

Alleged Discrimination

GSU May Boycott Corner Restaurant

By DEBBIE GALANT

THE GAY STUDENT UNION (GSU) will decide Thursday whether to organize a boycott against The Virginian restaurant for discriminating against gays, GSU President Andy Humm said yesterday.

In related action, Mr. Humm said members of his organization plan to "do what for us comes naturally," including same-sex dancing in Pavilion XI, despite recent publication of a Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC) ruling prohibiting homosexuals from the rathskellar.

Although he said the GSU did not expect University Union harassment, Mr. Humm said, "We certainly won't back off" if stopped from participating in gay activities in the Pavilion.

GSU would back a gay thrown out or arrested in Pavilion XI in a court challenge using Student Legal Services, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) or private legal aid, he added.

UNION OFFICIALS SAID same-sex dancing would not constitute a homosexual act, but a gay asking a non-gay to dance would be considered "solicitation," according to Union Tri-Chairman Rick Kruger.

"We don't intend to establish this as a place for solicitation," Mr. Humm said. "There is double standard here," he added. However, "straights can go up to gays, but gays can't go up to straights."

"We're not recruiting gays. We're just asking them to be who they are," Mr. Humm added. "And we don't intend to fake it (heterosexuality) for the sake of Pavilion XI."

Charlottesville ABC District Office Head Clarence Roberts said in the past six years no Charlottesville group has lost its ABC license because of the rule against homosexuals.

"Each case has to be weighed on its merits," Mr. Roberts said.

"Who's to say they're a homosexual in the first place?"

In the case of alleged discrimination by The Virginian, the University Legal Advisor's office advised the GSU last week that The Virginian was not breaking the law in sometimes not allowing gays in the restaurant, according to Mr. Humm.

THE OFFICE IS currently researching legal restrictions on the GSU's planned pickett-boycott of the restaurant.

Law Student Mike Hammaker, who works at the legal office, said he is researching "What legal rights to protest does a student organization have?"

He declined further comment, saying the office would not have a formal decision on gay's rights until Thursday.

Gay students have charged that The Virginian has asked gays to leave and harassed them in fluctuating cycles.

The Virginian is "tougher on who they let in and who they don't"

during Monday night football games, according to a GSU member, who said he was once asked to leave.

"Harassment" of gays included not letting five people sit at a booth and "conspicuously refusing to serve," he said. "You do get the feeling of being unwelcome there," he added.

"I don't care that much about The Virginian," he said, but "I would be more inclined to support a picketing of Pavilion XI. A bigoted University is harder to take."

THE WORST KIND of discrimination and bigotry have been practiced in the place for 10 years," according to another GSU member, who also said he was asked to leave The Virginian.

The Virginian Manager Edward W. Amato said although his restaurant has an enforced standard of conduct for customers, "We don't have any group that we're specifically saying we don't want here. It doesn't make any difference who they are."