

# Q Culture

## Competing for acceptance

by Brandon Tunnell  
Special to Q-Notes

The dejected batter creeps back to the bench after whiffing on a full count. "You hit like a fag!" taunts a fan. His teammates offer encouragement, "You'll get that queer next time." Homophobic insults like these are heard in the gyms and on the playing fields of American schools every day. To straight coaches, they are an everyday part of the sports scene, no different for chatter among teammates or sounds from the crowd. But the barbs are different for some. They cut deeply into the self-esteem, confidence, even talents of young gay men who are struggling to succeed in sports while trying to develop a healthy identity for a lifetime.

Dan Woog, author of *JOCKS: True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes* [Alyson Publications], knows that gays in sports struggle for acceptance in an aggressively hostile world. However, in high schools and colleges, gay male athletes are beginning to come out. It's a quiet revolution, but one that cannot be ignored. The final closet door — leading out of the hyper-masculine locker room — is slowly opening.

*JOCKS* is the first book to look at the experience of gay players and coaches in high school and collegiate sports. The experiences, both positive and negative, are powerfully and honestly told, in the words of the athletes and coaches themselves. Woog authored the highly acclaimed *School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools*. He is also an openly gay high school coach and was the National Soccer Coaches Association of America's Youth Coach of the Year in 1990.

The power of Woog's *JOCKS* comes from the many stories it tells. Some are tragic; others are inspiring. They range from the track star beaten up because he supported a gay coach, to the tennis player who educated his team about homophobia; from the coach dealing

Theatre

Art

Music

Dance

Film

with his football-playing son's homosexuality, to the swimmer whose drug and alcohol addiction was fueled by his terror at being gay. *Q-Notes* spoke to Woog about his book that looks at what happens when America's obsession with sports confronts its obsession with sex.

**Q-Notes:** Why are gay men so unwelcome in sports?

**Dan Woog:** There are a number of reasons gays are shunned. First, we learn at a very young age that gay is not good. When boys hear "You throw like a girl," "You kick like a pansy," or "I'll kill any faggots on this team," it becomes very clear who belongs in sports and who does not. Then you've got the "team dynamic." Sports such as football, baseball and basketball, are disturbed by people who are too "individual." Differences — say, an openly gay teammate — are believed to be a distraction from the team ethos. The dynamic in the locker room changes; all of a sudden, everyone is not on the same team. Also, there's a very real fear among young men of being gay themselves. A "guilt-by-association" fear makes male athletes hostile toward gay people. Finally, and very importantly, there are no openly gay pro athletes to hold up as models. So straight athletes don't know how to act around anyone who is perceived to be different. These elements are really troubling because our first experiences in gym class and with coaches determine whether we get turned on or off to sports. But sports are an important socialization process for young males. Sports are where we learn to be tough and take our place in society. Unfortunately, sports have become too important, almost beyond all else. So the roles gay athletes are forced into lead to all kinds of maladaptive behavior — extreme homophobia, misogyny, overaggressiveness, and a turning away from other artistic or intellectual pursuits.

**QN:** Do you think these factors account for why gay men as a whole do not support or embrace athletes? Certainly gay culture is devoted to health and fitness, but sports themselves are not seen as an avenue to greater social acceptance. Why do you think that is?

**DW:** Well, stereotypes cut both ways.

See *ATHLETES* on page 23

## Q-Culture presents: Netspeak 101

by Brian D. Holcomb  
Q-Notes Staff

Hey, you hipsters. We all know that the hottest thing to happen to queer culture in years is the Internet. Hell, you can hardly visit the Calvin Klein Underwear homepage without running into thousands of your friends. With that in mind, I thought that you should be up to date with the latest online lingo. Because, as we all know, there is nothing worse than not being the first to know.

**Study hard and you, too, can say things like:**  
"He's 404. He used to be quite the body Nazi, but ego surfing has really turned him into a mouse potato. Once his Elvis year has passed, that stupid SITCOM will be totally swiped out and there's going to be a lot of prairie dogging on the cube farm when the boss finds out that he's wasting time and he gets uninstalled."

