex

unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy.

In the last two years, the organization has grown from its original 10 founders to approximately 45 members. The group sponsors a variety of activities from movie

staff.

"We are a group where people regardless of sexual orientation can feel comfortable. It's a place where you can come and be exactly who you are" said Spectrum advisor Michael

SPECTRUM

350 gay and lesbian students on Elon's campus.

Ulrich explained that many heterosexual students have a problem coping someone in their life reveals that they are gay. "Together we can help abolish negative stereotypes about any group of people," Ulrich said.

Spectrum will meet on Tuesday Oct. 12 in Moseley 221B for their second annual Heterosexual Appreciation Night.

For more information on Spectrum visit their web page at www.elon.edu/spectrum. All students are welcome to join and participate in the organization.



nights, campus speakers, clubbing, speaking to Elon 101 groups and discussions with Elon faculty and

Ulrich.

According to popular statistics there are approximately 150-

Sociology professor Kier says she's 'just being natural'

Tammy Tripp
The Pendulum

Laurin Kier looks like any other professor on Elon's campus. She lives a relatively normal life, has two children, and at the start of each class, cracks a joke.

But she is not quite the stereotypical mother and teacher. Kier is open about being a lesbian, and says that for her, it was the right thing to do.

Despite the abundance of studies, no definitive conclusion has been reached deciding whether homosexuality can be attributed to chance or choice. But for Kier, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Assistant Director of Tutorial Services, studies do not matter.

"I can't tell you every homosexual person was born homosexual, but this is who I am," Kier said. "I can't give you the words to make you understand what it's like to be

open after 30 years of not being who I am."

For the first 30 years, Kier complied with the expected lifestyle. She married and had a daughter, now 18, and a son, now 15. After realizing she was not happy, she divorced her husband and made the decision to come out.

Educating her children on what it meant to be homosexual helped them to be accepting of her decision, and she maintains a close relationship with them.

So far, many of Elon's faculty and students have not appeared to have a problem with her decision either. Kier

has made it a policy to inform her students that she is a lesbian.

Despite the perception of

out. I have not found Elon to be a conservative campus," she said.

Even though she is out, she does not believe that all gays or lesbians should necessarily follow her example.

"My advice to those who are 'in the closet' is to come out in your own time. We live in a society that condemns people," Kier said. "There are very good reasons for not coming out."

Kier is familiar with all of the arguments against homosexuality. She is well aware of the qualms many religions have against her lifestyle; she grew up in a Southern Baptist church that did not hide its feelings toward homosexuality.

Even though Kier is a lesbian, she says she is not a separatist and thinks men are very important in this society.

But she feels to deny that part of her would be to deny who she is.

"I am out, and I make no apologies for who I am. Being gay isn't just about sex. I am a lesbian because I connect with women in a way that I have never connected with a man," Kier said. "Homosexuality for us is natural. I am just being the natural me."



Elon's campus as relatively conservative, the sociology professor said that she has not found that to be true. If anything, she has found that most of her students do not care one way or the other.

"I think Elon is a very safe place for gays and lesbians to be.

Next Week's Focus Topic:
Campus Dining