

Grand River Rainbow Historical Project

*celebrating the lives and
times of rainbow folk in
Grand River country*



The Voice

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The Voice

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Volume Two

Issue Six

Wednesday, March 1, 2000.

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IN THIS ISSUE OF THE VOICE



Editorial.....	3	Generation Why?.....	26
News.....	4	Community Listings.....	28,30,31
His-story.....	8	Entertainment.....	34
My Week On Crew (PT2).....	10	Ferron Feature	36
Deadly Search For A Cause.....	12	Entertainment Feature.....	40
Q-Health (Dr J. Chermine).....	14	Books.....	42
Shades of Grey (Column).....	16	10 Ways - Ruin Relationships ..	44
Erotic Love Letters (Woman to		"I Want" (& Poem).....	46
Woman).....	18	Humour.....	47
BIZ SECTION.....	20	Hamilton LGBT (Column).....	48
International Women's Day.....	25	Classified Page.....	52

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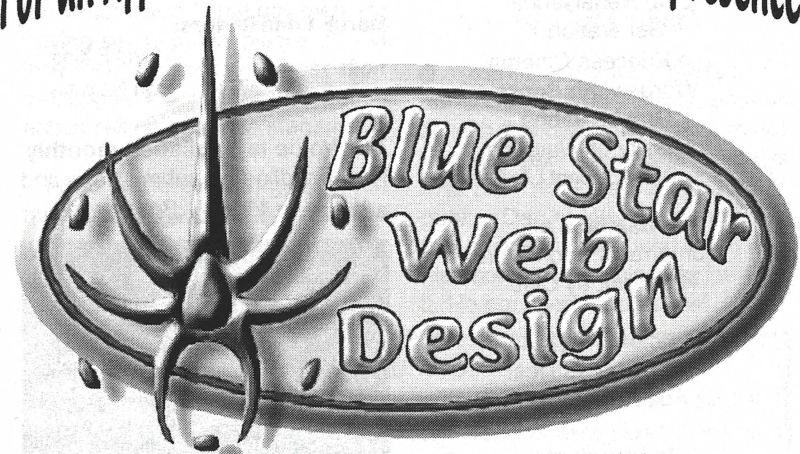
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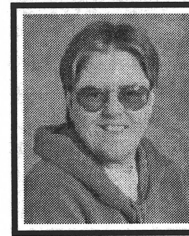
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Sex in the park -- Why?



In 1993 Waterloo Regional police conducted what has been called a "gay sting" in a Kitchener park in an effort to stop gay men from "frequenting" the park for the purpose of having sexual relations. The result, Daniel Webb, who was arrested in 1993, had his day in court.

"Webb, 62, is suing the force for \$4 million, saying the arrest amounted to entrapment and was unconstitutional." (K-W Record, Friday February 25, 2000)

While I have never heard of a "straight sting" conducted by police in any park the question is which is the larger issue -- that gay men are having sex in public places or that the police used an undercover effort to expose this? Does the police action reflect a double standard?

What is the difference between the police "gay sting" and the under-cover police efforts to stop prostitution and drugs? How could it be that just the "gay sting" is un-

constitutional?

Why are these men in the bushes in parks in the first place? Does the attitude of society about gay sex force these men into the bushes? Are these men in the bushes because they are "oppressed" by heterosexual society? Are they there because society's attitude toward their homosexuality has compelled them to live double lives? What about their personal responsibility to behave civilly?

Engaging in public sex is certainly, at best, risky behaviour. At worst it is an inappropriate response to shame. No matter how one is caught engaging in public sex, clearly, the cost affects us all.

What Webb lost was more the direct result of his own chosen actions -- and being in the bushes at all -- not a "gay sting".

Let us not lose sight of the fact that our detractors run miles against us all with this issue. The issue is not just "gay sex" -- the issue is what is and isn't acceptable conduct in public. Daniel Webb's conduct in that park is his responsibility. It was his choice. It was his risk. He took it. He gambled, and he lost.

LESBIAN DISCUSSION GROUP

This group will facilitate the discussion of issues that are relevant to lesbians in the 21st Century. The group hopes to offer another outlet where women can get together and discuss what is important to them in a social setting. This group will be a peer-support group and a welcoming place for lesbians of all ages whether they are just coming out or they have been out for some time. Topics to be discussed will be decided and agreed upon by those who wish to participate. This group will meet once a month at a time to be determined by the availability of the majority who are interested.

For more information or to join please call The Voice Magazine at [redacted]

www.thevoice.on.ca/lesbian.html

Omnibus same-sex legislation significant step towards full legal equality for gays and lesbians

EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere) welcomed today the introduction by Parliament of the Modernizing Benefits and Obligations Bill. The Bill extends to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples the status of "common law partners/conjoints de fait" throughout federal law.

"This is a historic day for our communities," said Kim Vance, President of EGALÉ. "The federal government has recognized in unequivocal terms the right of same-sex couples to equal treatment before the law. This far-reaching piece of legislation not only recognizes same-sex relationships as equivalent to opposite-sex common law relationships, it also extends many of the rights and responsibilities of married couples to both same-sex and opposite-sex common law partners. In areas ranging from income tax, pension benefits, access to employment insurance, conflict of interest requirements and conjugal visits in prison, same-sex couples can now expect equal treatment with opposite-sex married and unmarried couples."

"For too long, same-sex relationships have been stigmatized as inferior to opposite-sex relationships," added John Fisher, Executive Director of EGALÉ. "This Bill provides a symbolic affirmation of the equal validity and worth of same-sex relationships. As federal law, these amendments will set a national standard across Canada, requiring our relationships to be treated with equal dignity and respect. Equally significant is the

extension of equal pension rights in laws like the Governor General's Act and the Judges Act. These amendments send a clear message that lesbians, gays and bisexuals can aspire to the highest positions in the land, and expect equal recognition of their relationships."

EGALE noted one significant omission from the Bill: the absence of equal immigration rights for same-sex and unmarried opposite-sex partners. The Bill deals only with federal legislation, not with regulations, such as those which prescribe who may immigrate to Canada under the family class. "We recognize that the requirement of cohabitation contained in the omnibus legislation is not appropriate in the immigration context where couples are often unable to live together because they are separated by distance," said Vance. "We understand that the Immigration Minister has, however, committed to including same-sex couples within the family class and plans to introduce legislation to that effect later this year. We call upon the Minister of Immigration to commit to a clear timetable for bringing the law for which she is responsible into conformity with the Charter." <http://www.egale.ca/>

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Cruelty Against Homosexuals Hampers Education

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP)

Attorney General Andrew Ketterer addressed a luncheon forum for legislators on school safety Friday, saying cruelty and hate must not be allowed to hamper learning by gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

Learning should be the primary mission of all students, he said, and "you can't do that when your primary mission is interrupted by fear."

