

# SPECTRUM

## Gay relationships

### THE GAY FORUM

by Terry Richard

*What is homosexuality - Those who are halves of a male whole pursue males, and being slices, so to speak, love men, and take pleasure in physical contact with men.*  
from PLATO, *The Symposium*

The impression that all gay men are promiscuous has been recently fueled by the AIDS crisis. The stereotype of gay men being constantly on the look out for all sorts of sexual activity was first challenged by Kinsey and his associates, who found that homosexual men in fact had less frequent sexual contacts over a lifetime than heterosexual men.

Many of the old myths about gay men and their relationships have been proven wrong by the findings of many studies performed by psychologists. There are in fact many male couples who have been together for years, living out their lives quietly and productively in the mainstream of Canadian and American life. I know of several gay couples here in Fredericton who have been together for a number of years. They work, go to

school, socialize, love and care as the couples they are.

When dealing with gay couples several questions arise. For example how do two men with similar social scripting get along together? Does their homosexuality work for or against them? What kinds of problems do they have? How are they like heterosexual couples, and how are they different?

Like heterosexual relationships gay relationships can range from a brief sexual encounter to a long term commitment. However the one factor that makes gay relationships different from straight relationships is that gay men tend to avoid strong, emotional attachments and gravitate toward short-term relations. Again, this is not to say gay men do not have long-term relations with each other. That has already been discussed. However there are gay men, more so than heterosexual men who have a particular difficulty with intimate relations, which at times evokes an unconscious recollection of the rejection and injury that they may have experienced as children. The frequent rejection by peers in one's child-

hood and throughout adolescence contributes to a gay man's wariness of any relationship. This was often the problem for me for a number of years. Throughout high school I often spent a good part of my time alone, without friends not because I wanted to but because my peers had a good idea of who I was. When your rejected by people over a period of time something tells you never to get close to someone because there is a possibility that you may get hurt again. It wasn't until last year that I realized I could no longer go on thinking that way, or if I did I'd continue living as a single man. There are never any guarantees in life and we must take our problems and blows and put them into perspective and try to make them work out.

So, what makes gay relationship work as often and as well as we do? For one, partners of the same gender have a degree of compatibility and mutual understanding at the beginning of their relationship that is unusual in partners of opposite genders. There is also an initial rapport based on being the same sex that may make the initial period of the relationship very ex-

citing.

Like heterosexuals gay men seek out partners of similar age, interest, or vocation. Psychologists also state that successful gay relationships are based on a difference in each partner - a difference in age, race, or personality.

Also, more now than ever more gay men are staying together because of the fear of AIDS. The days of being promiscuous are a thing of the past as more gay men find partners to live and share their lives with.

One question that many people ask me about gay relationships is who is the man and who is the woman. Speaking from personal experience I feel that in a gay relationship the existence of the two men is evident a man chooses a man because he wants a male counterpart, not a female. For example if I wanted a woman I would choose a woman, but I don't because I'm gay. This is not to say that there are no gay couples where one partner does play a female role. On the contrary, but most gay couples are exactly that gay men sharing their lives together.

Gay men in relationships have the

same problems as heterosexual relationships. These problems can range from bills, jealousy, affairs, etc. However the one basic problem we are faced with is that the law does not recognize gay relationships for any purpose. We are denied insurance inheritances, as well as income tax claims. If I wanted to claim my live in lover as a dependent I could not do so because we are gay. Also, landlords will at times not lease or rent apartments to couples of the same sex. Currently the N.B Human Rights Coalition is fighting with the provincial government to make laws to protect gay rights.

In all reality there is nothing different with gay relationships when compared to straight couples. The only difference lies in each partners sex. Also love is love. As long as you care and experience emotional feelings for someone that is all that matters. After all happiness is the greatest thing that can happen to a person.

*In the next few weeks I will be devoting an article on lesbianism in the "Gay Forum". Anyone who has any suggestions can contact me through "The Brunswickan". T.R.*

## 1991 UNBSU SPRING ELECTIONS

**Nominations Open: Monday, February 25th, 1991.**

## GET INVOLVED!!!

**Nominations are invited for the elections of Student Representatives as follows:**

### EXECUTIVE POSITIONS:

- President
- V.P. University Affairs
- V.P. Finance & Administration
- V.P. External Affairs
- V.P. Activities

### GRAD CLASS POSITIONS:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary / Treasurer
- Valedictorian

### STUDENT POSITIONS:

- (4) 1 Year Senate Seats
- (1) 2 Year Senate Seats
- (2) B.O.G. Seats
- (?) Student at Large

### COUNCIL FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES:

- (5) Arts representatives
- (3) Business Administration reps.
- (2) Science representatives
- (1) Computer Science reps.
- (3) Engineering representatives
- (1) Forestry representative
- (1) Physical Education reps.
- (1) Nursing representative
- (2) Education representatives
- (1) Law representative

**ELECTION DATE: Tuesday, March 26, 1991**

**NOMINATION FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE STUDENT UNION BUILDING, ROOM 126**  
Nominations close Tuesday, March 12, 1991 @4:30pm