

SPECTRUM

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Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a problem that has recently begun to attract considerable attention. One of the reasons for its prominence is the increased number of women in the work place. More importantly, however, sexual harassment has become a problem that people are willing to talk about. As awareness of the problem grows, so does the potential for solutions. Many institutions and work places have implemented policies to deal with the problem. The University of New Brunswick has established a policy to ensure that its students, staff and faculty are not subjected to sexual harassment. This policy is set out in the *Policy and Procedure on Sexual Harassment*. This manual can be obtained from the Department of Personnel Services (for a summary of the policy, please refer to *Tackling the System*).

Most people think of sexual harassment as taking place in an employment situation with the victims being female. This is not always true. There are other situations in which sexual harassment may occur. For example, the victim may be male and the harass-

ment may take place at a university or a bar.

Sexual harassment can be defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal and physical conduct that interferes with an individual's academic and work performance. It is behaviour that is intimidating, hostile and offensive.

Some examples of sexual harassment are: verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature; pressure for sexual activity; sexist remarks about clothing, body, sexual activities; unwanted touching, patting, pinching; repeated brushing against your body; demands for sexual favours accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning your job, grades, letters of recommendation and physical assault.

You have a fundamental right to protect yourself from unwanted sexual attention. There are both informal and formal methods of dealing with the problem. You might speak with the person who is harassing you and try to resolve the problem yourself. If this does not work or if you are uncomfortable with this method, you can contact

the University Personnel Office. They have personnel officers who are specifically trained to deal with problems such as this. These officers will ensure that your complaint is treated as a serious matter. They will remain neutral, maintain confidentiality and meet with you at your convenience. The outcome of the complaint will be determined by a University Vice-President and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. A more formal complaint may be lodged with the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

Personnel Office, Room 102, Physics and Administration building, Tel. 453-4648.

The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, 103 Church Street, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1. Tel 454-2301.

THIS COLUMN IS MEANT TO BE USED AS A GUIDE ONLY. IT IS NOT MEANT TO BE A REPLACEMENT FOR LEGAL ADVICE. IF YOU REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL LEGAL CONSULTATION, PLEASE CONSULT A LAWYER.

Binding together and the right to be visible

THE GAY FORUM

...Terry Richards...

"Praise the high gods, for in giving this to man and this alone, they have made his chance of living shine the equal of their own."

by W.

E. Healey's *"Joy of Living"* (1973) Over the past month much controversy has surrounded the "Gay Forum" column on campus. From blatant cries such as "The Gay Forum" should be eliminated to "Times were better when I (James Gill) was doing them." I feel it is time that I defend my actions behind this column.

First, and foremost, the "Gay Forum" is exactly what it sounds like - a forum of gay issues (When I say gay I am referring to both gay men and lesbians). It has been my intention from the very beginning that once people read my articles that they will adapt their own views and opinions on the subjects I raise. One of the goals of the gay community is to increase tolerance through education which is something I feel I am doing through the "Gay Forum". I am also hoping that those who may be going through problems with their sexuality or who may have questions may find those answers here.

For those who want the elimination of this column all I can say is such a request is ridiculous. Saying such a thing is nothing short of saying gays should not be heard. I'm sorry but this is the 1990's and times certainly have changed. Homosexuals like anyone else have a right to be heard and just because a few bigots are appalled that the gay community would have the ability in voicing themselves doesn't mean that we should stop being visible. Visibility is everyone's right. For people who don't want to read the "Gay Forum" then don't. A newspa-

per should be an accumulation of various articles and columns to inform the public on different issues. I'm proud to be associated with the Brunswickan as I feel it is doing just this.

This brings me to another matter. Many people at UNB this year have asked if anti-gay material should be published by the *Brun*. This was the main topic of discussion on Monday night's gay radio program on CHSR where members of the Brunswickan were present to answer that question (I wasn't asked, until late last weekend to be present at this taping. I hardly thing one day's notice is enough time to prepare for a media program, so that is why I didn't attend). If anything the Brunswickan should publish material that affects the university community even though it may be negative. I'm the first to admit that I don't agree on some of the letters that I read aimed directly at the gay community but this shows just how uneducated and close-minded some people are. It shows however, that people are aware that homosexuality exists on campus and just how much work that gays have to increase tolerance.

I was also recently accused of having the "Gay Forum" being a carbon copy of last year's gay column. Certainly issues like gay-bashing and coming out have been dealt with again this year, but you must remember that we have a new orientation of students on campus and issues such as these must be addressed again.

