Facing The

Editor's Note: This article was researched and written by Craig Hines and Nick Sabo. To insure anonymity, the names of the characters have been changed. The situations are real.

"I'd say it started when I was young, say about ten years old. I reached puberty early. My mother told me to stay away from girls because I was too young to be interested in them. My father wasn't dominant, so that didn't help matters."

"It began with innocent associations with boys my age. Girls put me down a lot of times, and as I got older, I found security with guys. But when I came to Cal Poly I decided to play it straight. This proved to be a big problem," Monte explains.

The words provide an insight into the clandestine world of the gays, the homosexuals. It is a world that is a part of a not so obvious scene at the Cal Poly campus. The Gay Students Union is secretive by necessity, having just recently bravely the inevitable scorn, misunderstanding, and ridicule that followed its seeking official recognition by the Associated Students Incorporated.

"God knows how many bastards would come down on us if they could," says Rick. "Our phones wouldn't stop ringing. The heavy breathing or accusing voice crying 'faggot' at the other end would put most of us in maximum security at Atascadero State. When the time comes to find a job, all this education would be useless. Nobody wants to hire fags. The secrecy bit is only temporary. At least I hope so. I look forward to the day when my lover and I can live together without one goddamn word from anybody!

Lover—that's what he said. Rick and Monte are lovers. They relate like any couple. They enjoy touching each other."

It would seem evident that the gays face a major obstacle in achieving public acceptance. They have the problem of conveying to the general public that homosexuality is not something terrible, or at least, not harmful to the rest of society.

Being gay means being secret. Most gays don't want the calls and atrocities created by a "straight backlash." Rick and Monte, though deeply involved, are discreet about their relationship. They keep it hidden, but with a great deal of acting, deception, and excuses. Both live in the same dormitory in separate rooms, yet Rick spends the greater amount of his free time at Monte's. Luckily, Monte's roommate, David, is also a homosexual. Rick finally had to tell his roommate about his secret simply because he never seemed to spend nights in his room.

The rest of the dorm residents might suspect their relationship, but the pair gives in great length to suppress any suspicions, and they openly discuss their past experiences with the opposite sex. No reference is ever made to the fact that, when David is away, Rick and Monte share the room, with one bed always staying made.

Sexuality is important to the gays. They see it as the most complete expression of their feelings. Rick enjoys "tricking," what straights would call a one night stand—just for the pleasure and release of it all. Monte points out that many gays desire close, lasting relationships with one other person. But how?

"I tell people to use their imaginations," Rick replies. "We begin the mating game with handicaps. We don't have the ability to function with complementary parts, if you know what I mean. So, in order to make up for that, we've explored sexuality beyond the norms that the heterosexual couple lives with. We've discovered places that are more sensual than anything you can imagine—places you didn't even know you had."

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"I knew exactly when it was that I had to admit to myself that I was different from the other boys. I was only nine years old and in junior high school. The first time I saw those guys in the shower room, I knew I was gay," he says quite seriously.

Rick is very insecure and uncertain of his identity. Monte gives him the security he needs. In return, Rick gives Monte the love and understanding he failed to receive from girls. "Every day, I continue to search for the answer. If I knew the answer to that, and wrote a book about the facts, I would be rich men. People have been searching for the answer for years, and they'll go on searching."

There are many theories on possible genetic links, mother-domination, and father-pacification. Each case has its own individual background. "Mine was a profoundly strong mother and a father who tried to dominate her," David advises. "You can't prove that's why I'm gay and that's what's important."

As with Monte, Rick did not have close ties with his father. "I was a disappointment to him because I played the piano and wasn't interested in sports. I don't give a damn what he thinks anymore!" Rick admits.

Estimates place from five to ten percent of the population of the United States in the gay world. "Sure, there are queers that everybody has read about," Rick admits. "I really don't know how important, halting, blanking, fluctuating, I mean all the various things. But I do know there are many, well-adjusted, functioning people that are gay. Most of us are like you, except we enjoy the company of the same sex."

In their moments of privacy, Rick, Monte and David joke around about the stereotyped gays. Walking around with swaying hips, bent wrists, and lisping to all the "s"es" in every word, Rick, like most people, thinks nothing could be more sickening. A fear to the gays, perhaps their greatest fear, is discovery of their secret life. Yet, they would like to show people outside the gay community that they don't go around swishing like stereotyped (Continued on page 7).
by Jonnie Fuentes

The dimly shaded lamp in the corner of the room made the walls a whisper of egg white and the air was surrounded by quiet. Leaning against the bed, her tail-bottom legs stretched out in front of her while the fingers of her hand played with the bits of yarn on the carpet. The walls behind the pink spreaded bed are posterized with pictures of the sea, a boat on a ribbon of twilight sparkles, snap shots of only two, love stickies, and the face of Janis Joplin on a pumpkin colored poster that blurs out "Don't Compromise Yourself, You're All You Got!"

