

## COLLEGIAN OP-ED

### Lambdas: Staying in hiding

**Rick Mayes**

It was difficult to avoid the irony surrounding the three part expose on the Lambda Coalition. The sub-heading was "Coming out of Hiding": 'Myths & Stereotypes'; 'Recognition and Discrimination'; and 'Effects on Friends.' I read all three articles and no one "came out."

The Collegian started the entire series off in a childish manner with the not-so-clever "That's What You Think" political statement, an excellent piece of journalistic manipulation. How odd that they filled blank pictures with "no comment", yet there were comments below, some actual comments and some obviously made up (i.e. "Uh, wow. That's a tough one.") I doubt either Commentary or The National Review would sink that low. The Collegian could have found comments if they were truly pursuing an honest, campus reaction.

More importantly, however, is the fact that homosexual-heterosexual relationships could be far more harmonious than they are now. Select members mentioned right from the beginning that fear is what holds them back, fear of discrimination, fear of physical retaliation, etc. So they form a secretive group whose only outspoken leader is their advisor who makes no reference to his sexual orientation, thereby remaining involved, but not on a deeply personal level as a homosexual member would be.

There is, without a doubt, a homophobic element at U of R. This Coalition and the expose only to add to this homophobic element. I'll give a personal example.

Three years ago I got a job at a nice restaurant in St. Louis. As it turned out, about three-fourths of the male servers were gay. I didn't realize this until about a week after I started. Granted, being a card-carrying heterosexual and that it was my first exposure to homosexuals, I was a little shocked. They didn't wear neon signs around their necks, but they weren't ashamed of themselves either. If you asked them, they answered honestly about their lives. The more open and honest they were with me, the more comfortable I felt with them. By the end of the summer, they were good friends of mine who I felt as comfortable with as my straight friends.

\*The key is to divorce the act from the individual. A homosexual hurts no one else. He or she does not murder, steal, lie or otherwise as murderers and thieves do. Many take the moral high ground and consider the homosexual act an abomination. Fine, but homosexuals are accountable to God, not to me (obviously not me) or anyone else. Jesus loved the tax collectors, prostitutes and other undesirables because they were people, not the sum total of their deeds.

In my opinion, as arduous and undesirable as it may sound, I feel that the Lambda Coalition and U of R would be better off, if instead of being secretive and quiet, they were open and candid, not obnoxious, but just open. The change wouldn't be instantaneous, but change would occur, even if it were slow. FAMILIARITY BREEDS TOLERANCE. How do I feel about a gay/lesbian/bisexual student organization on the UR campus? Too bad no one asked me, because, if done properly, I think it would be great. That's not a condoning of the act; it is a condoning of the individuals.

*Editor's note: The "That's What You Think" mentioned in this editorial, as clarified in an earlier note, was composed of actual responses to the question "How would you feel about a gay/lesbian/bisexual support group on the UR campus?" None of the people polled (approximately 10, the usual sample for these questions) would respond on the record.*