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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



OUTLIVE HOMOPHOBIA

WHEN STR8 MEETS QUEER

WHAT MORE DO THEY WANT

THE OTHER COLOURS OF
THE RAINBOW



A PERFECT WORLD?

by Steve Wright

I was sitting in the Positive Space room with some GLBT friends and allies at school today when someone came and read sections from an article they were reading about porn.

Caught your interest, eh? It grabbed the attention of most the room. Porn! Porn, porn, porn, porn, porn! Come on, who doesn't like porn?

Wrong. This article was written by a gay twenty-something talking about how much he loved porn. No problem there, right? He talked about how he loved guy-on-guy action, even two girls getting it on, but then went on for paragraphs on how straight porn disgusted him, even going so far as to talk about how seeing a guy and a girl holding hands or kissing in public made him want to vomit. To clarify, he made it perfectly clear how fine he was with queer couples committing PDAs — public displays of affection.

What really made me uncomfortable was this article was written as a humorous one. Not one of parody, commenting on the wrong attitude that some straight people have towards gay couples, but one written in such a way that the writer expected the reader to laugh and say "That's so true!" It made me sick. Thankfully, the discussion in the room made it quite clear my friends felt the same way.

We tried to play devil's advocate, but really could not find a way to justify this thought. It was initially very distressing to be hearing this viewpoint in the Positive Space room. If you're unfamiliar, a Positive Space room — this particular one existing on the campus of my University — is a place where ANYONE can enter and relax and enjoy each other's company, knowing they will not be persecuted or find discrimination in any shape. It's a space where everyone is equal, free, and can celebrate that. You don't need to identify yourself as queer, straight, an ally, or anything; you're just you, and that's good enough. Of course, it's

an initiative perfect for the GLBT community and their allies and is essentially a bigger-scale Gay/ Straight alliance at my campus, but it also is so much more than that.

Once the initial impact of this writer's heterophobia wore off, I realized the Positive Space room was the perfect place to discuss an issue like this. While we instantly saw that this writer was horribly unfunny and completely heterophobic, we also realized his stance wasn't as uncommon as we'd like to think. Some queer people may only have an "Eww, cooties!" kind of position on straight porn, but there will certainly be those like this particular writer who treat heterosexual couplings with the same distaste those nutbags have towards queers when they hold up their "God Hates Fags" signs. Upon further investigation, we saw that this writer attacked homophobic attitudes only one month earlier in an article condemning gay hate crimes like that against Matthew Shepard.

What is the difference? Does this writer really think that queer people, as a minority, have the right to attack straight people and their relationships simply because they outnumber us? That because they are not the minority, those who are have the freedom to attack them, in humour or not? Or is it simply because they don't have the same sexual preferences that we do? If we continue along either line, we're just as bad as those who oppress us, who deny us the right to marry and for equal rights simply because they can differentiate us queers from "normal" human beings.

What we all need to see is that, deep down, there is no difference between you, me, or John and Jane Smith down the block with their 2.3 children and fancy picket fencing. We all are humans on this planet, with the desire to love, live, and be happy. The sooner we realize that — the sooner we have an entire world of Positive Space — the sooner this world will be one of equality and a place I'm happy to live in. /Z

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A HISTORY OF DIVERSITY

(Saskatoon) The Avenue Community Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity (ACC) (formerly Gay & Lesbian Health Services) announced the publication of *Celebrating a History of Diversity*, an illustrated annotated chronology of gay and lesbian life in the province of Saskatchewan, at a reception on November 24. This detailed, illustrated introduction to the heritage of Saskatchewan's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Two Spirit (LGBTT) community covers the period from the establishment of the province's first gay and lesbian organizations in 1971 to the recent legal recognition of same-sex marriages in the summer of 2005. The chronology was researched and written by Neil Richards, a longtime member of Saskatoon's LGBTT community, using documentary materials he has collected and preserved at the Saskatoon office of the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

The publication has two intended audiences. It is hoped that the work will be instructive and useful to newer and younger members of the local LGBTT community, many of whom have limited knowledge of those pioneers who dared to dream of change and who established the organizations and institutions that now maintain and enrich our communities. The publication also targets a wider audience. Only recently has information about sexual orientation and gender diversity begun to be made available in Saskatchewan schools and libraries. Increased information is, of course, available through the popular media but this tends to be focused on issues of conflict and seldom concerns the accomplishments and contributions of local LGBTT people.

"It is the hope of the project that the published chronology will help in breaking down the invisibility of Saskatchewan lesbians and gays, and by providing an accurate source of historical information to increase opportunities for understanding, acceptance and cooperation" said Richards. Complimentary copies of the publication will soon be mailed to Saskatchewan libraries, school boards, politicians and academics. The University of Saskatchewan Library will pre-

pare and host an on-line version of the chronology on their website, Saskatchewan Resources for Sexual Diversity – <http://library.usask.ca/spcoll/srsd>, starting on November 24.

Celebrating a History of Diversity was officially launched at the University of Saskatchewan Main Library at 3 pm on November 24. An evening launch was also held the same day at the Avenue Community Centre. The evening launch event featured a presentation by University of Saskatchewan historian Dr. Valerie Korinek, who is currently writing *Prairie Fairies*, a history of gay and lesbian communities in Western Canada 1945–1980.

The Avenue Community Centre received financial support from the Community Initiatives Fund for Saskatchewan Centennial 2005 and Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Enquiries about this publication may be directed either to the author, Neil Richards, neil.richards@usask.ca, (306) 652-3735, or to Bruce Garman, Executive Director of the Avenue Community Centre, brucegarman@avenuecommunitycentre.ca, (306) 665-1224.

BATTLING HOMOPHOBIA

(Saskatoon) At the annual Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) conference in November, delegates adopted a resolution to address homophobia. The resolution states that homophobia "is discrimination that leads to violence, including murder." The resolution also states that the SFL will sponsor speakers and provide training through conferences and workshops on the effects of homophobia.

"Hate is hate, regardless of who it affects," says Michael Hardes, co-chair of SFL's solidarity and pride committee. "There's no excuse." Hardes also said it's important to "ensure people feel comfortable where they are working, so they don't feel singled out. When you go to work, everyone talks about their family, can you talk about your family? You have to keep quiet because you don't

have a traditional family."

The solidarity and pride committee was formed because union members were seeing and hearing about violent crimes in the community. "You don't want people to have to be in a hospital for a week and a half because they were beaten up because they came out to somebody at work and said, 'I think I might be gay,'" he said.

The SFL has been active in combating homophobia for the past few years. They have produced a Safe Space sticker that appears on many office and business doors across the province. They have also marched in Gay Pride parades in Saskatchewan the past few years.

The SFL has indicated they will also work with community groups to combat the many problems that arise because of homophobia.

POSITIVE SPACE

(Saskatoon) The University of Saskatchewan Student Union's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Ally Centre (LGBTAA) has unveiled a Safe Spaces campaign for the Saskatoon campus. The campaign was instituted in partnership with Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services at the U of S.

Often, queer people remain closeted in their work or study lives on campus because their fear negative reactions to their sexual or gender orientation, says Nicole White, the LGBTAA co-ordinator. This campaign will help focus attention on those safe spaces that do exist on campus.

"The Positive Space campaign is a university-wide initiative to reduce the impact of homophobia and heterosexism on campus," White said. "The aim of the campaign is to create a resource network and to identify LGBT2 positive people and spaces."

People interested in participating in the campaign can obtain Safe Spaces stickers to place on their office door or workspace. Faculty and staff who wish to participate in the program receive a

(Continues on next page...)