The attorney general made his remarks during a series of brief presentations by students, teachers and parents who recounted episodes of harassment reflecting hostility toward homosexuality.

The gathering in the State House Hall of Flags was sponsored by the Maine Safe Schools Collaborative.

Another speaker, Director Lynn Davey of Maine Kids Count, cited a new study reported in the advocacy organization's 2000 data book that suggested widespread thoughts of suicide by gay, lesbian and bisexual youth in Maine.

The study also points to other problems for adolescents related to sexual orientation, ranging from

verbal insults and threats to assault. Kids Count plans to issue a more comprehensive study in the spring, but the preliminary findings present "a portrait that is certainly distressing," Davies said.

NORWEGIAN POLITICIAN COMES OUT

The new Oslo chair of Norway's Conservative Party, Per-Kristian Foss, came out as gay during his campaign for the seat and was elected anyway.

Foss said of his sexuality: "It could be viewed as if I have something to be ashamed of, which I don't. Being gay or lesbian doesn't mean a person should feel ashamed."

50,000 AT MELBOURNE PRIDE


More than 50,000 people turned out for Melbourne, Australia's, annual Pride March Jan. 30 on Fitzroy Street in the St. Kilda area.

The parade — part of the city's gay Midsumma Festival — was the largest ever.

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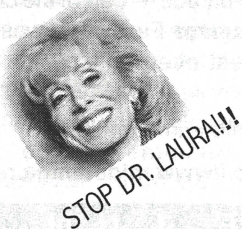
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Gay Politics: Online & With an Edge

- When Atlanta Braves pitcher John Rocker belittled "queers"... he got suspended.
- When 60 Minutes' Andy Rooney belittled Native Americans... he got suspended.
- When golf announcer Ben Wright mocked lesbians... he got fired.
- When writer Jimmy Breslin denigrated Asians... he got suspended.
- When Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott disparaged African-Americans... she got fired.
- When football player Reggie White attacked gays... he got dropped by CBS and Campbell's Soup.
- When Jimmy-The-Greek stereotyped African-Americans... he got fired.

But Dr. Laura calls gays "biological mistakes"... and she's getting a TV show from Paramount.



Paramount pulled a show in 1998 that offended African-Americans ("The Secret Diary of Desmond Pfeiffer"), but is fine with Dr. Laura equating homosexuality with incest and pedophilia. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Americans deserve equal respect, not a double standard.

Paramount's email address: television@pde.paramount.com

NEWS ANCHOR FIRED

The Canadian all-news network CTV fired anchor Avery Haines Jan. 17 after she flubbed a line of copy and then, thinking she was off-the-air, made a joke which offended minorities.

After stumbling over her script, Haines said: "I kind of like the stuttering thing. It's like equal opportunity, right? We've got stuttering newscaster. We've got the black, we've got the Asian, we've got the woman. I could be a lesbian, folk-dancing, black woman stutterer."

CTV News Vice president Henry Kowalski said: "The nature of her comments did not leave CTV News with any alternative [but to fire her]. Her remarks were disrespectful and unprofessional and cannot be excused."

WESTERN AUSSIES AFRAID TO COME OUT

Most homosexual men in the state of Western Australia are afraid to come out of the closet, according to a new study by Edith Cowan University researcher Christopher Churchouse.

They remain in relationships with women because they fear physical violence, mental abuse, discrimination and being cut off from their children.

As a result, they experience feelings of anger, hopelessness and powerlessness, and become socially isolated, the study found.

Churchouse reached the men via advertisements he placed in the mainstream media seeking anonymous taped interviews.

SAME-SEX COUPLE IMMIGRATION BILL BEFORE U.S. CONGRESS

Timed with Valentine's Day, the U.S. House of Representatives Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., announced the **Permanent Partner Immigration Act**, a bill to provide same-sex couples all the immigration options open to opposite-sex couples. Current law permits non-U.S. citizens who are coupled with an opposite-sex U.S. citizen to immigrate and become residents. But, because same-sex couples do not have the option of marrying, the non-resident partner is either deported when visas expire or must attempt staying in the country illegally. Contact Higgins at 212-818-9639 for more information.

"GAY PANIC" DEFENSE

(Detroit) The "gay panic" defense won again in a Wayne County Circuit courtroom today, when a murder suspect escaped with a slap on the wrist for his role in the murder of an acquaintance. The defendant made dubious claims of a homosexual advance by the victim to justify the cold-blooded shooting.

Justin Wallace was convicted of manslaughter in the death of Alexander Charles today, beating a First-Degree conviction for the murder. Although there was no evidence to support assertions that the victim was gay, much less that he made any sexual advances toward his killer, the defense used a so-called "gay panic" defense in explaining why Wallace shot Charles to death. The trial took place with Judge George Crockett

III presiding.

'Gay panic' defenses are the last refuge of a scoundrel, and the last resort of defense attorneys," said Jeffrey Montgomery, Executive Director of the Triangle Foundation and a nationally recognized expert on anti-gay homicide and "gay panic" defense. "This case is especially painful because the victim was not gay, yet his killer, raising the specter of a gay sexual advance, has succeeded in getting a jury to excuse the premeditated killing of his 16-year-old friend. It's really pathetic."

"Unfortunately, this verdict demonstrates that the 'gay panic' defense is alive and well and working to the advantage of cold-blooded killers. Manslaughter in the murder of Mr. Charles would be laughable, if it were not so utterly tragic," Montgomery continued.

"Wallace made a grave decision when he killed Mr. Charles, now the jury has been taken-in by a defense ploy that appeals to bigotry, and has compounded the felony. 'Gay panic' defenses affect all of us, gay and otherwise. This verdict shows that the ugly shadow of anti-gay prejudice looms over everyone," Montgomery concluded.

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CONFESSIONS OF A CHUBBY CHASER

By Howard Watson

Outsize and Loving It

They used to say 'big is beautiful' but in a world obsessed with dieting and cellulite, where every young woman's dream is to resemble a stick insect, we have simply gone from the sublime to the anorexic.

How strange that, according to a recent government survey, one in five of the population is now clinically obese. Fat people in society are often ridiculed and held personally responsible for their condition, so how does this affect those who are also gay or bisexual where thin is king?

I myself suffered from puppy fat, but I have always been unable to gain weight, despite eating all the wrong foods, such as cakes, sweets and sugary soft drinks. Trousers still fit me years after buying them and I have always bought off the peg. Far from despising those with a weight problem, I admire them.

In many cultures, even our own until the fashion magazines gripped our collective imagination, being large was associated with power. Henry VIII, the Tudor king, was considered a good king before the syphilis that eventually killed him clouded his judgement. Modern-day Polynesia still equates big with beautiful, as does West Indian culture, although the King of Tonga has been put on a diet.

