

A celebration

We shied at first from the title, "Gay/ Lesbian Celebration Week." But as a Student Council decision nears on whether to endorse this proposed recognition of homosexuals, we have concluded that "celebration" is just the right word.

It is time for students to discover the invisible effects of ostracizing homosexuals, and we urge Council to do more tonight than urge tolerance during the first week of April.

The Cavalier Daily will explore homosexuality at the University in a series set to run the same week. But the Gay Student Union's Gay/ Lesbian Celebration week also can help the heterosexual think about himself.

In spite of continuing discrimination of homosexuals, many gays and lesbians say in some ways they are not more oppressed than heterosexuals, but more free.

Society is a strict master. Men are not allowed to show their emotions in public. If you are not tough and stoic, you are considered less than a man. Women, however, have made some progress in rejecting controls on their conduct.

Cultural demands prevent both men and women from exhibiting their own personalities. These demands even prohibit the fulfillment of basic human needs. The man who feels he must never show he cares about others and the woman who does not dare stand up for her views are incomplete, unhappy people.

Because a transient student population feels the need to unite behind tradition at the University, the restraints on dissenting behavior are particularly strong. Essential to tradition at the University is the acceptance of heterosexual male dominance.

We do not endorse homosexuality or any other sexual preference. That would be as narrow-minded as the attitudes we criticize. But we believe that challenging the stigma of homosexuality will help all celebrants feel more comfortable about making decisions such as sexual preference on more valid criteria than peer pressure.

Reaction to the proposal among some Student Council members makes it painfully clear how little some people understand homosexuality. When three Council members got wind of Law School Rep. Bob Schwartz' motion, they submitted a watered-down substitute which only "acknowledges" that the GSU is sponsoring the week. There is even talk among Council members that some are considering another substitute resolution which would urge gays and lesbians to seek psychiatric help.

Psychological studies clearly have shown that gays are not mentally ill. "Gay/ Lesbian Celebration Week" will give people a chance to consider homosexuality seriously and fearlessly.

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We urge all our readers to seize the opportunity to broaden their understanding of homosexuality. We hope Council members do not let their own views on homosexuality take the meaning out of "Gay/ Lesbian Celebration Week" by substituting innocuous and politically safe words for "celebration."

Gays must be accepted, acknowledged and understood. As an enlightened institution, the University owes itself an open-minded celebration.