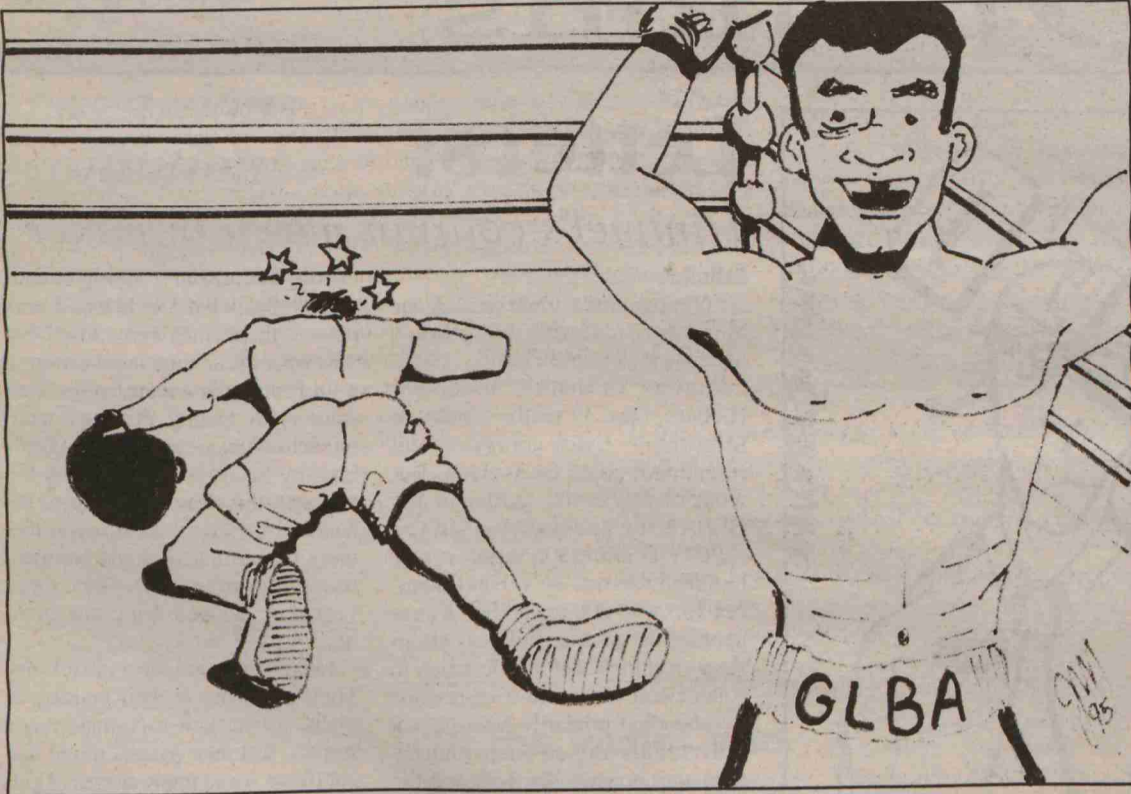


Letters



Himmel, editors, should be removed for falsehoods

Editor,
Among other things I am the managing editor of the local queer press, The Alliance, published by the Inland Northwest Gay People's Alliance. Thus, I am writing this letter as a person knowing and respecting the responsibility of the privileges granted by the First Amendment governing the freedom of speech, and in response to the libelous remarks made by Peter Himmel concerning gays and lesbians.

Peter Himmel should be removed as a writer for the editorial page, not because I don't agree with his opinions, but because those opinions are based on falsehoods; facts he creates. He is not a professional or responsible journalist, nor is The Evergreen acting in a responsible or professional manner to continue to print his hate-filled garbage. Whoever allowed Himmel's column to be printed should also be removed for permitting The Evergreen to print such libel. Frankly, I was shocked that such a bigoted and irresponsible thing would be published with the institutional backing of The Evergreen.