Up till now, those who were admirers of the fuller figure have

been frustrated in their quest for images of their ideal of beauty. Gay pornography is full of young men with washboard stomachs who have barely begun to shave. Real men, apart from fantasy types, who hang out regularly at the gym and have been defoliated, are noticeable by their absence. Cinema, however, has inadvertently catered for chubby chasers everywhere.

For instance, there is James Robertson Justice, who more than amply filled the role of Sir Lancelot Spratt in the 'Doctor' movies. Jimmy Edwards, the comic actor, whose moustaches and rotund frame graced the popular television series Whack-O! in the early 60's.

In the eighties, Bruce Robinson's brilliant directorial debut, *Withnail and I*, gave all chubby chasers a new sex symbol. The portly seducer Uncle Monty, Marwood's nemesis, played by that most under-rated of English actors Richard Griffiths. Despite the film making Richard E Grant a star, it was the portrayal of Uncle Monty who caught the audience's imagination, even securing the character a fanclub.

Last but, by no means, certainly not least is Simon Callow's character, Gareth, from the box-office sensation, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. If nothing else, it proves that British film, unlike its American counterpart, have no qualms about celebrating the mature, rotund and

and hirsute man in all his roly-poly glory.

Fantasy is fine, but what about the real I am? The prevailing attitude for many gay men is the belief that possessing a twenty-six inch waist, pumping iron and resembling a well-dressed beanpole is the route to health, happiness and humping.

Not all gay and bisexual men, however, have blindly accepted this narrow definition. AIDS in Africa is known as the Slim, referring to its wasting effects on the body, has marked a seachange towards body image within gay circles. Six-packs are out, potbellies are in.

Being a little plump has now become a plus as well as a plus size. Clubs have sprouted up catering for those of a fuller figure and their admirers, such as Bulk. Others such as Bearhug cater for the more hirsute amongst the chubbies, the global phenomenon that is the Bear movement. It is finally cool to be outsize and loving it.

Howard Watson is a 35 year old freelance writer who lives in London, England.

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My Week On Crew: (Part Two Of Two)

by Carol P. King



Those first few work hours melded us all as a group. Learning together. Passing each other tools. Watching out not to squish a finger. Working together to do it right. Breaking around 3:00 to eat granola bars, fruit and chocolate we looked at each other with tired dirty smiles as we tried to catch our breath among the scrub and broken rock around us. Our first real break since morning! For a moment I realized that even though this was my vacation, they had a time clock. Goals to complete. In signing up for volunteer trail crew you agree to work. ATC provides all the tools, the site, the food, the supervision, but you agree to work. And even on that first day, we worked until 5:00 PM!

My first field night was a blur. My muscles ached and I was so dirty. I was determined to be half clean and triumphed the freezing cold spring fed creek by camp....including my hair! I was amazed by the camp fare. Delicious beans on rice, salad and something that looked like mud but was actually pretty good tasting peanut butter chocolate pie. The assortment of snacks, breakfast stuff and lunch material was great to all have been packed in inside coolers. The call was to be up by 7:00 AM and have breakfast eaten, lunches, snacks and water packed with cleanup completed to be at the work site by 8:30. I went to bed for

the first time in many years at 9:00 PM. I took two Tylenol and couldn't have turned over if I tried. The next morning crew leaders walked through past our tents with reminders of the time yelled mildly for those of us ignoring our alarms. We all talked and laughed as we diligently eat substance for fuel, made and packed our own lunches, snacks and water in a ritual that would be our next several mornings.

For days we worked. We sweated. We pained. We laughed and we learned about each other and ourselves. Personally, I never felt more scared at times that I would fall down in exhaustion or have a heart attack. Or that I'd fall from the mountain with a simple turn of my ankle. But I took deep breaths. I looked around at my surroundings and the women I worked beside. The nature that I was within was amazing. I was so OK with it all. The hard work. The grind. The test of my body, my strength. A couple times I watched out for myself and stopped sledging to take a water break or walked slower down the trail back to the van. I didn't want to be the one carried out over something stupid like heat exhaustion, heart attack or a clumsy mis-step. But I was so proud of myself for being able to hang with all those younger women! I felt a camaraderie with the woman from Louisiana. I told her how amazed I was at her attitude and physical shape at 53. She made me feel good that I was keeping up with the

others with my ability to "sledge". "Sledging" is the task of taking slab rocks or chunks and sledging them into 2 inch chips to fill between rocks and as step bases. She liked that even after sledging I was still "singing and hopping around".

Several times we worked in light rain or just after heavy drizzle. Muddy and slippery, the rocks were not easy to work with. We swapped off teams and the crew leaders let us work out our own sections at times and worked with us on others. To learn the tools was so great. To work together in making something firm and strong to last for years was an endeavor. It was too cool.

We rotated meal prep and clean up. Our conversations around field camp ranged from the most absurd and silly to the depths of philosophies, emotions and politics. One thing that we discussed at length throughout our week was the advantage, the special feeling of this being an all women's crew. That we could dress half naked at dinner after creek baths. The things we could talk about together as women. Not competing at the work site but working together to accomplish the task. Things that as women we all identified with and felt somewhat the same about. We didn't down men but some of the girls that had been just the week before on the mixed crew week as a part of their two-week sign-up talked extensively about some of the things the guys did, how camp was with them there. They noticed the differences. We talked about our advantage. The importance of this experience with all women being as important as the work we completed.

The crew leaders urged us to put that in the survey they send out after crew. The bosses and dignitaries questioned the new all women's crew as being discriminatory not allowing males when the program was being created. As women we need these to do things just with women. The next day, I worked that much harder with the night's conversation in my mind. We were women. But we could move this rock and make this trail as well as or if not better than any group!

During one of the work days a nearby sponsor hiking group from Asheville came in to work an afternoon with us on the trail. Most of these guys were over 60. One of them was in his 80's and I questioned in my mind how long it took him to get from the road to the work site! I slapped myself for thinking such things and didn't complain to myself about the heat so much that day at all. Being my age and all! But they steadily got up that mountain and moved rock and cleared scrub right along with us. We were respectful and we all worked diligently together. That night our crew talked about the change in the air when the men were on site. We talked again about how special it was to just be working with women. Our strengths. Our bonding. Some of us were straight, some married, some lesbian. We were able to talk about our own identities and feelings with respect and freedom, feedback and viewpoints. We looked forward to the next day just having it all to ourselves.

Continued on page 50

The deadly search for a 'cause'

by Lyn McGinnis

There is a dark side to the ongoing search for the cause of non-heterosexuality. Given current trends they could lead to a new form of genocide. Such genocide would be seen as legal and moral, a matter of choice on the part of well meaning parents. It all starts with the question "Why are some people LGBT?"

One way of separating people from each other is by putting them into biological categories. For most of this century 'inverts,' was an acceptable term for gay people. Seen as physiologically underdeveloped, 'experts' said gay and bisexual men had 'female brains' and lesbians, 'masculine brains.' Unlikely as it might sound, such bizarre ideas are still entertained by some.

