

Emphasizing the positive: a GSU nobody knows

Guest Column

by Jon Hooper

Last time (Mar. 8) I said "the public has heard little about the Gay Student Union (GSU) and its activities." Today I am going to correct that and discuss some of these activities.

For example, those of you who applied to the Resident Advisor program and those of you who have read the Colonades know the GSU provides speakers, maintains a library of gay materials, and provides counseling for gay students. How often does such hit the front pages? Just the same old issues of funding, office space, and harassment capture the public eye. Rarely are our positive aspects emphasized.

Let's examine them:

- **Speakers:** we have had all sorts of people speak at meetings, including representatives of other gay organizations. Our most recent speakers were a team from the Counseling Center.

- **A library of gay materials:** the GSU tries to keep an updated library of gay-oriented materials. This includes subscriptions to the Blade and the Advocate, two prominent gay newspapers. It also includes books on homosexuality, ranging from dry scholastic treatises to personal experience books, not to mention our own Flourishes.

- **Counseling for gay students:** the GSU hotline is not currently in operation (though rumor has it that it may resume operation sometime this spring), but people could call that number and talk things out with someone.

We try to keep consciousness-raising (CR) groups going, though this semester's groups are conducted by a private individual and without GSU control. We have Flourishes, and our

coffees, which are good for just talking with people who share a common bond.

- **Flourishes:** a publication of the GSU, designed to "encourage everyone, gay and straight, to become familiar with the many and varied viewpoints of those men and women who proudly and courageously accept their own homosexual identities," as our then-President wrote in Flourishes number two.

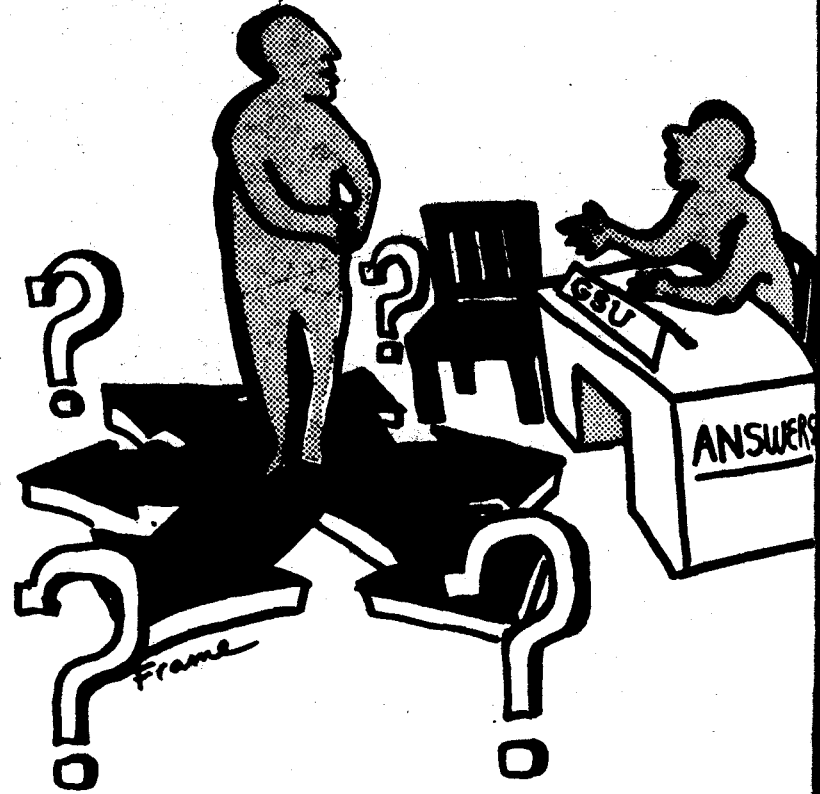
It is published sporadically (Number three due any year now), and judging by number two, future issues will carry several personal experience stories, articles on CR and group activities, a statement from the Board of Directors, and a page of news briefs.

I was handed a copy of number two when I began to come out, and it helped assuage my guilt. When number three does come out, read it. And think about it.

- **The Jeff Beaton Dance Marathon:** we entered it.

Other activities include affiliation with MAAGSO (Mid-Atlantic Alliance of Gay Student Organizations). And there are social activities such as coffees, picnics, and dances. (The next dance is March 25). And that my friends is the GSU nobody knows.

I said before that I was emphasizing the positive. Does a negative side exist? Consider the following: our meetings occasionally become bogged down in parliamentary procedure; we have



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cliques inside the group; and we have some volatile personalities that must be coped with. In short, we're no different from any other group.

You're right — I didn't mention office space or funding under either category. It's an extremely gray area — the issues cause an intra-group schism. Some feel we honestly need them, some see getting them as striking a blow for gay rights, and some (including myself)

acknowledge these beliefs but getting into another brouhaha create more antagonism than conceivably be solved. As a result of schism I don't feel justified in call them positive, yet I can't in good science call them negative.

Jon Hooper is an alias for a University student

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