4-12-1973

**Gay Lib. Spokeswoman (an interview with Carol Savoie)**

The Maine Campus

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice)

Part of the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons, Gender Equity in Education Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the United States History Commons

**Repository Citation**


[https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/253](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/253)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
Carol Savio, a senior psychology student, is a self-avowed lesbian who also considers herself a feminist.

Last semester she taught an Abeni course on gender identity and perspective and prejudice. "At that time, she said she was "not interested in dealing with sexual orientation or personality or abnormality, but as an approach to the serious question of a significant number of people." The informal discussion group gradually expanded until she could no longer hold sessions at her apartment in Old Town.

The group's focus changed, too, from an academic discussion of homosexuality into a social-support group for gays who previously had no way to meet except clandestinely.

This week the Campus talked to Savio. Following are excerpts from that interview in which she expressed views ranging from her personal decision to "come out" or openly declare her sexuality, to campus reaction to the presence of gays.

CAMPUSS: Why did you decide to declare your homosexuality publicly?
Savio: I don't know exactly why I did it. It's not like I sat down here, but when I came back to school I was still a virgin. I told myself: 'For christ's sake, will you quit playing around?' Of course you're gay. Get on with it. Get on with it.

And I decided if I had gone through so many things, why not. I was probably other people in the same boat.

Part of coming out is pride and a refusal to be stomped on. I refuse to be intimidated by other people's judgments. It's really wrong if you have a sense of your own dignity. You get angry and fed up and say, 'You guys, this is crazy. This is good in you.' Now get off my back. I'm not going to believe I'm a sissy.

But it's difficult because you're isolated in a straight society with such expectations. I'm 22 and I'm single. I go home and I tell my mother that I'm not getting married. She says, 'Oh, poor thing. The right man will come along.' My parents can't wait. They're getting nervous because I'm 22 and graduating and I'm not engaged.

CAMPUSS: Do you feel you have gained by coming out?
Savio: I think I've gained personally. I could have this as a dark, dirty secret and run around as if I were persecuted, or else I could say I'm gay and be free. There's something self-destructive about hiding when you're fighting about something essential.

One thing I really hate though—because so few people come out, the few who have come out have to talk about it.

CAMPUSS: Would you encourage others to talk up the shelf—encourage others to come out?
Savio: I don't think we can feel confident. It depends on individuals. Some can make adjustments, some can handle it because of jobs and personalities.

A lot of people who are not sure, who are coming to the groups, talk to people and identifying with some of their feelings.

The women are not pressuring other women. Some women come and talk about their feelings. Some women can't. That doesn't mean they've made it with another woman, but they've recognized themselves as gay.

CAMPUSS: Isn't it a downer when you consider the efforts coming out will have on your future?
Savio: Can you find a job that allows you to be open? That's the question I struggled with. If I went in on psychology, I could see myself as a counselor. But I know I'm a radical feminist and a gay woman. And that's the kind of counselor I would be.

I don't think I limit my ability to help people but probably would limit my credibility in people's minds.

I've had a lot of experiences. I don't feel psychology misrepresents homosexuals?
Savio: Yes. I'm a psychology major. One of the biggest hang-ups was reading that crap and thinking that was the judgment people in my own field were making about me.

Savio: I don't know. Maybe 'Gay Guy.' I don't know if I could get a week. It looks like women are long time to get anything.

CAMPUSS: Have you considered a DLS speaker on Gay Law? Have you made overtures to Hollywood for money on this?
Savio: I don't know if he knows we really are here in the university that we are. No, we haven't done that yet.

CAMPUSS: Do you expect difficulty acquiring funding?
Savio: They wouldn't dare refuse. The money is in the organization which grants recognition to student groups. If there was doubt, we would appeal to it liberal conscience. If the Senate didn't extend recognition, we would make them appear ridiculous by picking a group completely integrated.

CAMPUSS: Do you have specific goals for the university?
Savio: We'd like to do a newsletter—poetry and commentary by people in the group about the good things you're doing.

We wouldn't know if we had a successful reaction?

CAMPUSS: Have you considered media exposure for the group?
Savio: One of the reporters at the BANGOR DAILY NEWS wanted to do an article, but I don't think she's asking anybody at that paper to do a decent job. I was skeptical about this paper.

CAMPUSS: Do you find that straight people in the media say about gays a little warped?
Savio: They say things differently than way a gay would say them, but straights don't make same things at state. I don't know what the right attitude for the media is, except respectful. Tolerance kills; it's not respectable. Human beings are human beings. The media is insensitive that way. They're talking about 10 years ago and traditional attitudes about 'fem' and 'queen' as though they were the only examples of gay men.

CAMPUSS: One of the stereotypes of gays besides the 'fem' and 'queen' is an alcoholic. How many gays do you encounter that drink to escape their problems or their society?
Savio: Some of the men are currently investigating the love. A campaign is possible. It is not a big priority right now. Right now we are in an initial phase of reaching out to get to other people, developing a sense of community.

CAMPUSS: Will the group ever tackle the legislature in an attempt to change gay university policies?
Savoie: Some of the men are currently investigating the love. A campaign is possible. It is not a big priority right now. Right now we are in an initial phase of reaching out to get to other people, developing a sense of community.

CAMPUSS: Would you encourage others to talk up the shelf—encourage others to come out?
Savio: I think it's important. They won't get over the shit until they talk to each other.

Savoie: What response did you receive after coming out?
Savio: After the first meeting this term, people were talking to me. Students I didn't know would come up to me and say, 'Wow, I think that's a great thing you're doing.' Men would come up and start talking to me. I wondered why they weren't talking to other gay guys.

Savoie: My name was printed in the Abeni catalog. I lived off campus, so I didn't get too muchclick on this, if I had lived on campus, the dorms and all the men would have been haranguing me.

Savoie: What is the general campus attitude toward gays?
Savoie: Colleges tend to have more deviants, so they tend to be more tolerant of deviants. The way students are treated better on the campus. People don't see deviant here, because they don't dare at home, so you get a big population.

Savoie: Maine is a state that lives, but this campus is really liberal. North South—Boston or New York—gays make pilgrimage here. They may be as closeted or as straight-laced as they'd like to be. People have been scared off here. Unfortunately because people here don't want anything to do with him and that scene.

Savoie: College students tend to have more deviants, so they tend to be more tolerant of deviants. The way students are treated better on the campus. People don't see deviant here, because they don't dare at home, so you get a big population.

Savoie: Maine is a state that lives, but this campus is really liberal. North South—Boston or New York—gays make pilgrimage here. They may be as closeted or as straight-laced as they'd like to be. People have been scared off here. Unfortunately because people here don't want anything to do with him and that scene.