In June of 1992 they received a respectable airing on CBC television. It began airing a series called "Witness." The intention of the first three editions was to make a splash - and they did. Called "Brain Sex," this series presented in an entirely logical and reasonable fashion the worst excesses of the earlier manifestations of 'biological determinism.'

Based on the premise that hormones account for up to 90 per cent of our gender characteristics with our culture

and upbringing accounting for only 10 per cent, gender stereotypes and conventions were sanctified while any divergence from the biological order was a problem to be solved. While they couldn't explain lesbian behavior, they confidently stated gay men are the product of a break in testosterone delivery in their mother's womb due to her having suffered a major trauma.

Are we to infer that there is a huge crop of gay children growing up in places like Central America, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda? Are few or no gay children growing up in peaceful, prosperous countries? There is a far more serious concern to be addressed by this kind of thinking. When a cause is determined, are we then looking for a 'solution?' The moment we move from 'biological determinism' in the lecture hall to the legislature and laboratory, there then is a seed for a very great evil. The 'final solution' was the euphemism used to describe the genocide of Jews, Gypsies, gay persons and others by the Third Reich. With ideology provided by determinists, the tools of the new proponents of a 'final solution' would no longer appear as criminals. The enforcers of a heterosexual 'new world order' would be played by doctors and scientists, working hand in hand with social workers and government.

There are people out there believing the discovery of new ways to deliver hormones in the womb, or the development of radically new treatments, will render all this debate about sexual orientation superfluous. And what about the "Gay Gene"? As the Genome Project marches on and more and more of the entire Human Genome is mapped, will the day come that such a gene is found? If such a day ever comes, what will it mean? At the same moment as our understanding increases so does the appetite to manipulate and control. With the information we have now we already see signs of abuse. Currently there are web sites where beautiful female and male models are selling their eggs and sperm to the highest bidder. In other words, beauty and perfection, which have always been for sale, are now yours to select and give birth to for a price. What of less desirable traits? If such a Gay Gene was found and isolated, what will be done with such information, initially by the wealthy and powerful and eventually by everyone?

Gays, lesbians, bisexuals and/or transgendered persons in this culture have two things in common. They aren't heterosexual or don't identify with the culture in significant ways, and they have known fear, self doubt, rejection and even violence. Wouldn't a 'solution' be to remove the source of this pain? While the alleviation of individual suffering and social disharmony are laudable goals, the proposed methods point to an underlying issue. These 'solutions' are based on the assumption that ambiguity and difference in society is a problem. There is a truly radical way to deal with this situation. The presence of sexual orientation minorities offer a unique opportunity for the rest of humanity to continue to evolve into more humane and rational beings by continuing to pose difficult questions about unexamined assumptions. There are many mature queers who where subjected to electroshock therapy as late as the 1950s. They bear those scars to this day with their commitment to be the persons they are. Society also bears

scars from these inhumane exercises, in attempting to violate an individual's humanity, the humanity of the violators and the system supporting them is equally violated.

We must be vigilant against the day when a truly effective means exists to burn diversity and ambiguity out of humanity. The loss to us all, the opportunity to grow and evolve as a species, let alone as autonomous individuals, would be incalculable. The potential for slavery of us all would be immense. We have always initiated action with the best intentions, but are unable to foresee where such action may lead. The initiation of any program to 'deal' with the sexual orientation 'question' poses a grave threat to everyone.

The 'final solution' is the ultimate tool of the fearful and ignorant, leaving a diminished humanity in its wake.

This article is a Voice exclusive. Lyn McGinnis is a writer/web designer who lives in Waterloo.

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Becoming an Informed Consumer: Understanding Therapy & Finding a Therapist Who Fits your Needs

By Dr. Jeffrey Chernin

If you are considering therapy, there are some myths which should be dispelled, and some ideas should be considered in finding the right therapist. One myth is that to be strong means to be able to solve problems on your own. This type of individualistic thinking can lead to stress, which can lead to heart disease, lowered immune function, and other psychological and physical ailments. Paradoxically, admitting your weaknesses and knowing when to ask for help indicates strength. For lgbt people as a whole, there is a tendency to go for help when needed, but some people still believe this myth.

Another myth is that mental health professionals do something to make people change. As nice as this would be, people are responsible for making their own changes; a therapist helps people make the changes they desire.



A third myth is that therapy can be accomplished in a few sessions. While some problems are eased by short-term therapy, most people gain more from a longer therapy experience. A November, 1995 Consumer Reports article noted that the longer people stayed in therapy, the more they improved, and people who stayed for more than six months reported greater gains than those who left earlier. People said that they got better in three ways.

Therapy eased the presenting problems, it helped them to function better, and it enhanced personal growth. This growth included better self-esteem, more confidence, and enjoyment from life.

Another part of functioning better is developing insight into unconscious motivations, thoughts, and beliefs. Some of our thoughts and motives are automatic, and thoughts need to be slowed down for us to understand them. Discussing issues in therapy can lead to acting with awareness instead of automatically reacting to various situations. As an example, a study at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine found that slowing down thoughts changes brain chemistry similar to medication. Long-term therapy appears to be as effective as medication in treating depression and anxiety.

When entering therapy, asking questions about education, experience, and form of therapy should be welcomed by a prospective therapist. Questions regarding experience in working with lgbt issues and whether the therapist is himself or herself gay, lesbian or bisexual should also be welcomed. Many therapists are already out, so their sexual orientation is already known by prospective clients. A consultation or the start of therapy is a good time to ask questions you have.

Should you see a lgbt therapist? There are several advantages to seeing a lgbt therapist, such as possibly having a greater understanding of your issues. There are some advantages to seeing a nongay therapist, especially if you would like to have a nongay perspective.

After the first one or two sessions, you should be feeling more comfort about opening up. If there is a question as to the professionalism or potential for a good therapeutic relationship, consider bringing this up or continuing your search for a therapist.

According to authors Sharon Stocker and Theresa Walsh, there are several qualities that people should look for in a therapist. A good therapist tailors therapy to suit individual needs, encourages clients to voice concerns regarding the therapy process, and has good credentials. Further, a competent therapist often points out options and possibilities rather than tells you what to do.

Another important quality is the ability to form a respectful relationship. If you detect homophobia, a good therapist will welcome your concerns and will not act defensively or try to make it about you. Acting non-defensively should lead to reassurance that a therapist has worked through enough homophobia to work well with you. If a therapist suggests that all of your problems are related to your sexual orientation, don't walk out: Run. Assuming that your problems relate to your sexual orientation is a mistake. If you have problems that stem from your s/o or trans-gener, it is oppression, not minority sexuality in itself, which causes problems.

