

## Who's having sex with whom?

Health experts, including those trying to stem the spread of AIDS, have had to rely on statistics gathered by Dr. Alfred Kinsey 30 to 50 years ago and on magazine-sponsored surveys among the skewed samples of people who volunteer to participate. Much of that information is suspected incomplete and erroneous.

Recently an expert panel of the National Academy of Science's National Research Council who were looking into AIDS prevention urged more federal agencies to sponsor

## ... Between the Lines ...

BY JACK RILEY

more research on sexual behavior, since several new studies indicate that sexual practices among Americans are now quite different than what previous surveys suggested.

For example, a recent regional study revealed that an unexpectedly high percentage of American women regularly engage in anal intercourse, a high risk activity as far as AIDS is concerned. Another study found that many gay men and lesbians have intercourse with members of the opposite sex. That should come as no surprise to most gays, but it might be a revelation to the "straight" community.

The Kinsey Institute of Sex Research at Indiana University reports that studies indicate about two-thirds of homosexual men reported having engaged in heterosexual intercourse, 70 percent reported having sex with a married man and 20 percent said they had had sex with six or more married men. In addition, 45 percent of lesbian women said they had sex with men since 1980, during the onset of AIDS.

What this research emphasizes is that AIDS educational material should not focus solely on so-called "risk groups" because sexual behavior passes across identification boundaries.

Harold Lief, marriage and sex counselor at the University of Pennsylvania, told the *New York Times* in a recent interview that "It's behavior, not risk groups, that really counts."

For example, he said many Mexican-American men of mixed Indian and European heritage who have anal intercourse with other men do not consider themselves homosexual unless they are the receptive partners. Anal intercourse is often used to preserve the "virginity" of women with similar heritage, he added.

A properly done national sex survey could help family planning organizations define the need for contraceptive services and target more accurately education programs to prevent other sexually transmitted diseases.

That survey should include the sexual activity of homosexual men, teenagers, bisexuals, and divorced people, men who have sex with other men and just about anyone else who can operate a zipper.

Aside from aiding AIDS researchers and health officials, more accurate data could help overturn sodomy statutes in some states that ban such activity. If anal intercourse is found to be practiced more by heterosexuals than homosexuals, then using sodomy statutes to prosecute gays would be discriminatory.

## Acting up: youth revisited

Those of us who stepped out into the streets in the late 60s and early 70s and were promptly met with FBI cameras, hostile citizens, and nasty local cops. Those who

participated in the anti-war demonstrations have to be a little wistful when we watch the latest street theater by the vocal crew at ACT UP.

Though there is some questionable value to strewing 1,000 condoms throughout *The Oregonian* Building and tweaking Senator Hatfield over rumors (some very old) of being gay, you can't help but admit this group is doing what a lot of us would like to do: shake up the establishment of newspaper publishers who are afraid to face the realities of AIDS and politicians who continue to sport voting records that are less than favorable to homosexuals.

The traditional gay organizations do much to promote our welfare and no one should take that away from them. But we all know that working with the establishment does not always produce results. For instance, the state's AIDS education campaign with the media is an absolute farce. Gay groups were involved in the preparation of that campaign and effective ads are still not getting in print or on the air.

So as long as there is a cause that needs attention, here's to ACT UP. There is not a place in some gay organizations for the rank and file and those without a lot of spare cash to donate (some of us are not "Old Portlanders" like Sanford Director). But ACT UP doesn't need your cash as much as your body and soul out in the streets.

## Skinheads escalate attacks

The racist and anti-gay fliers distributed by skinheads and their followers in southeast Portland are a grim reminder that these hate groups never go away; they just subside for awhile until they find enough supporters to resurface and continue spreading venom.

Fliers that vilify Jewish businesses, taunt blacks as "burrheads" and condemn gays and lesbians are nothing new. Yet for Portland, it is disquieting that these New Age Nazis are getting national media attention for their aggressiveness.

Be aware that these groups are violent and posting bills is not their only pastime. If you like to party downtown be very careful not to travel alone if you have been drinking. Better to take a taxi home than the bus or MAX. And avoid the bus mall at all costs. It is not safe after dark if you travel alone and are intoxicated.

## Letters kill harassment law revisions

Efforts to expand Oregon's harassment law to include cases of harassment based on sexual orientation were shot down in Salem this past month, despite support for such new legislation from Governor Neil Goldschmidt.

Legislators pointed to stacks of correspondence arguing that specific language referring to the sexual orientation of victims would in effect give homosexuals special status and would recognize what opponents called "an immoral lifestyle." One guess where most of those letters originated.

All that despite some pretty convincing testimony in legislative committees that violence against gays has escalated.

The political reality is that gays as a group cannot be successful in changing laws until they help change political opinions... and one way to help change a politician's mind is to bombard her or him with letters telling the truth about what is happening to a group of people who deserve protections against victimization.

## High schools snub AIDS survey

It's going to be more difficult to coordinate AIDS education efforts in public high schools in Oregon as long as school districts keep refusing to participate in a state survey to gauge students' knowledge of the disease.

The Oregon Department of Education says almost half of the state's high schools have turned down requests to participate in the study conducted by Eastern Oregon State College.

The negative attitudes toward the study are summed up by a Salem-Keizer School District

official Skip Liebertz: "Unless a survey has a very direct benefit to the school, we have a policy of not conducting any," he told the *Associated Press*. "We get hundreds of different surveys every year and don't have the time or the staff to do them."

The research is planned to span five years in an effort to assess the impact of the new AIDS curriculum on students. It's too bad AIDS is looked upon as a moral issue, instead of a major health issue by those school officials not responding to the survey. There is no doubt that they are objecting to the subject matter and the controversy it may bring, rather than the problem of administering the survey.

Remember the lesbian and gay community in your will.

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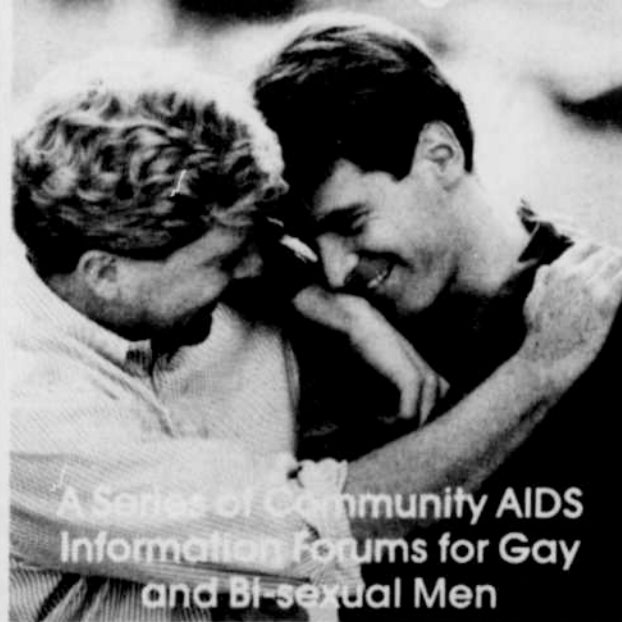
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