

When I was a small boy...and I need to clarify that I was a small *heterosexual* boy, whereas now I'm a full-blown heterosexual *man* who enjoys intimate relationships exclusively with women, lest any of you wiseheimers get the wrong idea...but anyway, when I was a small boy, I used to spend lots of time wondering about house pets owned by black people...were the *pets* black, too?

By the same tortured reasoning, when a gay chef in a gay bar cooks a hamburger, is the *burger* gay, too? And what about the person who eats it?

I have heard of these so-called "gay" people and their mysterious practices. I have heard of their boisterous Pride Parades and their disproportionate influence in the fashion industry. I have heard of their Judy Garland biographies and Bette Midler videocassettes and Laura Branigan CDs. I have heard of their amylnitrite and their Tony Awards and their clean teeth and their pet poodles and their well-oiled armpits. I have heard of their cock rings and their golden showers and their quivering prostate glands. I have heard of their turd-encrusted penises and saggy sphincters blown-out like inner tubes. I have heard of their analcentric politics and their jagged glory holes and their virus-laden seminal fluids.

Very interesting, these gay people. But why are they called gay, when not all of them seem happy? Must be the same reason there's no ham in a hamburger.

We already know that lesbians subsist on a diet of potato chips and cheap beer, but what about male homosexuals? Do gay men eat the same sort of food as real people? The hamburger is a good place to start. It is more quintessentially American than, say, anal fisting. So what about the gayburger? How does it differ from the burgers produced by Giant Heterosexual Corporations?

I needed to know. So I decided to set my prejudices aside and sample some of Portland's homosexually oriented burger fare. I had my fears, of course. I was scared about rampant rumors of Secret Gay Sauces and vindictive homo-terrorist chefs. I was reasonably certain that, despite my leather jacket and trim appearance, the gays would be able to tell I was an interloper. And I made it clear, in NO uncertain terms, that I wanted NO mayonnaise or melted cheese on my gayburgers.

Most of Portland's gay restaurants, and thus most of Portland's gay hamburgers, are clustered around "Vaseline Alley," the notorious homosexual ghetto tucked like a greasy salami in Downtown P-Town's backside. I have heard murmurs that the city's health inspectors are afraid to set foot in Vaseline Alley.

But not me. I needed to taste this forbidden meat.

I expected to find dingy S&M dungeons whose walls were spackled with dried seminal fluids and crusty feces smeared like chocolate cake frosting. Instead, I found pleasant, polite, color-coordinated, well-groomed dining experiences. If it weren't for the pumping disco music, exclusively male clientele, and muscular, well-tanned waiters, one might think these were regular het bistros.

All told, I ate three gayburgers in three different gay restaurants. To my relief, they were the BEST FUCKING HAMBURGERS I'VE EVER



EATEN!!! They were thoroughly delightful taste treats, and I can say this without compromising my masculinity in any way. After all, enjoying a gay hamburger is not tantamount to engaging in sexual congress with a gay man.

The main difference between the gayburger and the hetero burger is that gayburgers are much bigger. Lots more meat.

For some inscrutable reason, gay men seem to enjoy shoving huge slabs of beef into their mouths.

There I sit, eating my gay hamburger. Gay patrons look over at me as I wrap my eager mouth around a giant hunk of meat. The gay people smile at me. I smile back courteously, my twinkling eyes saying, "I don't care what sort of blunt objects or furry rodents you shove up your ass—that's a *damn fine hamburger!*"

I am proud, and more than a little relieved, to report that never once did I achieve an erection during my dining experiences, nor was I in the least bit titillated by all the sweaty, muscular manflesh swirling around me. Plus, no one tried to convert me, and I appreciate that. I didn't even have to make it clear that I didn't wish to suck anyone's penis or penetrate their anuses.

I learned some very important lessons from all this...

I began to slowly realize that gay people are almost human. Gay people eat food, too. And they need love, respect, self-empowerment, dignity, and a sense of connectedness just like people who *don't* insert gerbils into their rectums.

Merely because they indulge in practices which God clearly condemns doesn't mean that they aren't like us in many ways. And even though they're going to hell unless they repent, that doesn't mean they don't experience what might properly be called emotions.

Gay people have hopes and dreams and bank accounts and mortgage payments. They drive cars, take showers, and sleep in beds.

They slather shampoo on their hair and sprinkle talcum powder on their achin' tootsies. They breathe the same air as us and flush their toilets into the same sewer system.

And they eat hamburgers. Delicious, oversized hamburgers!

Anyone who can cook such a bitchin' burger doesn't deserve to be herded in gay concentration camps or persecuted for their alternative lifestyle or strung up to die on lampposts or labeled with nasty, unfair nicknames such as "pole-smoker," "rump-wrangler," "peter-puffer," "ass jockey," "butt pirate," or "cum-guzzlin' Nancy-boy."

Although I might recommend that gay people be forced to use separate drinking fountains and restrooms, I am not ashamed to assert that they deserve equal treatment under the law.

Gay people enjoy a good hamburger just like the rest of us. No...make that a GREAT hamburger. Right on, you gay people!

Stand up, gay people, and be proud of your hamburgers!

