

Alternative sexual lifestyles misconstrued by society

Darris Means
Guest Columnist

Matthew Shepard was a normal college student enrolled at the university of Wyoming. He had a loving family and he enjoyed theatre, soccer, swimming, running, camping, hunting, fishing and snow skiing. There was one thing that made him different from the majority of the people in our society: he was a homosexual.

On Oct. 7, 1998, two men lured Shepard to a remote area in Wyoming, where he was tortured, beaten, hung to a fence and left to die in freezing temperatures. A cyclist found Shepard unconscious and suffering from hypothermia 18 hours later. Shepard died on Oct. 12, 1998 at 12:53 a.m. with his family by his bedside. The men that did this to him admitted to doing it because he was a homosexual. He was killed just because of who he was.

Many homosexuals, bisexuals and people of alternative sexual lifestyles endure violent acts, slurs and discrimination against them every day. Some

homosexuals cover up their sexual orientation due to fear of being scorned, harassed, assaulted or killed. Why are people so against homosexuality?

"It's Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve," a pastor recited in a sermon one day. I believe some religions overrate homosexuality. True, the Bible does say homosexuality is a sin, but lying, shaving facial hair, eating pork, wearing clothing made of more than one material and getting tattoos are sins in some religions. No one ever makes a big deal about the other sins.

Some religions make homosexuality so horrible a sin overrated that people just think of all homosexuals as evil. This is not the case. Just as there are good and bad heterosexuals, there are good and bad homosexuals. However, the negative aspects of some homosexuals are emphasized much more than their positive attributes. Some people take the Bible literally, and this causes them to commit violent acts and use slurs against homosexuals. What ever happened to "Love Thy Neighbor?"

Throughout media history, homo-

sexuals have been portrayed as child molesters, people that are very flirtatious, feminine in the case of men, masculine in the case of females and evil. Many people rely on media to get information on different issues, and when people see how homosexuals are portrayed in the media, they create a horrendous image of homosexuality. A freshman at Elon said, "I am not fond of flaming faggots and they are just doing it for attention." I believe this person has a misconstrued image of homosexuals because the only homosexuals he knows are the ones on television and two gay guys he has met in his life. With people having the image of homosexuality from media, they start thinking negative things about gays, using slurs and committing hate crimes against them.

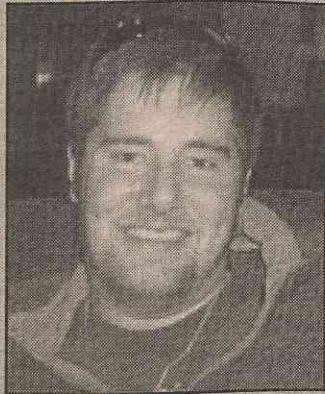
Homosexuals should not have to live in fear. The people in our society should get to know more homosexuals before making negative conclusions about them. We should all try to open our minds up to homosexuals, bisexuals and other people of alternative sexual lifestyles.

Resources for those interested in learning more about alternative lifestyles

- **Spectrum:** e-mail spectrum@elon.edu
- **Human Rights Campaign:** www.hrc.org
- **PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays):** www.pflag.org
- **Equality North Carolina:** www.equalitync.org

Photo Poll:

How would you define sexuality?



Name: Mark Ludden
Grade: Senior
Major: Music Theater
"When I think of the word 'sexuality' it makes me think of a bed, two naked people and lots of noises."

What is your interpretation of sexuality?



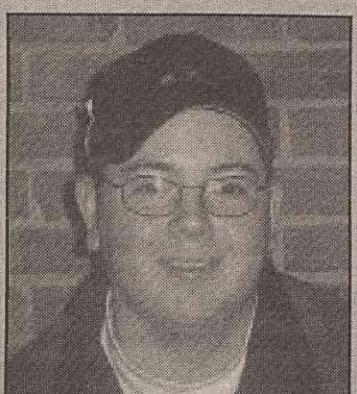
Name: Anne Corbitt Grade: Sophomore
Major: English
"I think sexuality is something that people often are afraid of, and it is an important part of yourself and your expression of yourself. And that is something I think that a lot of people learn when they come to college is to open up to it and that it isn't something to be scared of, and it is not something to be afraid of. I think that is a shame because there is a strength in being confident in who you are and knowing what you want. Go for it."

How would you define sexuality?



Name: Amanda Braun
Grade: Senior
Major: Sociology
"I would define sexuality as a basic understanding of one's sexual identity."

What are problems you see with sexuality in our culture?



Name: Alex Laney Grade: Junior
Major: Business Administration
"In the American culture I think there is far too much complacency with sex and sexuality. I think there are a lot of people who have removed themselves from the intimacy and true emotions that I personally think should be associated with sexuality. You have many stories, especially around this campus, of random hook-ups and people having sex without reason. For no reason other than what feels good. Which is okay, but it is becoming one of those things that is another way of getting pleasure. I personally think there is a lot more emotion behind it. Sexuality is a very, very personal thing."

Compiled by:
Michael Marlier