

## The Bald Facts

My hair has been thinning for 30 years or so. Baldness is not something to be ashamed of, but it's nothing to be proud of either. The best thing you can say about balding is that it just is.

Some people may think being bald is a bad habit, a choice. While it's true you can hide baldness, put it in the closet, so to speak, with toupees, rugs, wigs, hair transplants, or black shoe polish, the baldness is still there, hiding under the cosmetic disguises.

I ignored my baldness for years because I couldn't see it in the mirror. I still had hair up front. Then there was a channel 8 delayed broadcast. A camera from above caught me as I walked back and forth across the Oceana Gym. Those reflections off the back of my head came from skin. Damn those TV cameras.

I notice former (thank goodness for that!) Vice-President Dan Quayle has a full head of hair to go along with his trust fund and his family values. It was not about balding Mr. Quayle recently said "My viewpoint is that it's more of a choice than a biological situation...I do believe in most cases it certainly is a choice." However, a man so certain homosexuality is a choice may next be criticizing my balding head as a morally unsound decision on my part.

I truly don't know if homosexuality is a choice. Maybe nobody knows. Certainly some normally heterosexual people, like prisoners in gender-segregated jails, choose homosexual acts as an alternative to celibacy. But, as some homosexuals have pointed out, why would

anyone choose a way of life *voluntarily* that causes families and neighbors to ostracize them, which causes bullies to single them out for beatings, which sometimes makes them so unhappy they commit suicide, and that has other drawbacks?

There are many problems being bald in a hairy society, but there are enough of us tonsured types in the older age groups to carry a good deal of weight. In some men's organizations with an average age of 40 or 50, half the members are bald or balding. The last bald president who was re-elected was Dwight Eisenhower. He defeated a bald Democrat, Adlai Stevenson. It would be an interesting bit of research to discover who was the last bald president to defeat an opponent with a full head of hair. Certainly it was well before the television age.

I never made a conscious choice to be heterosexual. I just am. I doubt Dan Quayle made a conscious decision on the same subject. Most likely he is whatever it is he is, without ever making that decision for himself. That being true, it might be better if he kept his mouth shut rather than criticizing others, who, like him, probably didn't make a choice in the matter either. Quayle gave no scientific basis for his guess that homosexuality is a choice, "a wrong choice", he says. Saying so doesn't make it so, even if he was the Vice-President. He wouldn't dare criticize the bald. There are too many of us, and we vote.