Out of all the negative editorials that were printed this term against the "Gay Forum" the one that I found the most offensive was entitled "When Times Were Better" written by James Gill. This was because it was written by

someone who I thought was a close personal friend. Gill's letter smacked nothing but a personal attack aimed at me and his accusations simply were not true as he had no basis for his views. We have a saying in the gay community that we should protect each other: apparently Gill forgot that as he was trying to make himself look good by making me look bad. He also talked about courage in his editorial entitled "Gill assesses Human Rights". Just what kind of courage does Gill have is what I have to ask. A week before his editorial's were printed I met James on two occasions and he never mentioned any dissatisfaction he had with the column. Once his letters were printed he was conveniently out of town where I couldn't confront him with his accusations. It is bad enough that we as gays have to defend our actions against the heterosexual world but when it comes to defending our actions with someone in the minority group just because of someone's ego things have gotten too far. James Gill showed a poor example of what being in a minority group is all about. A few weeks ago I stated that I would never want to be associated with the likes of Steve Gobie: little did I know that for over a year I was doing just that.

Homosexuality, no matter if it is discussed verbally or in print will cause controversy. It is up to us in the gay community to change that. As long as we bind together and stand up for our rights things will change. After all, sticking together and being visible is how most wars have been won. Onward!

METANOIA

With John Valk (Campus Ministry)

In Response...

Mostly I do not respond to "Letters to the Editor" that result from something I have written. This time I make an exception, and will respond to William Parker (Nov. 23). He raises a number of concerns regarding Christianity, the church, and the notion God. The latter I will come back to another time.

Mr. Parker feels it is Christianity and the institutional church that is largely responsible for the disappearance of God from the lives of many people. He maintains it clings to a strict set of doctrines, morals and values, which are not to be questioned, and that it discriminates against women and homosexuals.

One ought not, first of all, conflate Christianity and its institutional expressions. Christianity, as I understand it, is the teaching of Christ as they are recorded in the Scriptures, and as they have come down to us through history. It is difficult to see how these teachings would drive people away from God. If more would study them more intimately, I think the very opposite would happen.

The church, on the other hand, is an organized body of people who seek to give expression to their Christian faith and have it enlivened by the spirit of Christ. It is composed of people who love, share, have compassion and wisdom, as well as those who hate, cheat on their tax forms and make eccentric pronouncements. What else is new?

Does it drive people away because it has shortcomings? I doubt it. Many simply leave. They return only for the rites of passage: baptism, marriage and funerals - an indispensable form of "life insurance".

Why do many not consult the church apart from these occasions? Could it be that they simply are not interested because they are spiritually lazy, are enticed by other interests, or like to live free and unrestricted? That appears to fit in well with our materialistic and individualistic society, wouldn't you say? The church, however, tends to challenge our complacency. And, on occasion, it says things about our lifestyles, our relationships and our work that make us a little uneasy, or that we would rather not hear.

Christianity and its churches do not, for the most part, have rigid rules and strict morals and values. They do, however, abide by certain norms and principles. If I have it correct, these challenge us to seek our full humanity. That entails acknowledging basic human rights, which in turn are to be balanced with responsibilities, care and concern for others - in society, in the workplace, in school, in marriage and in relationships.

Seeing all of this as somewhat restrictive says quite a lot about one's own lifestyle and perspective. In any event, the church does not advocate greed, conceit, drunkenness, loose liv-

ing, free sex, disregard for persons and property, disrespect for authority, etc. But then would you readers?

The church has discriminated against women. But then, so has business, the university, sports clubs - in general, our entire society. The church is improving its record in this area, albeit ever so slowly in some cases. But, it has never to my knowledge portrayed women as objects of lust and desire. In fact, it has always spoken strongly against this. That cannot be said for and about present day pornography, the advertising industry, or certain glossy magazines, all which continue their sexist portrayal of women under the guise of free speech and the right to make a profit. Judge for yourself, reader, who is most exploitative.

The teachings of Christianity have always advocated love and concern for others. Christ, if you remember, refused to allow anyone to stone the woman, "caught in adultery". We are called to love all people: heterosexuals and homosexuals. That does not mean, however, that the church is to accept as normal, proper and moral all forms of behavior, be that heterosexual and homosexual.

There have been and will always be those in the church who espouse all kinds of things. But then we find that also outside the church and Christianity. The church is a place for people who acknowledged that they are far from perfect. If it was for saints only, it would be quite empty, or have died a quick death long ago.

It is my guess that on the one hand many who criticize the institutional expression of Christianity have not darkened the doors of a church for some time, are quite unfamiliar with the teachings of the church, including its social pronouncements, listen to only one side of the story, and use hearsay and the media for their sources of information.

On the other hand, however, perhaps those who criticize the church choose an easy target. But, for those concerned about restrictive doctrine, discrimination, oppression and the absence of God from the lives of people, it is the best target? Why, in the main, do we associate with, involve ourselves in or remain indifferent to institutions and organizations which do the very same things: political institutions that tell us whom we should hate, economic systems that enslave and exploit the poor, entertainment industries that de-humanize people, especially women, and a moral and unjust banking enterprise that "make the rich richer and the poor poorer"? Well, reader, does our involvement with them bring us closer to God?