

Introduction

Gays are. And I repeat: gays are. After long centuries of repression, we are still here, an inherent part of human sexuality. Kinsey says we are at least 10% of society, a number that impresses me very much.

Ten thousand gays marched in New York this July. Four hundred of us in Toronto 3 weeks ago. And the sidewalks were filled with men and women wondering if their time really had arrived. It has.

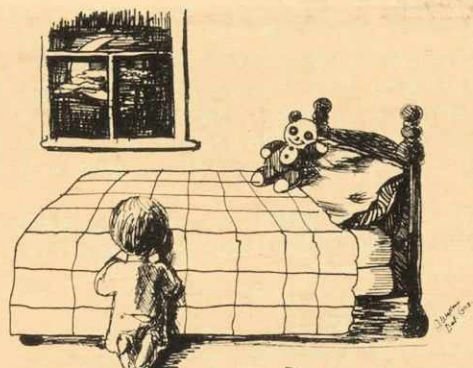
This 'Gayzette' section of the *Dalhousie Gazette* tells what is happening in Halifax, shares thoughts on the direction of gays in society, gives information on the emerging gay culture (it's a life-style now, not just a sexual act), and some background to future showdowns on the legal, religious and political fields.

Enjoy gay. If you're a confirmed breeder, open up to accept the gay people you are going to meet. If you are thoroughly gay, mainly gay, or slightly gay, get yourself in motion and with pride in the realization of the beauty in showing love to your fellow woman or fellow man.

I'm not going to make gay palatable to scared parents or Victorian prudes. I want gay to be a refreshing and relaxing alternative to the charades people in the closet are getting bored playing. I want gay to be personal to every homosexual, reflecting his/her interests, and giving a way towards fulfilling individual goals. The freedoms we seek are just a matter of time now.

Gay was once a hindrance - it frightened too many people who thought enjoyment must contain sin. Our liberation will be your salvation, you just may let yourselves (and others) live yet. Now gay is a platform, letting us see another level above the role-playing and the restricted, dictated goals (2½ kids in a bungalow) that have taken over straight life.

In a society preoccupied with bigger and better, I am happy to announce that gay is 'different'. We are not a competition, we are an alternative. Fear of homosexuality is the strongest factor in the actions of most men, dictating how they will dress, talk, work and relate to their friends. Now that gay is O.K., straights can relax too, and we can both enjoy the pleasures of being humansexuals.



"God bless Mummy and Daddy and Uncle Jack and his room-mate - that we're not supposed to talk about"

Why do we only hear about homosexually oriented people in the arts?

This is probably because the arts (theatre, fine arts, interior design, etc.) hold the most liberal attitudes on sexuality, thereby allowing the homosexually oriented person to acknowledge his/her sexuality with little or no discrimination. If truck drivers were more liberal, more gay truck drivers would come out.

If I associate with homosexually oriented people, will I become homosexually oriented?

No! People don't catch a homosexual orientation. You have probably been associating with homosexually oriented people through out your life without even being aware of it. If you associate with gay people, there is a possibility that you might have a homosexual experience, if you want one, but it does not mean that you will become homosexually oriented.

Why don't animals do it?

Many people are unaware of the fact that animals of all species engage in homosexual acts. Homosexual behaviour has been observed between monkeys, dogs, rats, bulls, porcupines, guinea pigs, horses, donkeys, cats, raccoons, baboons, apes, and porpoises.

Are gay people trying to take over?

This idea may have resulted from a misunderstanding about Gay Liberation. What gay people want is equality, not supremacy. If homosexually oriented people were allowed to live as openly and honestly as straights, there would be no need for things like Gay Liberation.

questions and answers

What is a homosexual experience?

A homosexual experience is any physical arousal you feel in response to someone of your own sex. This can range from just thinking about someone and being aroused to actually experiencing orgasm with that person. You can have a homosexual experience without being predominately homosexually oriented. Most people have a homosexual experience at some point in their lives.

How common are homosexual experiences?

According to Kinsey, in 1949, 37% of American men have had at least one homosexual experience to the point of orgasm and 13% were predominately homosexually oriented. For women, the percentages were 20½% and 7% respectively. This means when you walk down the main street of Halifax, about one out of every three people you pass has had a homosexual experience and one out of ten is predominately homosexually oriented.

Do homosexually oriented people really want to be heterosexually oriented?

No, homosexually oriented people are by definition primarily attracted to people of their own sex, that is where they find most fulfillment. Many have wishes for the acceptance they would get if they were heterosexually oriented. Some have even tried a heterosexual life style, but in many cases they have not been willing to keep up a pretense. If society did not condemn homosexuality and homosexual experiences, people would be more comfortable with their sexuality, no matter where they were on the sexual spectrum.

Why do the experts claim that all homosexually oriented people are emotionally disturbed?

A careful look shows that psychiatrists and counsellors make their judgements from their experiences with homosexually oriented people who come to them for help. If their only contact with the heterosexual world was through their clients, they could draw the same conclusions about heterosexually oriented people. Professionals in these fields seldom see the healthy homosexually oriented individual because s/he does not need counselling.