Over the course of therapy, the major focus should be kept on you. Therapists should talk very little about their personal lives, and even then it should be with an intention to be helpful to you. Further, good practitioners should not talk about their current problems, become involved with your life outside of therapy, or spend time with you outside of sessions. Even though being lgbt may be like living in a small town, there should be no reason to be invited to or to have your therapist over for social events.

Sometimes, people are reluctant to enter therapy because of the fear it can be painful. Keep in mind that therapy actually helps release sorrow and grief which in some way may be holding you back. So, while therapy is used to treat depression and anxiety (among other psychological conditions), it can also be a journey of growth and self-discovery.

Jeffrey Chernin, Ph.D. is an author and psychotherapist in Los Angeles. He can be reached at [REDACTED] This article was submitted to The Voice by Dr. Chernin.

What is Your Personal Philosophy?

By A.J. Mahari



Are you living your life according to any known, chosen or well-thought-out philosophy?

Many live their lives without ever asking themselves this question. Why is it important to have a chosen personal philosophy? It is vital, actually, because without our own actively-contemplated philosophy we are left to rely on what we are told by others to form the base of "truth" from which we further develop our beliefs, values and morals. Personal "truth" is the cornerstone of identity and all that one is.

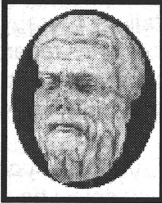
The word **philosophy** can be traced to the Greek words: **Philein** which means - "to love" and **Sophia** which means "wisdom". Philosophy, then, means, the "love of wisdom".

Wisdom involves following the soundest course of action and is based on knowledge, experience, and understanding. We cannot know what we do not explore. We cannot have experience with that which we accept merely because it is what someone told us. We most certainly cannot achieve a deep and meaningful level of understanding of ourselves or of others without a willingness to risk the pain of soul-searching to increase self-awareness.

Philosophy begins with wonder. Wonder arises from seeking to

satisfy a curiosity or a doubt about something we thought we knew, we have experienced or want to better understand. **Wonder is the soul of hope.**

Plato, a student of Socrates, wrote "**The Myth of the Cave**". It is an allegory in which prisoners are chained in a cave and all they can see is a wall in front of them. With a fire burning behind them and puppeteers casting shadows upon the wall that essentially become whatever reality the prisoners superimpose upon them; the prisoners mistake appearance for reality. The prisoners thought that the shadows they saw on the wall were real. It is only when the prisoners are set free and they turn their heads that they are able to see the actual origin of the shadows.



How often in life are we like the prisoners in the cave? How often do we think that because we think "it" is -- "it" is? How often do we attribute one meaning to something that means entirely something else? The only way to begin to answer these questions in our lives is by living an examined life with a thought-out philosophy. If we choose not to examine our lives, ourselves, our motives, our thoughts, beliefs and our actions then we are truly operating much like the prisoners in the cave were. Living without a developed personal philosophy is groping in the dark.

What we may assume to be true may be a smoke-screen. Without a personal philosophy one is a prisoner to the shadows of misinterpretation.

Living a developed philosophy frees us to think for ourselves and to act accordingly. It means that we do not have to follow, necessarily, what the majority thinks is "right".

It takes courage to honestly examine our lives. Everything about our lives is predicated on why we think we are here. Purpose holds the answers to so many of our questions.

Is your philosophy an inclusive one or an exclusive one? What do you base your opinions of self and of others upon? Do you think for yourself or do you follow the crowd?

So much of how we experience others is really an extension of our own experience of ourselves. Where and by what criteria does the line get drawn? Why do some people feel they are "better than others"? Why are some people so afraid of knowing themselves, and others deeply?

In today's world we can easily compare the experience of the prisoners in the cave in Plato's allegory to sitting down in our living rooms and watching television. Just as was the case in the cave the forms that the prisoners perceived were not real. They were assumptions of the mind based upon the previous experience of the prisoners. When we watch television most of the shadowed-images cast back to us are not reality. They are by and large what we define them to be and what we

experience them as.

Objective reality seems to be defined by what is considered to be agreed upon and "shared reality". Most of what we experience to be reality is highly subjective. Each of us coming from our own subjective reality and trying to find meaningful connection and association with others will be reduced to mere shadows on the walls of life if we are not willing to be open to living the examined life.

What is your philosophy? If you do not develop and identify a personal philosophy by which you live your life you will be a prisoner of the cave of your own dark-ignorance. A prisoner to the "truth" that you have adhered to because someone else told you that's the way "it" should be.

In life we can either be open to learning or we can be closed - in need of protecting ourselves. Developing your own life philosophy involves being open to life's lessons. It involves actively being involved in the wonder of "it all". It means being open to both the joy and the sorrow that life offers us. It also means acquiring a true love of wisdom. Life is much more than just what you want it to be or what you want out of it. Life has its own agenda of which we are all a part. We can actively engage this universal wisdom or we can choose to remain ignorant, and a prisoner of all that can so tie us to the physical realm of our existence. We are much more than that. There are none so blind as those who choose not to see -- their own philosophy.

The opinions expressed in this column are those of A.J. Mahari, and are not made from any editorial standpoint of The Voice Magazine.

The Apology

My Precious Sweetness,

I leave this note on the pillow beside you for I have slipped from our bed, showered, dressed and left for work long before you will have awakened to read it. I just want to be sure you know how very glad I am that yesterday is ancient history and, my luminous love, that I swear to you, such a dreadful event shall never occur between us again.

When you'd first left, stormed out of the house, slamming the door behind you, I sat in the middle of the rug, placed my face in my palms and cried.

"How could it be," I wondered, "that our lines of communication had broken down so very low; how could it be that the woman whom I had loved for eight long and glorious years could be so angry that she'd turn and walk away from me? These things, these bickering sessions happened to other couples, not us. Why? What had happened? What was happening? And could it truly be that this was it? That it was over? That simply and that easily? The end?"

Questions. Questions roared through my mind, ripping and tearing it apart, but no answers. Only the pain. Pain that burned as it spread from my mind to my heart then my soul. A deep reaching, wrenching pain the likes of which I have never felt.

And then sorrow. Thickly into the murky quicksand of sorry I sunk. What could I have done differently? How could I have behaved to have avoided this catastrophic event? What could I have said, done to have curved the path we were on so that we ended up in each others arms again instead of this; me sitting alone in

the center of the living room and you off to only God knew where but somewhere far from my embrace.

Thoughts, doubts, regrets plagued me. I was confused. I was angry. I was hurt. But mostly I was sad. To the core of my being, irrevocably sad.

When I lifted my head and looked around all I saw were memories of you; memories of us. Photos of happier times; you and I tightly wrapped in infinite poses and embraces; art and knickknacks that we'd bought together, that we'd given to each other as presents - expressions of our love and, or so we thought, everlasting affection for each other.

Was "everlasting" truly impossible? Was all that gone? Snatched away? Lost? Tossed away?

