

Gay at Dalplex?

I am one of the many gay men who regularly work out at the Dalplex. However, I am sure most of the people who I have met at the gym and talk with on a regular basis are not aware of my homosexuality. I don't "look" gay — I am attractive, 6' tall, 200 pounds, and in good shape. I often wonder what they would think if they knew more about me: Everything else seems to be acceptable to them about me, except my sexual orientation.

I am a fortunate person. I came out ten years ago to my close straight friends, while attending University. My friends were so supportive, it was beyond belief. They were typical guys, they enjoyed partying, sports and women. These same people have been part of my life since an early age, so it was a big step to risk it all by telling them the truth. But in hindsight, the long-standing friendships are what made my transition into gay life so easy. My friends said they knew all along, and they probably did, but their openness to my sexuality gave me new found strength, and as a result I began to believe in myself.

My career has taken off, and today I am manager for a prominent consulting firm. Many of my colleagues know I am gay, but it is always a surprise when I tell them. I bring a different perspective to what is generally a very conservative environment at work. I have brought many progressive changes to the company — from implementing high technology office automation systems to presiding as president of the social committee, arranging many social functions for our more than 50 consultants.

When I tell colleagues I am gay, I explain how being gay alters my perspective on society and where I feel that I (do and don't) fit-in. I expect those in-the-know about my sexual orientation recognize that my contributions to the company can be attributed to my learning experiences as a gay man. I learned a lot about people and society when I was struggling to come to terms with my sexuality.

So, where does Dalplex fit into all of this? Gay life in Halifax is dull. Most of the visible gay community is off-putting, to put it mildly, and there is nowhere for the rest of us to hang. Most people, straight and gay, seem to automati-

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cally assume that just by classifying a person as gay describes everything there is to know about them — their lifestyle, personality and culture.

There are many gay people in Halifax who will never go to Rumours — perhaps they don't like to dance, perhaps they don't like the people or atmosphere (I don't!). Many pretend, or go to a place like Studio, where you aren't automatically labelled queer by walking in; though I detest Studio more because of their overt oppression and exploitation of homosexuals.

At Dalplex, I see interest on some of the guys' faces, and I suspect — and expect — they are gay. I know those looks. I feel a bond with them. I recognize what they are going through. Estrangement and alienation — and fear. Fear of being exposed; or just fear of expressing what they feel. If only people were more tolerant and it wasn't such a horrific crime to express your gayness.

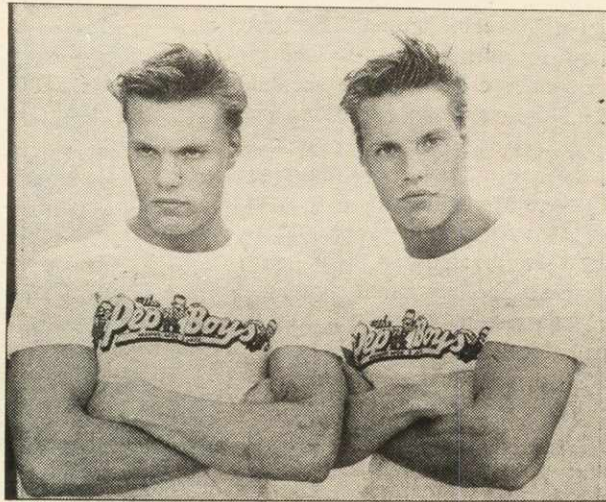
These guys are good-looking and well-built for the most part. They're not out of the closet — possibly to themselves, and certainly not to their friends — but they have probably slept with guys and know what they want sexually. They are not interested in socializing with what they may have good reason to think they may find at Rumours. They probably want to be singing along to a band at the Lower Deck, or dancing to some GOOD music (as opposed to what Rumours and Studio play) at J.J. Rossi's.

Dalplex is very sensual. Gyms by their nature are filled with sexual energy; and there are more than a few “I'm curious” looks floating around. I certainly don't consider Dalplex a gay meeting or cruising area — it isn't, although I will say that the atmosphere can often be intensely intimate at times (as well as genuinely friendly; which automatically disqualifies it); but my point is, that I recognize a lot of what I went through in terms of my agony about coming-out, mirrored around me in Dalplex: people who want to be more openly curious — or even just a bit more tolerant; to be able to accept interest in someone's body for what it may be. Gay sexuality exists at Dalplex, it's just not recognized or tolerated.

So where can the gay person socialize “gay-openly” who does not fit into the existing gay communities? Right now — nowhere.

If you are one of the gay men who feel caught in this dilemma, you should consider contacting BGLAD. I recently attended my first BGLAD meeting and was surprised by BGLAD's willingness to recognize and confront this problem. Perhaps if this need is shared by others in the community, BGLAD can become a vehicle to form other social groups which are of interest to other Halifax Nova Scotian gay men like myself.

Gay Jock



Can you tell the difference?

“Exercise For Men Only”

He was leafing through a copy of Men's Fitness magazine studying each face and body type carefully, a question playing on his mind, inspecting each page intently, absorbed in trying to imagine how ageing would overtake and reform what each handsome man would eventually look like,

Curiosity teasing his imagination, his attention buried in the glossy pages, as he scrutinized carefully every well-built, attractive man modelling an exercise or demonstrating the latest in work-out gear fashion.