Her name is Carla and she loves a lot of things. At 18 she is alive with a fusion of deep ponderous thoughts and wild hilarioust laughter. But most of all she loves life.

Her chestnut brown hair, parted down the middle frames a simple beauty of nesma clean skin and a pensive countenance. Her little and sensuous body is at once curvaceous and bony. Her eyes mirror an image that could at once be every man's daughter, every mother's child. Carla has deep solemn eyes that are sometimes bright and sometimes pale, colorless mirrors the sitrmadelegen on a blue shaggy rug and plucks the petals of her mind.

"Jeff. He was the only guy I could ever be in love with, you know. I mean really, I loved him so much it just hurt inside somehow. Marriage was out of the question because there were just too many things we both had to do, besides my parents would never go for it."

"That was the last thing I wanted to believe-- me pregnant. It just couldn't be true. That summer I was working to bide time before school. It was my first summer before going away. You know how it is--away to college--the feeling you get, like an old Mickey Rooney movie."

But then the questions come. Academically they can be listed--morals, values, outlook, maturity, open mindedness, family background, up-bringing. And like a hand full of ice that snowballs into a gigantic avalanche, all of these emotions compact and hurtle down on the mind of an innocent girl across the room.

"My period was due and it didn't come and it didn't come. I knew I'd start sooner or later. But when I didn't I decided to go to a doctor and find out for sure, I knew he'd find it negative. I'm just nervous, that's why nothing's happening, I told myself."
Carla is a typical girl much like you or I who has faced an almost inconceivable problem, with all the feelings of trauma and anxiety of a girl in trouble.

There were alternatives besides therapeutic abortion for Carla, but awareness wasn't here for the moral and physical vacillations of young girls tottering precariously on the threshold of intercourse.

"If there is any possibility of pregnancy, then the young lady should be on an effective contra-

traceptive program. The girl who has an unwanted pregnancy is one who is in the process of decision. This decision depends on her own moral values. The girl who has been promiscuous since she was eleven has no problem accepting birth control. It's the one who wanted pregnancy la one who is in the process of procreation, It just happened. No rhyme, no function on the outside when inside and inside and inside.

Incomplete or a missed abortion. At this time the decision grow until the word abortion explained. "One is spontaneous. Twenty per cent of all pregnancies are spontaneously aborted, the cause is usually unknown. After 4-6 weeks, If the mother comes in, it is too late to do anything.

Finally, down the carpeted hall she was led. The room was well lit. The American flag hung high. Their daughter would never hurt them. No word on her lips. But It had to be done and It had to be done. There was no one to worry about. No one would know but herself.

The discussion grew until the word abortion was verbally ignored.

There are various methods of abortion," he explained. "One is spontaneous. Twenty per cent of all pregnancies are spontaneously aborted, the cause is usually unknown. After 4-6 weeks, If the mother comes in, it is too late to do anything.

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"If there is any possibility of pregnancy, then the young lady should be on an effective contra-

there's nothing we can do. Does your boyfriend have enough to send you to Tijuana?"

"I didn't know how to take him at first. I looked for a snare or a paralyzing snare on his clean medical face. My eyes followed his movements, his eyes, his eyebrows, his glinting metallic Instruments, a pair of long silver colored fluffs of gauze and a pair of long silver colored forceps.

After 4-6 weeks, If the mother comes in, it is too late to do anything.

"I heard an announcement one day over the radio, 'I'd heard it at least of times before but never paid any attention to it until now when I desperately needed it. It said call Hotline if you need help. For drugs, counseling, or an unwanted pregnancy call Hotline."

But for Carla the decision was too late. At night she laid in bed thankful for the tautness of her belly, as the sound of whispering children settled on her soul. Carla laid her hand over her still flat belly, In the distant velvet stroke against the muffled Icy coolness of the sheets. And an awareness of the miracle chambered Inside. Hie heart flutters of gauss and a pair of long silver colored forceps.
the salvation. Gently she guided her heels and placed them in cold metal stirrups wide-apart.

“Shoot down more Carla. A little more, little more. Thats it girl.”

Flat on her back and knees straddled spread eagle, she gripped tightly to the smooth black leather.