I couldn't stay here another moment. My heart carried the weight of a sinking iceberg within my chest, the pressure and tightness in my throat making it almost impossible to swallow.

I would leave I'd decided, get a room. Give myself time to think.

Maybe it was for the best. Maybe we'd changed, grown, maybe it was time to move on, maybe you'd long ago moved on and I'd been too blind to see it. Maybe you'd lost your love for me and just couldn't tell me; was this your way? Or, Oh God, was there someone else? Did your desire drift from me only to land upon the pleasures of another woman. This painful thought I could not bear to allow myself to explore. I decided I would get a room, shower, dress and visit my old stomping grounds, the bar that I used to hang out in before you - it'd been eight years since I'd gone there alone but tonight I would go. I needed the attention that I knew I could get there. I needed someone to be attracted to me, someone to make me feel

desirable, someone to want me. I knew I would have these things and maybe more by the time morning visited me.

Tears burned and streamed down my cheeks as I stuffed a few clothes into an overnight bag and I didn't even bother to wipe them away, just allowed the salty drops fall from my face onto the floor.

As I shut off the light in the bedroom I paused for a moment and stared at our bed. Had I seen your beautiful body beneath those covers for the last time? Would I never again hear your sighs, moans, ecstatic screams? Taste your deliciousness? Would I never again gaze down upon your face, your cheeks flushed with the intensity of our love making as I rocked on top of you while you steadily climbed toward the peak of climax? Would I never feel your weight upon me as you took control of me, my body, commanded me as only you are able to? Only you have been able to unleash the wild libidinal animal that lay dormant, hidden so deeply inside of me. Had I felt the last of that? The last of you?

What had I done? What had we done?

By now I was near nauseous. My stomach threatened to turn inside out and my legs were weak; I wasn't sure I could trust them to walk out the door.

Not bothering to retrieve supplies from the bathroom, I'd buy whatever I needed, I rushed down the hall and reached for the front door knob.

The sobs that gushed from my mouth almost didn't sound human, certainly no such noises had ever left my throat before, but I didn't bother to stifle them. No one was around to hear and had there been, I didn't care anyway. Life as I'd known it was over.

My eyes were so swollen and filled with tears that I could barely see and tripped over your sneakers as I rushed toward the door. This

caused me to curse you out loud as anger and frustration poured from me in the form of venomous adjectives and nouns, words that I have never before uttered, describing you.

I grabbed the door handle and pulled hard. It flew open and banged against the wall, leaving its mark there.

I flung the screen door back, and was about to tear through it, fly down the front steps, the walkway and out the front gate toward my car when suddenly, I stopped dead in my tracks.

At the bottom of the steps, you stood. Your arms were open wide, palms upturned toward me. You wore only a long, unbuttoned trench coat. Peeking through the opening in the front I could see a lot of your peach colored skin; your chest and your stomach were exposed to me as was your black sheer see-through bra, the one that leaves nothing to the imagination. The one that is my favorite. Your right breast peered through the opening of the coat, and I could clearly see your nipple. As if it were waving to me, as if it was saying "Hi honey, we're home, please take us back". Thin black, laced panties hid virtually nothing of your sweet treasure that I love beyond words. Your legs covered with sheer thigh-highs. And those shoes! The sexy pair that you know drives me insane.

By now a couple of the neighbors were lingering around their front yards watching. The could only see your back and were trying to figure out why you were standing at the bottom of the stairs with bare feet and a trench coat in the middle of the summer.

I dropped my bag, held my arms open wide to you and whispered, "Come to me my love."

You threw yourself at me and until my dying day, I'll never forget how soft and warm your skin felt as my hands slid around your waist and I pulled you to me. Nor have your lips ever been so sweet, soft and enrapturing. Our bodies passionately melded together and we

Continued on page 24

Reducing the Tax You Owe (using Non-Refundable Tax Credits)

By Darren Kregar

Less than 60 days before the deadline to file your taxes. This is the last of two parts on how to reduce the taxes you owe OR to increase your refund. Following are non-refundable tax credits you may claim to reduce the amount of federal tax payable. Unused credits are non-refundable.

1. Basic Personal Amount

Everyone is entitled to a basic personal tax credit of 17% of \$6,794 (up from \$6,546). This amount is sometimes known as the 'tax-free' amount. The amount you can earn without paying tax.

2. Age Amount

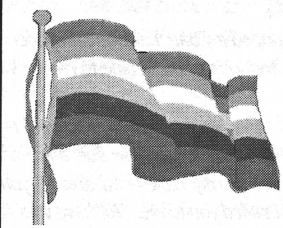
If by chance you are older than 65 in 1999, you are entitled to claim a credit of 17% of \$3,482. This amount is reduced for income that exceeds \$25,921 to a entirely eliminated when net income reaches \$49,134.

3. Spousal Amount/Equivalent-to-Spouse Amount

Unfortunately Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (Revenue Canada's new name) still does not recognize spouses as a person of the same sex. A spouse unfortunately includes a legally married spouse and a common law spouse (a person of the opposite sex who has been co-habiting with the taxpayer in a conjugal relationship for at least 12 months, or is the natural or adoptive parent of the taxpayers child. However, if you happen to have a spouse, and his or her income is less than \$5,718, you would be entitled to claim a spousal amount. If the spouse's income is less than \$572, the maximum credit may be claimed is 17% of \$5,718. That credit is reduced if the spouse's income is greater than \$572 but less than \$5,718.

You may claim the equivalent-to-spouse amount if at any time during the year, you were single, divorced, or separated and supported a relative who lived with you and

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was dependant on you. The dependant must either be under 18 or at any age, if dependant by reason of mental or physical infirmity.

4. EI/CPP Premiums

The amounts paid to EI/CPP as shown on your T4's are reported as a Non-refundable tax credit.

5. Disability Credit

A 17% credit on \$4,233 is available to any individual who a doctor certifies Form T2201 is suffering from severe and prolonged mental or physical impairment during the year. The impairment is considered severe if the disability restricts the person in their daily living activities and is expected to last at least 12 months. The credit may also be claimed in respect of certain dependants if those dependants don't require the credit to reduce their own tax liability.

6. Medical Expense Credit

An individual may claim 17% of medical expenses in excess of the lesser of \$1,614 or 3% of the individual's net income. Medical expenses may be incurred on their own behalf or that of their spouse. Normally the expenses claimed can be for any 12 month period ending in the year. The type of medical expenses are listed in the personal tax guide.

7. Charitable Donation Credit

A 17% credit may be claimed on the first \$200 of legible donations, plus 29% on the amount in excess of \$200. A credit can be claimed for donations made in the current and/or the preceding 5 years. The annual limit is 75% of your net income. If by chance you have died, the limit is increased to 100%.