Age, an irrelevant question, had gone beyond questioning to something like an inevitability—parking itself like an illegal squatter in his brain, stubborn as a homeless person lodged over a warm-air grating or squatting in a lobby entrance, all its belongings in a messy pile—smeared across his vision, insinuated into his thoughts, occupying all his time. Hours spent mapping out the details of changes that Time and Age would thrust upon him, bringing with them...he could only wonder what—and regretting how he will fade before he has ever bloomed.

Eyeing the wealth of bare skin and cut outlines of perfectly defined muscles —so many clear, not-always-quite-innocent male eyes; eyes lacking a sense or irony perhaps, but also often without much imagination either or innocence, or especially: much of the expected envied joy, making you wonder at yer envy & their obvious discomfort so naked in front of the lens — a wall closed between the viewer and the models.

Charting without malice or envy, calculating the process, each alteration time would impose, mapping the progress of deterioration carefully, with an alert and kind curiosity; plotting the delta of wrinkles and paths of saggings, regarding them as not-necessarily unflattering, investing them with the understanding as clear indications of a maturity and depth of character to be etched & inscribed on faces & hands; worn-in by a caring unkindness of nature that perfect health & fitness cannot avoid entirely or cure; making his imagination dictate their future looks with careful & earnest critical study, making up anecdotes to accompany the changes & deteriorations; determining his perceptions to a calculated accuracy accorded, by drawing on his own experiences & the depth of his perceptions of each similar face and body type he'd encountered in his life: the greying blonds; the crows feet scribbled around the eyes; the grey chest hairs sprouting, nipples pointing obscenely.

Until he forgets, losing himself, his mouth suddenly pressed against the glossy smooth magazine skin. Clutching imaginary paper shoulders flecked with a spray of delicate freckles tasting, kissing the shower of freckles sunspotting the outline across the broad smooth hard back, fitting his body spooning into the imaginary perfect curve against the back of the hard supple body lying face-down on the prone leg machine.

“sespe”



Kinsey Questions

By ANTHONY ROBERTS

Please note that due to the inherent androcentric nature of the Kinsey Report, this article deals primarily with male homosexuality.

What is the Kinsey Scale?

In the 1948 book, the Kinsey researchers made the assertion that homosexual behaviour was not restricted to identified homosexuals. The book was based on an in-depth survey of thousands of men. The authors said that it seemed more reasonable to look at a person's behaviour and psychological response to being at some point on a spectrum or scale and therefore developed the following method of sexual categorization:

- 0=entirely heterosexual;
- 1=largely heterosexual, but with incidental homosexual history;
- 2=largely heterosexual, but with a distinct homosexual history;
- 3=equally heterosexual and homosexual;
- 4=largely homosexual, but with a distinct heterosexual history;
- 5=largely homosexual, but with incidental heterosexual history;
- 6=entirely homosexual.

This represented a move away from the usual compartmentalisation of sexuality into homosexual and heterosexual (a system which provides for only an either/or characterisation). It was indicative of a move towards an increasingly holistic notion of sexuality.

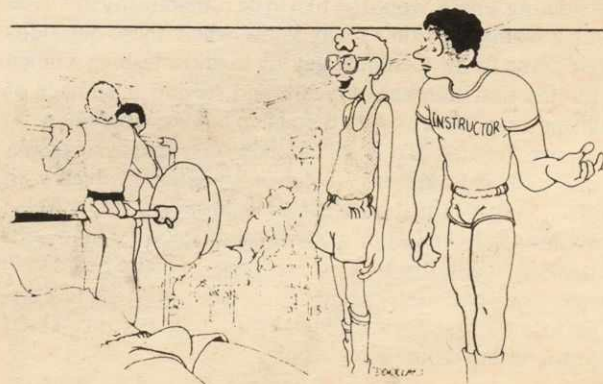
What is the origin of the 10 percent gay figure?

In the same book mentioned above, Kinsey published survey results which stated that 4% of the men were ranked as a “6”, while 6% were given the ranking of “5”. This yielded a figure of 10%. The same study indicated that the figures for women were between 3 and 8% (although it is not made explicitly clear what the ultimate percentage was). Kinsey has been challenged on a number of grounds, as with most sociological studies, in terms of the accuracy of these figures. More recent studies have estimated that the figure is closer to 18,5 percent and estimates as high as 50% have been cited. It is also becoming increasingly popular to assume that no person is entirely exclusively heterosexual.

“...a maximum of 50% of men are entirely heterosexual...”

So-exactly what percentage of people are “exclusively heterosexual?”

From the same book: “At least 37% of the male population has had some homosexual experience between the beginning of adolescence and old age... this is more than one male in three of the persons that one may meet as he passes along a city street”. In addition, 13% of males react erotically to other males without having overt homosexual contacts. This indicates that 50%, at least half of the male population, have some sexual response, whether actualized or not, to other men. It also indicates that a maximum of 50% of men are entirely heterosexual throughout life.



Oh, no thanks, I'm just browsing.