Himmel is not concerned with the facts at all, he simply makes up whatever works to fit his bigotry and claims that is his right protected by the First Amendment. It is not. It is libel. For The Evergreen to publish such libel as a column and not merely a letter is also an abomination of the Edward R. Murrow tradition. No responsible press in the country would have published something as a column making statements like "there is no evidence the gay preference is anything other than a behavioral characteristic" or that the "homo-erotic lifestyle is [not] any different from people whose sexuality is pathologically fixated on undergarments, farm animals, corpses, small children, or battered and bound women." Contrary to these statements, the factual evidence is overwhelming that to be gay is quite "normal."

Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, happens naturally in wild and domestic animals. The American Psychological Association removed homosexuality as a curable pathology in 1975, concluding the scientific evidence supported that like heterosexuality, homosexuality just is. Concerning Himmel's reference to the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), I think he would find most gays and lesbians have the same distaste for the organization as do straights, and in fact its goals are not endorsed by the queer community at large.

The publishing of a column with such hate is irresponsible on the part

of The Evergreen and is a direct violation of the non-discrimination codes on campus. By holding up any marginalized group and then attacking, The Evergreen commits an act of discrimination as well as a violation of the Fifth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As gay people, we, like straights, have the right to due process, the avoidance of cruel and unusual punishment and not to be deprived of life or liberty. Such hate, in any form, denies us those guarantees. It sets us up to be physically bashed by people who are not merely satisfied with a psychological beating

of words, but rather have a thirst for blood. Hate, institutionalized and endorsed by The Evergreen, lays the groundwork for action by others. WSU is not immune. We have had gay-bashings on campus.

Like Mr. Himmel said of Lincoln, "Important [principles] may and must be inflexible." I would speculate that if Lincoln were alive today he would feel those principles included the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution for all, not just Whites, not just males, and not just straights.

Rob Painter-Johnson

A refutation of homosexual and heterosexual acts in routine life

Editor,

It always puzzles me to hear the opinions of people who are opposed to "homosexual acts" or "homosexual behavior," as are Amber Marchant and Dan Lawrence (Dec. 5). It puzzles me precisely because I never have a clue as to what the terms might mean. I have looked in several dictionaries for these pesky terms and have never been able to find a definition.

Unfortunately, those who are most likely to employ these terms are the least likely to explain them. I decided, given the above, to define the terms for myself. In so doing, I came to the conclusion that everything that I do is a "homosexual act"; that is to say, an act done by a homosexual.

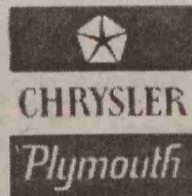
Waking up in the morning is (for me) a "homosexual act," as is showering and getting dressed. My students were probably not aware that, when I stand in front of them in six weekly, hour-long class periods, I am committing "homosexual acts." My study partners are aware that I commit "homosexual acts" when I study with them, just as I am aware they commit "heterosexual acts" when they study with me. I would hardly think that any of these acts would be "perversely vile" or abominable (as Ms. Marchant states), nor do I think they would "...increase lawlessness and antisocial behavior" (as Mr.

Lawrence suggests). I find them instead to be expressions of my personality, of who I am. The fact that I am gay is very important to me, but it is not all that I am, just as gender and racial identities are not total expressions of a person's being.

And then I reread the letters to the editor, and realized what the authors were talking about was sex. I think that clarification is in order. Just as teaching class and playing racquetball have nothing to do with sex, sex acts have nothing to do with sexual orientation. If I had never had sexual contact with another man, I would have been gay anyway. If a heterosexual person never has sexual contact with a member of the other sex, s/he is still heterosexual.

When the GLBA asks for funding from the student government, it is not asking for funding for sex acts. It is asking for funding for a student organization based on serving the lesbian, gay, and bisexual students at WSU. Just as it is hard to be a person of color or a woman in a racist and patriarchal society, it is difficult for lesbians, bisexuals, and gays to be ourselves in a heterosexual society. Bisexual, gay, and lesbian students (who pay tuition and student fees like everybody else) should be represented by a student organization that is responsive to our needs as well as to the needs of others.

Curtis Wasson



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