

she has every right to. By using the phrase "lesbian/gay," however, and implying that lesbians are not gay, gender separatism is furthered by additionally implying that lesbians are different in some unique qualitative way from gay men. This is sexism.

Specificity

By which I mean just how elaborately one classifies an individual when speaking of that person: is the person referred to as "a person," "a Chicano person," or "a bisexual Chicano person"? I think we have a moral obligation to specify no more than is relevant. If one keeps referring to someone as "my Chinese friend" when the fact that the person is Chinese has no relevance to the matter at hand, the implication is either that the person is a friend *despite* the fact that the person is Chinese (he's not like the others) or that Chinese people are somehow different and so the listener must be warned that the person is Chinese. "Lesbian/gay" emphasizes that "gay" is not quite enough to say of a woman: we must be warned of her gender constantly. We all know the history of "separate but equal." "Unity" should be voiced unless there is a special reason to specify the "diversity." We don't need to relabel organizations like the Republican party the "Chicano/Gringo Republican Party" or worse (and parallel) the "Chicano/Human Republican Party" to keep ourselves aware of the special plight of these people of color.

So what? I think labels should be kept unisex when they exist in that form or made unisex when they imply masculinity. It would not be constructive to coin new labels like

"bakeress." "Actress" should be changed to "actor," which is at least potentially unisex. "Chairman" has been changed by many to "chairperson," and mercifully not to "chairwoman" for women and "chairmen" for men. "Her/his" should be changed to "its." "A person has its obligations" may be unsettling, but it is not as hideous as "A person has her/his obligations." Another alternative is "their." "A person has their obligations." Pardon my grammar.

An anecdote is related about Bertrand Russell. When he was jailed for protesting against the H-Bomb, the jailer (J) and he (BR) had the following exchange while forms were being filled out.

J: "Your name?"

BR: "Bertrand Russell."

J: "Your occupation?"

BR: "Philosopher."

J: "Your religion?"

BR: "Atheist."

J: "How do you spell that?"

BR: "A-t-h-e-i-s-t."

J: "That's alright, Mr. Russell, we all believe in the same God."

The point, of course, is that we don't all believe in the same God. We don't all have the same goals, priorities, or perspectives, but we *still* can respect one another. Let there be established a society in which each individual can function without discrimination directed at it because of its differences. Let us relish the variety of the world community instead of reducing it down to the least common denominator, which I fear we shall find is zero.

If I feel that these arguments are still valid, why do I now think that the expression "Les-

bian and Gay Pride Week is preferable? A minority has the right to self-determination, including what it calls itself. If a faction arises that wants to change that identity label, it should be respected. This has happened repeatedly throughout history. It is appropriate to know the generally accepted label of a subgroup and if you meet a member of that group who wants to be labelled differently you should, without apologizing, call them what they will.

The *Cascade Voice* survey that was published January 13, 1984 showed that 28%* of the respondents wanted the week that commemorates the Stonewall Uprising to be called Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. This is a significant faction. Those women who do not wish to be singled out by the word "lesbian" can group themselves conceptually in the "Gay" part of "Lesbian and Gay Pride Week,"

since it does not specify "Gay Men." Analyzing rhetoric can be uncomfortable because it makes us think, but if doing this occasionally results in a deeper understanding of ourselves and others, so be it.

**Editor's note:* This statistic is somewhat heartening. The respondents to the survey were 81% male, 92% white and 60% full-time employed with a median income of approximately \$22,000; and 65% of the respondents picked up the survey in a restaurant or bar honor box. This segment of the community (white, male, pleasure-oriented, relatively affluent) has been the least likely to support issues of social consciousness; so 28% of the respondents preferring *Lesbian and Gay Pride* may indicate enlightened thinking and fairness are increasing in our community.

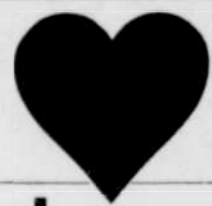


PORTLAND GAY MEN'S CHORUS

PRESENTS:

Love Song

A SPRINGTIME SERENADE



2 PM Sunday, March 11

in Eugene's Hult Center for the Performing Arts

8 PM Saturday, March 17

in the Benson High School Auditorium
546 NE 12th Avenue, Portland

Tickets: Available at the door, or in advance from Dugan's, Forward Gear, Roxy Heart's, Sensorium, C.C. Slaughter's, Somebody's Place, or any Hult Center outlet.