I shut my eyes trying desperately to hold back the humiliation consuming me minute by minute. The membrane plastic hand probes inside of me while the other hand pressed down firmly on my abdomen. God, I wanted to die. The pain was unbearable, but it was nothing compared to the other pain in my mind and heart. It spread gnawing me inside out until tears squeezed from beneath my eyelids and rolled down making wet trails down my flushed cheek.”

I looked outside and it was dark. I put my pencil to the long parted hair hid her smooth face.

Carla, It’s gonna feel like we’re pulling your heart out the window, But she couldn’t see them...

I remember the nurses wheeling me up one hall and into an elevator. My eyes were glued and staring, when I lied about everything I did. I prayed no one would recognize me while I was sitting waiting to be admitted. The waiting was eternal, but I knew they were processing papers that would go on record…

“Where the hell are you Jeff? She pleaded in silence. “Don’t you know what’s happening?”

The room was eerily like a nightmare with no song and with it came nurses and the doctor. The stethoscope was cold against her heart and Into the dark windowed edifice were rows and rows of empty-eyed people waiting like parasites for replenishment. Some were old and belabored by worry. Moving down one, their eyes hooked on tears sweated from beneath their eyelids and rolled down making wet trails down my flushed face.

Another day brought Carla to the trimmed green blankets of grass cut by some civil prisoner outside the county welfare office. Inside the slick windowed edifice were rows and rows of empty-eyed people waiting like parasites for replenishment. Some were old and belabored by worry.

Moving down one, their eyes hooked on tears sweated from beneath their eyelids and rolled down making wet trails down my flushed face.

“I could feel the nurse rubbing my arm with something cold and damp, then the pain was a sharp pinch in my arm. The trees outside were swaying back and forth and back and forth. The sun was so bright I had to close my eyes, my eyes, my eyes.

“I remember the nurses wheeling me up one hall and into an elevator. My eyes were glued and staring, when I lied about everything I did. I prayed no one would recognize me while I was sitting waiting to be admitted. The waiting was eternal, but I knew they were processing papers that would go on record…”

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“I remember thinking, she’s crazy. I’m waiting, I’m waiting. Go away and leave me alone. I’m waiting for the doctor.” But I heard him say Carla, It’s gonna feel like we’re pulling your guts out.

Like a crazy holding her brain revolved. She looked and strained to see the palms swaying out the window, But she couldn’t see them because the light had come back.

She went home late the next day. And everything was the same only slightly different, Out of focus limbo-land.

Carla folded her lean bell-bottomed legs and the long parted hair hid her smooth face. I looked outside and it was dark. I put my pencil away. I
fairies. "We walk with pride," says Monte. "We talk and shout like every other person. Some of the greatest athletes and moving orators are gay, and you don't see them swishing. You see them as part of our society. Their membership in the world of the gays is only part of their lives. If we could only tell people that, without bringing down the persecution that follows being a found-out gay."

Membership in the gay community is not limited to students in San Luis Obispo, as Rick would tell you. "We know quite a few respected and some not-so-respected businessmen and important citizens right here in San Luis Obispo that are gay as you can get. In fact, I'd venture to say that this town has as many, or more gays than the average."

"While there are some out-and-out queens in stores, I think you would be surprised to know how many you think are gay and that really are not. Yet the ones you wouldn't even suspect could turn out to be gay."

Human curiosity leads most people to want to know for sure that they are face-to-face with a real homosexual. There is an aura of mystique, Rick says, "When some of the members of the Q.S.U. have been on the radio programs around town, one of the most asked questions revolved around homosexuals reaching outside their own group and soliciting and molesting harmless, normal individuals. Our only answer can be that we know of no gays who have ever attacked a straight, much less gotten brutal. I just can't think of any reason to fear homosexuality in San Luis Obispo because of physical harm or crime."

"If society would leave us alone, there wouldn't be any problems," Monte interjects. "What a man does in the privacy of his own bedroom is his business and nobody else's."

"What right does society have to tell you you can or cannot love? People keep forgetting that the Constitution guarantees a man the right to live his life the way he wants to as long as he doesn't hurt anyone else. And we're not hurting anyone."

What does the future hold for the homosexual? Rick has chosen show business for his career, which is like an island for gays in a sea of straights. David is pursuing the medical profession, a world unique unto itself. Monte on the other hand, seeks a more technical field which is government controlled and requires security clearances and constant on-guard behavior. Even today, Monte bitterly dreads the thought of living in fear of discovery, so much that he is considering an alternate course.

Homosexuality is an alternative in itself, it is a way of life most feared, most misunderstood, and maligned. The secretiveness is the biggest regret of the gays. "As we discover ourselves as human—nothing more, nothing less—we'll be able to live happily and free," Rick concludes. They appear to be asking not for acceptance, merely tolerance."

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