

LESBIAN/GAY INFORMATION SHEET

A message from some of the women and men in Toronto's lesbian and gay communities.

Gay men and lesbians are becoming more visible in Toronto. We have become a focus for concerns about sexual morality, the future of the family, male and female roles, and the sexual education of young people.

Several groups have set out to "stop homosexuals" and are presenting the public with lies and half-truths about us. Amongst other things they are trying to blame us for the breakdown of traditional family bonds, which many people feel are their only protection against isolation in an alienating world of bureaucracies and corporations.

Gay men and lesbians know exactly what it means to be socially and emotionally isolated. For decades we have lived alone, or pretended we have heterosexual feelings in exchange for the security of "family life". But now we are searching for and beginning to find new forms of home and community life and new types of love relationships that can give us the security everyone needs, especially in hard times such as these. A growing number of heterosexuals are also finding that the old ways of rigid sex roles and lifelong marriage are not working for *them* anymore. They too are looking for new ways of living.

The anti-gay crusaders want to stop this search for new ways. They see that homosexuals are the most obvious community involved in this search. So they try to convince the public that we are a tiny group of "perverts" who are "eager to get our hands on schoolchildren". Their message is: people who go against the old ways of living are a "social menace".

Let's look at some of the facts.

HOW MANY HOMOSEXUALS ARE THERE?

The anti-gay crusaders paint homosexuals as a tiny minority completely distinct from “normal” people. This is false.

Among *men*, according to sex researcher Alfred Kinsey ¹, 4% are exclusively involved with other men throughout their adult lives. And 50% are exclusively involved with women. THAT MEANS 46% ARE INVOLVED WITH MEN AS WELL AS WITH WOMEN.

The anti-gay crusaders conceal the reality that women are involved with other *women* as well. The number appears to be about 2% exclusively so involved, and another 15% are involved with women as well as with men.²

These statistics would suggest that lesbian sexuality is less common than male homosexuality, but one must remember that many women are tied down by dependence on men for economic support and unable to express their sexuality as openly as men. Whatever the correct figures: HOMOSEXUAL EXPERIENCES, FEELINGS, AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE EXTREMELY WIDESPREAD AMONG WOMEN AND MEN.

WHAT ABOUT CHILD MOLESTERS?

A so-called “Homosexuality Fact Sheet” distributed during last fall’s municipal election claimed that 1 out of 3 sexual assaults on children are committed by gay men. This false statement perpetuates one of the oldest and most malicious myths about gay men: that they are especially prone to attack children. In fact, anyone who takes the trouble to consult the studies of sexual abuse of children will find that most authorities maintain the exact opposite view. Robert L. Geiser, in his book *Hidden Victims: The Sexual Abuse of Children* (1979), states: “As for the offenders, studies suggest that these men are much more likely to have a heterosexual history and orientation than a homosexual one. Contrary to public belief, homosexual adult males rarely molest young male children.” (p. 75)

In other words, most men who assault boys are primarily or exclusively heterosexual in their sexual relationships with other adults.

Moreover, children are in much more danger within their own families than they are outside. The Children’s Hospital National Medical Center in the USA states that the child knows the offender in 80% of the cases.³ Add to this the fact that 95% of cases of sexual abuse involve men and girls⁴ and we can see that THE MYTH OF GAY ATTACKS ON CHILDREN HAS BEEN USED TO COVER UP THE MUCH MORE WIDESPREAD AND PERNICIOUS PROBLEM OF INCEST WITHIN THE FAMILY.

DON’T HOMOSEXUALS WANT TO ABOLISH AGE-OF-CONSENT LAWS?

In Canada, the age of consent for homosexuals is presently 21. For heterosexuals, it is between 14 and 18, depending on sex and marital status.

The main effect of age-of-consent laws is to make it illegal for young people to have sex *with each other*. These laws do not deal specifically with adult-child relations. They simply prohibit anyone under a given age from having sex at all. Many young people are sitting in reform schools merely because they had sex with another young person of the same or opposite sex. This is the main reason some homosexuals, including the former National Gay Rights Coalition, have called for the abolition of age-of-consent laws.

AND WHAT ABOUT OPENLY GAY TEACHERS?

Last fall, there was much concern about a proposal to establish a formal liaison between the gay and lesbian community and the Toronto Board of Education.

What does the lesbian and gay community want?

- An end to the negative picture of homosexual people that now dominate the schools — or the equally destructive silence.
- An end to the ‘mechanics of sex’ approach to sex education: sexual acts, both homosexual and heterosexual, take place within the context of our emotional and social lives and should not be wrenched out of that context.
- An end to the harassment of gay and lesbian students
- An end to the possibility that a teacher could be fired just because he or she is gay or lesbian.

The anti-gay crusaders (who would deny Socrates the right to teach in Toronto schools⁵) say that students may wish to be like their teachers, and will reason that if it’s okay to put a homosexual in charge of students, then it has to be okay to *be* a homosexual. There are two points here.

1. *Can* teachers really ‘recruit’ students to homosexuality? Scientists don’t know what determines homosexuality *or* heterosexuality, or when in life it is finally set. Suppose it’s not yet set by school age. Could one teacher really override all the forces in our society that guide young people toward heterosexuality? Is heterosexuality really that fragile? It seems unlikely. What an openly gay teacher *could* do is provide a positive model for that minority of students who we know are going to be gay or lesbian no matter what.

2. *Is* it okay to be gay? Well if it isn’t, what’s wrong with it? The fear that gayness is incompatible with a secure and loving life is a false fear. You do not have to stick to traditional sex roles and traditional sexual morality to find security and love.

More and more heterosexuals are seeing this as well. And that is what the anti-gay crusaders fear. They talk about keeping *homosexuals* out of the schools. But what they really want to keep out is any ideas about new ways of living for *everyone*.

THE ANTI-GAY CRUSADE IS NOT REALLY A CRUSADE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY. IT IS A CRUSADE AGAINST SEX, AND AGAINST ANY CHANGE AT ALL IN TRADITIONAL WAYS OF LIVING.

1 Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male, 1948. A study of 5,000 American men. 13% of men are more homosexual than heterosexual, Kinsey found.

2 Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female, 1953. A study of 5,000 US women. S. Hite, *The Hite Report*, 1976.

3 Geiser, p. 23

4 Geiser, p. 75

5 Ken Campbell of the anti-gay organizations Renaissance International and "Moderate Majority", testifying at the trial of *The Body Politic* in January 1979.



This pamphlet was produced by Gays and Lesbians Against The Right Everywhere (GLARE).

GLARE is a coalition of lesbians and gay men dedicated to fighting the anti-lesbian and anti-gay attacks of the Right through educational work and cultural activities to affirm the pride of our communities. We oppose the sexism and racism of the Right, particularly the recent arrival of the Ku Klux Klan — which combines a heavy dose of anti-gay bigotry with its racism. On March 21st we are organizing a day of workshops and cultural festivities against the Right. For further information contact GLARE at Box 793, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2N7.