

"That kind of male bonding is important. It's done throughout the entire culture," Tadd said. "Unfortunately, often it's limited to an athletic event, whether it's football or basketball."

"You see that kind of bonding on the courts," he noted. "You see men slap each other's butts. It's so accepted on the football field to hug each other and grab each other and jump up and rejoice."

"But if you jump up and hug a man here on the street ... it's not accepted and automatically you'll be labeled as a gay man," Tadd said. "You may not be, but so what if you are? Rejoice in it. Accept it."

After a struggle, he has learned to accept and enjoy his male-centric life, Tadd said.

"When I was in college as an undergraduate it was different because I had a couple of male lovers, but often they were simultaneous with girlfriends I'd had because I wasn't open about it," he said, noting that he was a member of a fraternity at the University of Kentucky. "But I know my energy and my heart connections are with and from men."

"There's something really special about being with a man and mountain biking all day. And then eating a big huge dinner, just really gluttonous, and then just having rowdy sex afterwards," Tadd said.

Sometimes he found himself flaunting his physical affection for Ed, Tadd said.

"I just wanted to begin desensitizing people," he said. "The more they see it, the more they'll get used to it."

'Good liberals'

However, Tadd added that it's not always safe for gays and lesbians to be open about their relationships, even in Eugene.

"It's the fear of getting beat up or your friends beat up," he said. "It's the fear of losing your house, your insurance, your job and your biological family. These are very real concerns."

Tadd said his willingness to be open about himself has created a rift in his family.

"My mother and brother know that I'm gay; my father does not," he said. "So, there's this undertow in our family, and it's really difficult because they're just too uptight to talk about it."

"I come from a fairly well-educated background and family, and I always thought they were 'good liberals,'" Tadd added. "But they haven't been too good about it. Even good liberals can be pretty homophobic."

Society's homophobia is reinforced by most people's assumptions that everyone is heterosexual, Ed said.

"It just pisses me off because it's automatically assumed that we're straight," he said. "Why do people have to assume anything? Why can't we just be ourselves, whether that's gay or straight or whatever?"

With society's overwhelming pressure to be straight, gay men often have to deal with internalized homophobia, Tadd said.

"When I was first coming out, although I felt deeply inside of me that I was gay, I really didn't want to look gay," he

said. "I was really scared to be effeminate."

"I had to learn what gay means to me. Does it mean being swishy and effeminate?" Tadd asked. "It doesn't necessarily mean that, although it could mean that. And so what if it does?"

Tadd recognized himself to be masculine and male-oriented. But he also learned that he shouldn't feel intimidated by men who are more effeminate.

"It's really sad because I've missed a lot of people in my life because I've been too homophobic myself to allow myself to see their beauty," he said. "I am much more comfortable with that now."

No clear role models

Society's homophobia also prevents gays and lesbians from having positive role models like straight people have, Ed said.

"I have a Norton Anthology book of poetry here, and I realize a high percentage of (poets) are gay," Ed said. "But how often is that brought up in classes?"

"You have to do all the research yourself to find these people because they're ignored by overall society," Ed said.

And the lack of positive role models is tough on a same-sex relationship, Tadd said.

"A heterosexual model was all I was ever shown. That's all that's visible," he said. "And it's apparent that heterosexual role models aren't always working even in the heterosexual community, much less are they working in the gay, lesbian, bisexual community."

"When you see yourself as



Photo by Mark Ylen

Monday's Gay and Lesbian Pride rally was a time that Tadd and Ed could publicly express their affection for each other.

the role model it's pretty interesting," Ed agreed. "Even for heterosexual relationships the script is already written out. If it doesn't work out, you know what to do."

"But for gay men, you sort of have to make it up as you go," he said.

"In some ways it's exciting

because we have the liberty and freedom to create our lives as we see fit," Tadd said.

"Being gay is not bad," Tadd said. "It's certainly not easy. But anything that's worth working for is worth having, and just rewards will come to those who work."

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

A ballot measure during the April 26-27 general election will address changes being considered in the 1990-1991 student health insurance program. The following are explanations of the four enrollment systems that will appear on the ballot:

VOLUNTARY

The student health insurance enrollment system currently used at U. of O. The student is required to pay for their coverage through direct payment of premium to the insurance carrier. The cost of the plan cannot be included in the student's tuition/fees and is not eligible under federal financial aid programs. Approximately 30% of the universities and colleges in the country employ a voluntary system. Approximately 3-10% of the eligible students are expected to enroll in the plan.

MANDATORY/LOOSE WAIVER

Students are automatically enrolled in the student health insurance plan unless they assert they have adequate personal health insurance coverage or personal finances to cover unexpected medical expenses. Students are not required to present proof of insurance or financial resources. Typically, the student's signature on a waiver petition is sufficient proof. The central advantage to this type of enrollment system is that the importance of student health insurance is brought to the attention of the general student populace. The main disadvantage of this enrollment system is that large numbers of students are likely to complete the waiver without having adequate health insurance. Often the student mistakenly believes they are still covered under a parent or employer's health insurance plan. The cost of the plan is eligible under federal financial aid programs. Approximately 30% of the nation's colleges and universities currently employ this type of enrollment system. Approximately 30-60% of the eligible students are expected to enroll in the student health insurance plan.

MANDATORY/RESTRICTIVE WAIVER

Students are automatically enrolled in the student health insurance plan unless they can prove the existence of comparable health insurance coverage. Waiver petitions are typically evaluated on the basis of: a) proof that the plan will remain in effect throughout the academic year; and b) the benefits provided are equal to or greater than the coverage provided by the university or college. The cost of the plan is eligible under federal financial aid programs. Approximately 10% of the country's college and universities employ this type of enrollment system. Approximately 60-80% of the eligible students are expected to enroll in the student health insurance plan.

MANDATORY

All students are required to participate in the university-sponsored student health insurance plan. No waiver petitions are accepted. The cost of the plan is eligible under federal financial aid programs. Approximately 5% of the universities and colleges in the country currently employ a completely mandatory enrollment system.

For more information, please call the ASUO Health Insurance Office at 346-3702.

