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Creasy, R., "Thinking about Blue Jeans Day" (1978). *The Good 5 Cent Cigar Articles*. Paper 20.
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Thinking about Blue Jeans Day

R. Creasy 4/19/78

Well, URI, it's happened. For the first time in the history of the University many people had to think about what it would be like to be gay.

Friday, April 14, 1978 marked National Gay Blue Jeans Day all across the nation and contrary to "popular opinion" as expressed via letters to the CIGAR prior to Blue Jeans Day there was a significant number of people wearing something other than Blue Jeans.

It was also interesting to note how many outfits looked like they had never been worn before.

A random sampling of people (people entering or exiting the main door of the Memorial Union near the information desk between 1 and 2 p.m.) on Friday, March 31, 1978 which includes a population size of 634 indicated that 47 per cent of the people surveyed were wearing blue jeans. Further, of the women surveyed, 40 per cent wore jeans and of the men surveyed,

52 per cent wore jeans.

On April 14, 1978, a similar

survey was taken (same day of the week, same time limit, same place, same weather.) This survey indicated some drastically different statistics: 27 per cent (down from 40 per cent wore jeans; and 26 per cent of the men (down from 52 per cent wore jeans. The sample size was 668 (up from 634) this time.

These statistics serve for themselves in showing first, how many people got up on Friday, April 14 and made a conscious decision not to wear blue jeans and, second, how many people due to homophobia (fear of homosexuals or homosexuality) would not wear jeans for fear of being uncouthly labeled.

Further, the question that comes to mind is, "Why are people so afraid of being labeled homosexual?" Perhaps the only reason is that these people know through experience that to be known as a homosexual subjects one to many forms of discrimination.

Additionally, the existence of concrete forms of discrimination against gays has been disputed in many recent letters to the CIGAR as well as by people asking questions of me. The fact is that this discrimination indeed does exist. This

discrimination took place in several concrete forms during the few weeks prior to Blue Jeans Day.

First, I received obscene phone calls. Secondly, posters and tent cards advertising Blue Jeans Day were pilfered or mutilated moments after distribution.

But of greatest significance was the mutilation of a sheet in front of Quinn Hall announcing Blue Jeans Day.

Shortly after this sheet was put up it was stolen and later reappeared with a few graphic additions. However, it served its purpose well.

Moreover, I would imagine that many people upon seeing the mutilated sheet realized just what kind of discrimination gays are up against. Additionally, this action speaks very loudly of the mentality of its perpetrators.

This being the first Gay Blue Jeans Day at URI (the third nationally) the Gay Students' Coalition did not sponsor any further public events to put the finishing touches on the things accomplished by Blue Jeans Day.

Many embers of the GSC, however, did meet in Providence that evening for some dancing and celebration of a project that has been called an "unqualified success."

It is hoped that next year, however, that we might have some sort of dance or speaker to complete the educational and social processes.

Also, maybe next year we will see more than jeans coming out of the closet, and just maybe people will think twice each and every morning when they get up and put on their jeans.

