

Today's crossword solution

GROSS	SLAW	MASK
AIMEE	GOBI	IVAN
STANDSTILL	DALE	
PANOUT	NOD	DIVA
RCA	SOCALLED	
GNU	EFT	MALE
RIGA	FOE	TEMPLE
ACHRISTMAS	SCAROL	
BESIDE	SAT	NESS
SERF	ARC	ZEE
HOSTAGES	IOU	
UPTO	EEN	KANSAS
MEET	ADOLESCENT	
ORAL	NERO	TUTTI
RAKE	TREY	STAIR

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Not so ordinary

On National Coming Out Day, one student shares his story openly with the campus community

Michael J. Kleckner
 Editor in Chief

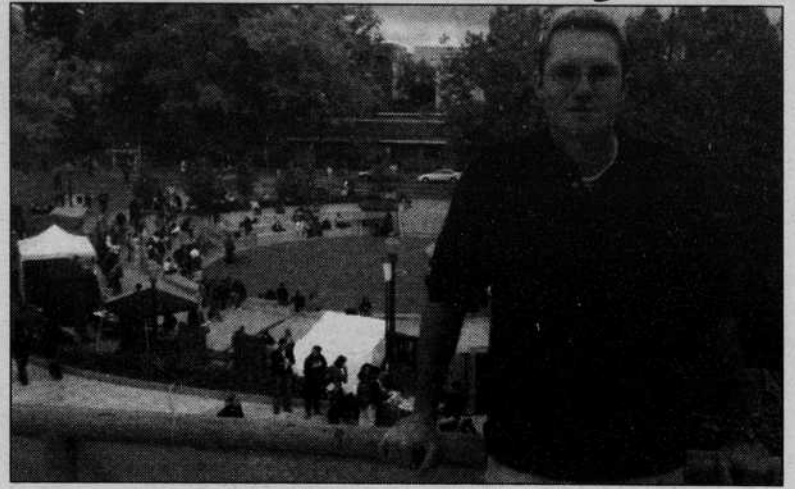
Scott Bonnell is a 21-year-old University senior majoring in political science with a business minor. He wears an unassuming, stylish haircut, is dressed like a regular college student and carries a dark beige Banana Republic messenger bag.

All of which may sound average and ordinary.

But Bonnell is gay.

For many young people who are gay, college is the first place they can acknowledge their homosexuality openly. Self-discovery is said to be one of the purposes of higher education, and college towns often provide a sense of freedom and a more liberal community than students have experienced before.

But for Bonnell, who recently came out to the entire country in *The Advocate*, the nation's longest-running gay news magazine, a sense



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

University senior Scott Bonnell decided he was through lying about his sexuality.

of freedom was only half the battle. In order to express fully his gay identity, he needed to find a place where no one knew him and he could begin with a clean slate. That happened earlier this year, when he was an intern for Disney in Orlando, Fla.

"That was the major turning point," he said, "where I decided basically — here it is; I'm laying it out on the table, and if no one likes it, then..."

He trails off, politely not finishing the sentence. For his national coming out, however, he did finish the thought.

"If you don't like it, then fuck you," he wrote on *The Advocate's* Web site.

That emotion, that uncompromising sense of self, likely came from the stress he carried while living an "average" life — or at least, an average heterosexual life.

"All my friends, before I told

them, thought I was straight," he said. "So they'd always come up to me and say, 'Hey, what do you think about that girl? She's kind of cute.' (They would) fix me up on a date. And I just got sick of it."

The tension eventually built to where Bonnell felt he had no other choice but to come out.

"I was afraid to check out a guy," he said. "I just couldn't be myself. I mean, it pissed me off after a while. It got to the point where I was just like, this isn't even worth it."

Even then, the decision was difficult because Bonnell wasn't sure how his ordinary friends in Beaverton — which he describes as "conservative, yuppie, judgmental" — would react.

"What are they going to think?" he asked. "Are they still going to be my friends? You know, everyone says that if they're not your friends after telling them, that they weren't your true friends to begin with."

"But it's a different feeling when you're actually going to do something like that — like tell them."

Since living in Florida, Bonnell has come out to most of his friends, but not all of them.

"I've got two friends up in Portland who I love very much and I would do anything for, but I know that they're extremely conservative and completely anti-homosexual," he said. "They're the only two that I'm really, truly afraid to come out to because I think I actually would lose them."

Bonnell is in a similar situation with his parents, whom he has not told about his sexuality.

"I feel like we're probably not as close as we could be if they were understanding of it," he said. "It really sucks when I go home for a weekend, and they're asking me, 'So what have you been doing with yourself?'"

Here, Bonnell's voice sounds almost plaintive.

"And I want to tell them, you know, I threw a great dinner party on Saturday night with 20 of my friends, and they're all gay," he said. "We just had a couple of bottles of wine and barbecued."

"Instead, I'm like, 'I had a few friends over. And you don't know them.'"

It's his friends, here on campus, that Bonnell said is the best part of being honest about his sexuality.

"Once I came out, I opened up to all these different people. I started Turn to **Coming out**, page 10A

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