Can a homosexual orientation be changed (cured)?

Some individuals have undergone attempts to change their homosexual orientation. In some cases, the person's enjoyment of homosexual relationships has been removed, but in very few cases has this resulted in a satisfying adjustment for the individual. Why attempt change (cure)? Homosexual behaviour, being natural, needs no curing. It is not a disease or sickness, and thus the term 'cure' does not apply.

Has homosexuality always been frowned upon?

No, in the past, homosexuality was an accepted part of Greek and Roman cultures. It was only the acceptance of Judaeo-Christian teachings that these attitudes changed. When these religions began, the tribes were struggling to survive and so it was important to produce children. To make sure this occurred, all forms of sexuality and sexual acts which did not lead directly to the birth of a child were outlawed.

Isn't homosexuality a sign of a society breaking down?

The Persian empire declined quite nicely along with strong antihomosexual taboos. Homosexuality flourished freely at the zenith of the Roman Empire, but the decline was accompanied by an increase in antihomosexual restrictions. Homosexuality thrived during the heights of Periclean Greece, Renaissance Italy and Medieval Japan. And some cultures in which homosexuality has been accepted, like those of certain African and American Indian tribes, neither rose to nor fell from world-dominating heights. The acceptance or non-acceptance of homosexuality had nothing whatever to do with the rise or decline of any culture, and no reputable historian since the 18th Century has taken this theory seriously.

How do other cultures react to homosexuality?

Although our own Western culture does not approve of homosexual activity, many in the Near and Far East do. Drs. Ford and Beach report that of the societies that sampled, 49 of the 76 (64%) considered homosexual behaviour to be normal for members of the community. Homosexual activity in these societies is often a part of the normal growing up process that all teenagers go through and does not lead to one exclusive sexual orientation (either heterosexual or homosexual). In fact exclusive sexual orientations are only found in the Western World.

Struggle for gay rights

As a result of the emergence of a public gay movement in 1969, there has been some change in public awareness of the legal oppression of the homosexual minority, and subsequently some concrete action to help relieve this oppression. However, much remains to be done to bring the homosexual into a position of equality.

Gay organizations now exist in every major and most minor urban centres, from St. John's, Newfoundland to Vancouver, B.C. Civil rights campaigns for gay rights on the provincial level are presently underway in 7 of the 10 Canadian provinces. In Ontario, a Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario (CGRO) has united the struggle of gay organizations in that province. And the recent formation of a national coalition, the National Gay Rights Coalition, by 27 gay groups is proof of the growing strength of homosexuals in this country.

We list here some of the most recent advances of the gay rights cause in Canada. As a result of several years of public lobbying, it appears that the sections of the Immigration Act barring homosexuals will probably be removed. Such has been the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Immigration Policy. In Saskatchewan, the Human Rights Commission recommended to the provincial government in August of 1973 that the protections offered by its Human Rights Act be extended to the province's gay minority, and more recently the Commission agreed to officially intervene in the case of Doug Wilson. In October 10, 1973, Toronto City Council voted to direct the City's municipal service not to discriminate against its employees because of their sexual orientation. In British Columbia a case involving the Vancouver *Sun's* refusal to print an advertisement for *Gay Tide*, a gay newspaper in Vancouver, has prompted Human Rights Commission director Kathleen Ruff to express the opinion that the incident constitutes "discrimination without reasonable cause" on the part of the Vancouver *Sun*, contrary to Section 3 of the British Columbia Human Rights Code. This section bans discrimination directed against "any person or class of persons with respect to any accommodation, service, or facility customarily available to the public". In Ontario, Liberal M.P.P. Margaret Campbell has introduced a resolution into the provincial legislature calling for inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the Ontario Human Rights Code. And, finally, the recognition that discrimination against homosexuals exists in employment has prompted several Canadian labour unions to negotiate for the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the "no-discrimination" clauses of their contracts. Other unions including the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour have included "sexual orientation" in their own human rights codes. It is also significant to note that two of the country's most conservative dailies - The *Toronto Star* and *le Droit* have recently published editorials calling for inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the provincial human rights codes.

Perhaps most significant however, is the overwhelming support that the Committees to Defend John Damien and to Defend Doug Wilson have received not only locally but nationally, in their struggle to obtain justice for these two individuals.

In the United States similar advances have been made. More than one and a half million gay men and women are now protected by employment rights legislation forbidding discrimination on the basis sexual orientation. Two of the largest American cities, Detroit and Washington, D.C. have bills protecting gay employees. In addition, there are over 20 cities with some form of gay employment measures including San Francisco, Minneapolis, Seattle and Portland. In the past year and a half, both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have removed homosexuality from their lists of "mental disorders" and have called for protective legislation to deal with discrimination against gay people. As well, the National Council of Churches meeting in Chicago this year, passed a resolution affirming the right of anyone -- without discrimination -- to be free in the exercise of his or her "affectional or sexual orientation".

These are some very small steps in the right direction towards the recognition of the civil rights of homosexuals. Much remains to be done, however, in terms of removing archaic anti-gay laws and of instituting civil rights legislation for homosexual women and men.