

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

---

Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Special Collections

---

4-12-1991

## Gays not unlike 'straights'

Matthew Begin

*University of Maine*

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](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Begin, Matthew, "Gays not unlike 'straights'" (1991). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 749. [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social\\_justice/749](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/749)

This Letter to the Editor 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](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

# Gays not unlike 'straights'

To the editor:

What does it feel like to live on campus as an openly gay man? I wouldn't know.

Like any other self-respecting gay person, I moved off campus knowing full well that I would get little empathy from a university community that is otherwise not to discriminate regardless of one's sexual orientation.

Some of my best memories will be the two years I lived on campus. They hardly seem the memories of an oppressed person. And they wouldn't be, if I had been allowed to be myself, and had not felt forced to be someone I'm not.

Despite many straights' lack of comprehension and outright intolerance, gays inevitably understand straights, because, whatever our sexuality, we all grow up within the straight culture as participants.

Straights, however, don't understand gays any more than whites understand blacks or Christians understand Jews, however good your intentions.

Gays are a unique minority, strictly elective. If called to the

test, you resist, no one may ever really know who you are. In a heterosexist society, coming out is one of the most courageous, honest, and manly things that a guy can do.

I like to ski and climb mountains. I love loud music and when not doing any of that I'm usually reading my brains out.

During the summer I work on trucks at the university farm. I've never paid more than five dollars for a haircut.

No slave to fashion, my wardrobe consists of various rock T-shirts, jeans, and well-worn Chuck Taylors. I can't act, dance or sing though many of my friends, straight and gay, can. If I behave the least bit effeminate, great.

After spending the last ten years of my life hiding it, why not reveal in it?

All that racy, crude stuff you hear about homosexuals isn't really true, for me or my friends anyway. I'm hardly a threat to anyone. In fact, you probably wouldn't even know I am gay unless I told you.

Matthew Begin