8. Tuition Fee/Student Loan Interest/Education Credits

Full-time students may claim a credit of 17% of eligible tuition fees plus a 17% credit of \$200/month. To qualify, students must be enrolled as a full-time student in a recognized post-secondary institution. (Disabled students may be enrolled part-time) If you are a part-time student and the course is longer than 12 hours per month and lasts for more than 3 consecutive months you can deduct 17% of \$60/month. Unused tuition/education credits may be carried forward indefinitely to offset income in future years once you become employed. If your parents insist, up to \$5,000 may be transferred to a supporting person and must be claimed in the year incurred.

Interest paid on any repayment of federal or provincial student loans is also eligible for a 17% tax credit. You also have the option of claiming interest in either the current year or up to five subsequent taxation years.

Note: With proper tax planning you may be able to receive large tax refunds in the first couple of years after graduation if you become employed.

Next month we will look at the Provincial Tax Credits as well as the GST credit that you may be eligible for. We will also look at last minute options to filing your tax return.



GAY MONEY

by Bonnie J. Babin,
Investment Planning Counsel of Canada

LIFE INSURANCE: a useful tax planning tool

While there are few tax shelters available outside of Registered Retirement Savings Plans, there is one that anyone can take advantage of; "exempt" life insurance.

Exempt life insurance, such as universal life, works as an investment vehicle. You pay money to purchase life insurance coverage, then pay an additional premium that goes into a reserve fund to earn interest - free of tax. This means that in a single policy, you get life insurance coverage plus investment earnings.

Depending on your situation, this could be a useful investment vehicle. More importantly, it can be a powerful tax-planning tool because the funds that accumulate

within the policy are tax-deferred until cash is withdrawn. If kept until your death, the funds are tax-exempt.

While there are limits to the maximum amount of the policy's reserve fund within the tax-deferred status, the rules are fairly generous. Take the example of a 40-year-old buying a \$50,000 policy for as little as \$2,900. With a universal life policy, the premiums collected can run as high as \$15,100 per year. The \$12,200 difference would be sheltered in the reserve fund.

In addition to a tax shelter, the exempt life insurance plan offers two key benefits: control and flexibility.

Investment Planning Counsel of Canada

Financial Planning Professionals

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1) Control. With this type of plan, you manage your own funds. You can choose low-risk investments such as daily interest savings accounts or Guaranteed daily interest savings accounts or Guaranteed Investment Certificates

The interest accumulates tax-free as long as you follow the government's rules. You have to keep a certain balance in the policy. If you pay too much into the investment fund compared with the insurance portion, you will lose the tax exemption. Get professional advice on how to keep the tax shelter intact.

2) Flexibility. An important advantage of a universal policy is its flexibility.

In the first few years the charges will lower the investment yield, but you can eventually use the reserve fund to pay your life insurance premiums. For those in the top

Bonnie will be hosting a series of seminars starting in February, 2000, for same-sex couples. On March 8th, at 6:30 she will be speaking on Wealth Management. Please call to reserve. If you would like a complete listing of her winter/spring seminar series, please email us.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please respond to e-mail address: [REDACTED] Fax (519) [REDACTED]

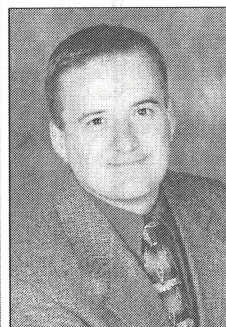
marginal tax bracket, this can cut insurance costs in half.

Or you could, for example, make a withdrawal for four successive years to pay for your child's university education. Alternatively, if you find yourself with a lump sum of money one year, you could make an additional payment into the policy - up to certain legal limits - much like making an extra payment on your mortgage.

If you leave your funds with the insurance company until your death, the proceeds will be returned to your estate, and/or beneficiaries completely tax-free. With many other investments, the government could end up with half your assets and your beneficiaries could wait a very long time for the other half.

The key to using exempt life insurance successfully is to remember that life insurance is a long-term plan.

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The Apology

Continued from page 19

*barely made it up the steps and into the house
to finish our fervid and emotive expressions.*

*And the rest... well, I trust you remember quite
well the rest.*

*We rediscovered each other last night my love.
For hours upon hours we were lost in pleasing
and being pleased, each kiss as if the first, each
touch as if never before.*

*My priceless jewel, this I swear to you, never
again will I risk losing you. My affection for you
is imperishable and never again, for even the
briefest of seconds while I remain breathing
and my heart still is able to propel blood
through my veins, will it diminish in the slightest.*

*I know now, beyond doubt that the flame of
my love and desire for you is inextinguishable.*

*I will hurry home tonight my dearest delight,
and continue to explain and show you in person
exactly how much this is so.*

*Until then, I remain
Your loving,
O.*

**Oceanldy is a lesbian-writer who
lives in Florida. This piece was
submitted to The Voice by Oceanldy.
Her work is on sale online as a
downloadable file at:**

<http://www.fatbrain.com>

Your Kiss

by cking 2/2000

On mine
Your lips are wet
And sweet

Brushing me gently
Tasting me
The heat of your breath

Soft, long grazing
Moans of appreciation
Fuel your press

My juicy lips part
For your tongue's penetration
Deep inside me

Your kiss
I feel throughout
Your heart on your lips quiver

I kiss you back
With all of me
I rush and shake

I meet your fire
With throbs and quench
Rosed petals pull you in

My lips are yours
My wetness your spring
All from your kiss

Individual and Couple Counselling Anger Management Gay Positive

**SUSAN A. COX
MAsc. (Psychology)**

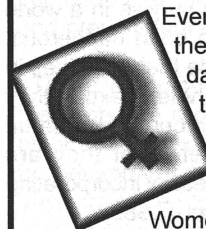
279 Weber Street North, Suite 102, Waterloo, Ontario N2J
Tel. 529- [redacted] Fax 519- [redacted]

Women's International Day Is Celebrated around the World



Promoting Solidarity and Understanding Between Women

What is International Women's Day/Week?

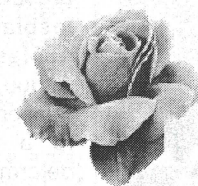


Every year on March 8, millions of women and men around the world celebrate **International Women's Day**. This day is an ideal opportunity to reflect the progress made to advance women's equality, to assess the challenges facing women in contemporary society and to look at ways to improve life conditions, to demand their rights and, of course, to celebrate the gains made.

Women on all continents often divided by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences come together to celebrate **International Women's Day**. It is a celebration of ordinary women as makers of history. Rallies, marches, fairs, receptions, shows, films and debates are held around the world to celebrate the achievements for women's equality.

When Did It Start?

