

# Feeling fine, thank you

**H**i. You don't know me. Well, maybe you do know me. But what you don't know is that I'm gay.

I'm the gay person sitting next to you when you said how you can spot gays a mile away because they all have the same mannerisms or they all look the same somehow. (A pink triangle stamped on their foreheads, perhaps? I don't know, you weren't too specific.)

I'm the gay person who listened to you talk about how the health class you had about homosexuality really turned your stomach.

I'm the gay person who was walking beside you when you started making fun of a guy in your English class who, as you said, "everyone knows is a faggot"

I have a lot of gay friends. Oh, you know them too. But you don't know they're gay because they don't fit your labels.

It's sort of funny, you know, those situations I was telling you about. Not funny ha-ha; ironic funny. Listening to someone tell you what gay people are all about when they don't know you're gay encourages the development of a healthy sense of humour.

I know that being gay has done wonders for mine. It's a defense mechanism, I guess.

One of my favorite lines came from a gay singer, Heather Bishop, who was recounting how a radio interviewer tried to put her on the spot.

"Some people think homosexuality is a sickness," he said. "So tell me, how do you feel about being a practising lesbian?"

"Well, for one thing, I feel fine," she said.

And added, with a wicked smile, "And I don't need any practise."

Like Heather Bishop, I too "feel fine." I don't think homosexuality is a "disease," either physical or mental. I don't think that the sex of whoever I choose to have a relationship with is so big a component of my total personality that it is grounds to write me off as a person. It hurts to know that some people would do so.

Gay people are just like straight people in a lot of respects and different in one other.

Is it a crime, being different?

Maybe we could all do with a healthy dose of tolerance. □



Illustration: Kimberley Whitchurch, Dal Gazette

## Are we regressing?

**T**he homosexual person has, for centuries and maybe since the dawn of time, been oppressed.

Society has driven us into the ground, where we cannot express our sexuality in an objective manner.

Some have gone so far as to commit genocide on homosexuals, i.e. the Nazi regime, where approximately 500,000 gay women and men perished.

Poor knowledge about gays has been a factor in the oppression of gays. With inaccurate knowledge and little research gays were given bad press. Fortunately, now that we are able to openly express our sexuality, this is all changing. Massive collections of writings and research are available for the education of people on the subject of homosexuality.

The struggle, though, still con-

tinues. There is a general feeling that homosexuality should be even more oppressed. Many feel that we are the cause of the overall decline in the traditional form of family life. This is ludicrous. The probability of an all-gay world is highly unlikely as there will always be procreation among couples.

Because gays come under such oppression we must often carry on a façade—that is, we must say we're straight and not gay. We are in a society that has forced us to be the silent minority. Again, this is changing.

It makes me wonder . . . Have we regressed?

During the Greek times, homosexuality was perfectly acceptable. A man would carry on a relationship with another male, with the full knowledge of his wife. This was over two thousand years ago. How nice it would be if being gay was accepted in our advanced society.

Many people base their hostilities towards gayness on religious upbringing and religious beliefs. This is unfounded as Jesus Christ had nothing to say about homosexuality. I repeat, nothing.

During the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt homosexuality was frowned upon simply for the reason that they wished no seed to be spilled, they wished to build a strong Jewish nation again.

This has been a brief comment on the subject of homosexuality. Hopefully it will give a little insight, and maybe loosen the bond of oppression. □

## Call the Gayline

Gayline is an information, referral and counselling service for lesbians and gay men. They'll be glad to take your call and answer any questions you may have between the hours of 7-10 pm, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Phone 423-1389. □

## AIDS committee tackle problems

**A**s noted ever more often in media, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a serious, and increasing, health problem, involving to a large degree the gay male community.

As of June 27, 1984, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control in Ottawa reported 94 cases in Canada. Of these, 56 were homosexual/bisexual, 32 heterosexual, and six unknown. Unfortunately, cases of AIDS in Halifax have contributed to these statistics.

In Halifax, gay men and women are currently in the process of forming an organization to respond to this health problem. The initial form this group has taken is an ad-hoc committee of the Gay Alliance

for Equality; however, support is coming from all parts of the gay community.

The immediate concern has been getting basic information out to the gay population, via brochures, posters, and talks by health care professionals familiar with AIDS. In addition, the local group has been in contact with a similar, more established organization in Toronto, from which much support has been received.

As the organization evolves, information dissemination will continue to be a primary objective. Beyond the current brochure project, films, seminars, and other such programs remain possible vehicles for achieving this objective.

Another goal is the establishment

of an accessible resource library of information related to AIDS, encompassing not only the health aspects but also the social implications for gay/gay and gay/straight interactions.

Also, contact and discussion with other AIDS awareness groups and with the larger gay community in Atlantic Canada will be important tasks for the new Halifax group.

Awareness combined with discussion is the first step in responding to the health problem posed by AIDS.

To ensure that the challenge is effectively met at the local level, all those concerned and willing to offer time or other resources are urged to contact the Halifax committee c/o Gay Alliance for Equality. □