Jeans are gay on Wednesday

By GORDON GOTLIEB

Unjustified assumption of heterosexuality won't be in effect next Wednesday, March 9th has been declared "Gay Wednesday" by the Tufts Gay Community. Anyone on campus wearing blue jeans on that day will be considered homosexual.

An arbitrary method of determining one's sexual preference? Absolutely. Almost as arbitrary as the ways the straight community has determined what constitutes gay male or lesbian appearance, dress or mannerisms.

The purpose of Gay Wednesday is to help people understand (and hopefully reject) those arbitrary societal labels and their harmful effects by giving the straight community the opportunity if only for one day and perhaps for the first time - to experience the subtler forms of discrimination and the underlying hostility faced daily by gays (and indeed by other minorities on campus).

It's not really that big a deal being gay. But come Wednesday, people will resurrect the most dubious of reasons for not wearing their jeans: it was too cold; it was too warm; I forget; I wore them yesterday: they're in the wash; I don't have any. The list goes on ad infinitum. In 99 cases out of a hundred, these excuses won't be true, yet they'll be dredged up from the seemingly bottomless reservoir of excuses people manage to have.

When TGC sponsored the first Gay Wednesday two years ago, many straight people deliberately refrained from wearing jeans. Why? Why this fear of being gay for a day? It certainly was not because they

considered themselves to be gay, and wished to hide the fact, but because they feared some sort of social ostracism from their friends if they appeared to be anything but heterosexual. How fragile our friendships and indeed our self-concepts must be if they can be so influenced by this spectre of homosexuality.

I use this term mockingly, yet the fear of alternative sexual lifestyles is such that society has deliberately covered up the existence of and contribution by gay people in an effort to protect straight people from the truth.

When the media finally begins to deal with reality, and television offers a half dozen shows in one season dealing with lesbians and gay men, it's considered a major breakthrough, and Time deems it the Year of the Gay.

All of my friends - both straight and gay - will be wearing blue jeans this Wednesday. There's no reason why those heterosexuals comfortable with their sexuality shouldn't do similarly. The only people who can't afford to wear blue jeans on March 9th are the several hundred gay students who have chosen not to emerge from their closets, ironically appearing as the more conspicuous amidst their blue-legged peers.

TGC will hold a discussion about sex roles Wednesday night at 8PM in Lamian Lounge, East Hall.

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