Gay community not concerned by QUEER postering

by BRIAN EGGLESTON

When a Daily editor asked me to write an article about QUEER I was highly amused. As far as I can tell, this is the first time that a radical action by a gay group on campus has not received any open support or condemnation by any gay people. None of the numerous letters and opinions written about QUEER’s “controversial” posters were written by openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual people. None of the writers seemed to realize that they were written by someone who was not interested in their concerns. None of the writers seemed to realize that their concerns were not relevant to the issues at hand.

The lack of gay response meant that such response had to be sought out for a commentary. I agreed to write the piece after another person declined to, under the stipulation that my opinions are my opinions, and in no way reflect those of everyone in the gay community.

However, I feel that the lack of gay response shows just how light-heartedly the gay community felt about the issue. To put it frankly, the posters didn’t really affect people that much. When I was interviewed by a Daily writer the day after QUEER’s posters were hung, I was asked if I thought that

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the pictures of naked women were offensive and hurt gay rights at Tufts. I laughed. Actually, I had never thought about the posters in such an analytical manner. Even though I never saw them, they sounded kind of neat. That’s it. Not good or bad, just neat.

Indeed, when I had lunch with the “gay” table in MacPhie Pub the day of the “incident,” some people just came in and told me about the posters. We laughed a bit about how humorous they were, and then proceeded to talk about other equally trivial gossip while eating our tuna fish sandwiches. No one really cared to find out who had made them. We realized long ago in the case of QUEER that ignorance is bliss.

Then, the issue became even more humorous when all the letters from heterosexual people came in with everything from praise to damnation of the posters. Everyone had their own opinion about what the posters meant. Some said the posters had made them more aware, others said that the posters set the gay movement at Tufts back 10 years. Associate Dean of Students Bruce Reitman seemed to be ready to get the secret police out to find out who had done this terrible deed. Other people contemplated whether these posters violated free speech or not.

But where were the letter’s from the gay, lesbian, and bisexual people? Many people whispered in classes and dining halls that the Tufts Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community was “obviously” not responding to the posters because the group was involved. Numerous people blamed the whole issue on Wally Pansing and “his friends.” Let me tell you, if Wally did half the things that he has been accused of, he would have failed out of Tufts by now.

For lack of time to study. As anyone else on the Senate can tell you, Senate activities take up all of your time. Furthermore, just who are these infamous “friends” of Wally’s that everyone just talks to him when talking about him? Don’t they have names too?

When people asked me if I thought the pictures gave gay people a bad image, I laughed again. Look honey, I have sat through countless numbers of “R” rated straight movies and had to endure watching people kiss and have sex. These vulgar displays of heterosexuality have not made me look at straight people in any more of a negative light. However, I wonder how many straight people watched such quality gay films as Desert Hearts, or Torch Song Trilogy?

Maybe the picture of two women was a bit more graphic than breeder sex scenes on TV or in movies, but look at it this way: you had to endure these pictures for one day. I have to endure others’ sex scenes everyday. It will be an equal trade. I get to look at soft-core heterosexual pornography on TV and the movies for the rest of my life. You get to look at hard-core gay sex for one day. Now, you tell me who gets the better end of the deal.

All right, maybe little kids will see these posters. However, just look at it this way. They’re just putting in their viewing time early in life. They get it over with quickly. Oh my gosh, I almost forgot the other complaint I overheard. These are just another means to recruit gay people!

Look, I grew up with heterosexism pouring out of the woodwork everywhere around me, and I’m still gay as a debutante... OK. I admit it. This heterosexual propaganda almost worked. One time in high school I had a nightmare about (gasp) having a crush on a girl. I woke up in a cold sweat; I was terrified that I was straight. I told my mom about the experience and she said, “Don’t worry, Brian, everyone goes through phases where they have feelings for people of the opposite sex.” That night, I watched “21 Jump Street,” took one look at Johnny Depp, and kicked myself for ever worrying that I was straight.

So where is all of this leading? Well, I don’t know because I have no clue what QUEER was trying to accomplish with their posters because I don’t know anyone in the group to ask. Whatever their goal, however, they made straight people discuss gay people (which maybe was their goal). Contrary to what people would like to believe, the posters didn’t upset me or lead me to believe that the whole gay cause at Tufts was going to collapse.

Oh, by the way QUEER, when are more pictures of naked men going up? Next time I want to make sure I’m on campus to see them.