**General Online Terms. Good For Keeping Up That "Trendy Gay" Image**

**Ego Surfing:** Scanning the 'Net looking for references to one's own name.

**Body Nazis:** Hard-core exercise and weight-lifting fanatics who look down on anyone who doesn't work out obsessively.

**Elvis Year:** The peak of something or someone's popularity. Example: "Barney the Dinosaur's Elvis year was 1993."

**404:** Someone who is totally clueless. From the online error message "404 Not Found," meaning the requested document couldn't be

located. Example: "Don't bother asking him. He's 404."

**Mouse Potato:** The online, wired generation's answer to the couch potato.

**Swiped Out:** An ATM or credit card that has been rendered useless because the magnetic strip is worn away from extensive use. This is usually discovered at 12:45 on Saturday night on your way to the club.

**More Reasons to Be Gay: Things That Only Apply to Straight People**

**SITCOMs:** What yuppies turn into when they have children and one of them stops working to stay home with the kids. Stands for Single Income, Two Children, Oppressive Mortgage.

**Starter Marriage:** A short-lived first marriage that ends in divorce with no kids, no property and no regrets.

**Online at Work: Shouldn't You Be Doing That On Your Own Time?**

**Cube Farm:** An office filled with cubicles.

**Prairie Dogging:** When someone yells or drops something loudly in a cube farm and people's heads pop up over the walls to see what's going on.

**Uninstalled:** Euphemism for being fired.

**Tourists:** People who take training classes just to get away from their jobs. "We had three serious students; the rest were just tourists."

**Ohnosecond:** That miniscule fraction of time in which you realize that you've just made a big mistake. ▼

## Sex today: panic or ecology?

by Brian D. Holcomb  
Q-Notes Staff

Duke University's program in the Study of Sexualities is hosting two speakers within the next month to present opposite viewpoints in the debate over the spread of HIV.

On Feb. 27, Gabriel Rotello will speak in the Social Sciences Building on the Duke campus at 4:00pm. Rotello is the founder of *OutWeek Magazine* and published *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men*. The book argues that monogamy is the only successful option for curbing, and ultimately stopping, transmission of HIV. The theory is not complicated, but the practice is fraught with difficulties and would require a total re-thinking of the implications of sexual relations.

In opposition, Lisa Duggan will speak on March 27 in the same building. Duggan is an Associate Professor of American Studies at NYU and is co-author of *Sex Wars* and *Policing Public Sex*. Her argument is that monogamy is not effective as a tool for preventing HIV and that safe sex is the only viable weapon. This argument is espoused by Sex Panic, a radical sex organization of which Duggan is a member. In addition, Sex Panic strives for a more public dialogue, based in sexual liberation and feminism, on the issue of erotic safe sex.

The argument over these opposing viewpoints has been carried out in print for over a year. Both are effectively argued, although Rotello is clearly the better writer of the two. *Sexual Ecology* is a bit more level-headed than are Duggan's works...not that writing style dictates correctness. Most fascinating about a comparison of the two is that their basic argument

is the same: human nature, and specifically conventional modes of sexual behavior, work against stopping the spread of HIV. Rotello argues that safe sex is frequently ignored "in the heat of the moment" for casual partners, and on a sustained basis for intimates. Therefore, confining one's sexual relations and thus possible infectors/infectees to a single other individual will halt new infections.

Duggan argues that monogamy, especially in the post-Sexual Revolution era, is not an acceptable option for many people. Therefore, safe sex is the best option. See Rotello's argument above. The cycle begins. Duggan does emphasize the importance of eroticizing safe sex, therefore making it easier to implement and, in fact, preferable to unsafe sex. This argument almost overrides the "human nature" factor, except that it cloaks sex in a kind of fetishist mystique. The appeal is, to say the least, not universal.

So, is the prevention of HIV hopeless? Absolutely not. Both Rotello and Duggan have excellent arguments and one or the other will appeal to a huge segment of the population. And, by their very definition, a person attracted to one would not be attracted to the other (why practice safe sex to allow multiple partners if you are then going to practice monogamy?). Transmission can therefore be curbed to a huge extent through either of their programs. Neither has their head totally in the sand. Both know the inherent problems in their theories. The series will give our community a chance to hear what they have to say first-hand, question them, and continue the dialogue.

For information, call (919) 684-6607. ▼

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- Muriel Barbieri, R.N., Treatment Educator, AIDS Center, Montefiore Medical Center

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Please call Metrolina AIDS Project at (704) 333-1435 or (800) 289-2437 by February 26<sup>th</sup>.

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