Toward the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century, a movement of women struggling for better working conditions and recognition of their fundamental rights, including the right to vote, emerged in North America and Europe. Notwithstanding differing views as to its origin, a number of historians believe that International Women's Day emanates from labour strikes of female textile workers on March 8, in both 1857 and 1908, to protest against poor working conditions in New York City. However, the first official reference to *International Women's Day* can



be traced to a demonstration for women's suffrage organized by the National Association of Socialist Women. Referred to as "*Women's Day*", the demonstration took place on February 28, 1909 and was celebrated annually in the United States on the last Sunday in February until 1913. Inspired by the *American Women's Day* at the Second International conference of Socialist Women held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1910, the German socialist leader, Clara Zetkin, presented a resolution calling for the designation of an *International Women's Day*

to recognize women's struggles around the world, including the fight for universal suffrage. The resolution was passed unanimously by more than 100 delegates representing 17 countries. The first *International Women's Day* was celebrated on March 19 the next year in

Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Following that, it was celebrated in other parts of the world in February or March and sporadically in North America until the end of the 1960s. At the end of the 1960s, interest in *International Women's Day* was revived with the birth of the

women's liberation movement. In 1977, the United Nations adopted a resolution inviting countries to dedicate one day to celebrate the rights of women and international peace. March 8 became the date of recognition in many countries. Over the course of the years, the celebrations grew and often stretched over a week, with March 8 being the highlight. *This year in Canada, International Women's Week is March 6 to 12.*

<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/iwd/origin-e.html>

We are your children too:
Accessible child welfare services for
lesbian, gay and bisexual youth

Survival techniques and associated risks

In order to cope with their feelings of being different and wrong, lesbian, gay and bisexual youth develop specific strategies to survive in a world that is not only largely hostile towards them but also often dangerous. Only three choices are available to them: they can hide their identities in an attempt to create a public persona that appears heterosexual; they can deny their growing awareness of attraction to members of the same sex and attempt to prove to themselves and others that they are heterosexual; or they can "come out" and begin the process of incorporating a positive sexual identity into their sense of self (Gibson, 1989).

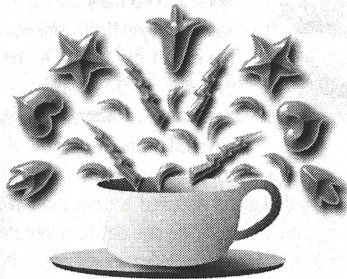
Each choice carries with it significant risks. For many young people, the process of developing an integrated and positive identity as a lesbian, gay or bisexual person involves all three choices and the associated risks at different times. These risks include: Family Disruption, Rejection and Abuse; School Failure and Peer Rejection; Unresponsive Child Welfare Services; Homelessness; Isolation; Withdrawal; Depression and Suicide; Pregnancy; Sexual Exploitation; HIV/AIDS;

Family disruption, rejection and abuse

The disclosure of a same sex orientation to family members presents the greatest risk for lesbian, gay and bisexual adolescents (Miller, 1978). Although the quality of family relationship that already exists is a significant factor in determining whether disclosure will ultimately be met with a positive response, initial reactions in even the most supportive families are frequently emotional and disturbing (Herdt, 1989).

Parents are likely to share societal misconceptions about matters related to sexual orientation. They may believe their child has made a choice in order to hurt them; that they, as

Janelle T. Wielhouwer, M.S.W.
Psychotherapy



parents, are to blame; or that influences outside the family have led their child astray. Many parents experience fears about their child's future, terror of AIDS and grief over the loss of their own dreams and expectations (Borhek, 1988).

Tears, arguments and emotional rejection are the common results of an adolescent's disclosure of a same sex orientation. Discipline may be tightened and the child's freedom restricted in an effort to both punish and prevent further "contamination".

These young people may experience physical abuse; attacks by family members are reported by 50% of youth who experience violence as a result of their sexual orientation. Up to 25% of parents who react negatively to their son's or daughter's sexual orientation disown their child. Although boys are forced to leave home more frequently than girls, both boys and girls may run away to avoid the turmoil and abuse arising from the direct or indirect impact of anti-lesbian/gay discrimination (Remefedi, 1987; Kruks, 1991).

If the family's religious, ethnic or cultural group has a particularly negative view of same sex orientation, the risk of family disruption is extremely high. Youth from such cultures speak of experiencing double-edged discrimination. They are excluded from full participation in their family and community because of their sexual orientation, but they also experience discrimination within lesbian and gay communities because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Homelessness

One result of our failure to provide appropriate care and protection for lesbian, gay and bisexual clients is the likelihood that these young people will run away from their families, foster homes and group homes. Many of them will end up, in disproportionate numbers, living on the street. The culture of acceptance that they find there may represent to them their first opportunity to be themselves and becomes a strong magnet to remain on the street. However, the unstable nature of this population, combined with the dangers of physical violence, sexual exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases and alcohol and substance abuse present risks that far outweigh the benefits of acceptance.

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Sundays

NOTE Rainbow Metropolitan Community Church- The final service of the Rainbow Metropolitan Community Church (Guelph) was held on February 27th. The Church has been dissolved.

KW-Friends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling, meets every Sunday at 3:15pm at the Brunswick Frederick Lanes. 385 Frederick St. Kitchener. (behind Frederick Plaza) Cost: \$12.00 (shoe rental included) For more information contact Phil at [redacted] or [redacted]

AWARE K-W is a Christian gay-positive group with roots in the Christian Reformed Church. They meet every second Sunday evening of each month. For more information, call Gary [redacted] at [redacted], or Fred at [redacted]

Tuesdays

Guelph Queer Equality (GQE) meets every Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in UC536, the University Centre's Mature Student Lounge at the University of Guelph. Contact GQE at: gqe@uoguelph.ca for details.

Wednesdays

Hamilton Coming Out Proud Discussion Group We meet every first and third Wednesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 pm. Call us for more details: 905-526-1074, or toll-free 1-888-338-8278, or email info@gomorrah.com <http://www.gomorrah.com>

Discussion Group: A group for people aged 16-25, sponsored by ACCKWA and held in Waterloo, 7:00-9:00 pm. To join, or for more information, call ACCKWA at (519) 570-3687 (Kitchener).

Women For Sobriety

Create a New Life: a drug & alcohol addiction support group for gay women meets Wednesdays, 7pm to 8:30pm, Oasis Club, 146 Wyndham St., Guelph. A safe and confidential place. For more info, call Marilyn at (519) [redacted]

GLOW's Coming Out Discussion Groups explore issues in sexual orientation; Hagey Hall Rms. 373/378, University of Waterloo, 7:30-9:00 pm. Information: 884-4569. A social gathering follows the discussion groups weekly from 9pm to 11pm.

The Coming Out Discussion Group

- Wed March 1: How Do I Meet People?
- Wed March 8: Discrimination from Within the LGBT Community
- Wed March 15: Same-Sex Couples
- Wed March 23: Safer Sex and Related Issues
- Wed March 30: Marriage and Parenting
- Wed April 5: Leading a Double Life

The Rainbow Community Group

- Wed March 8: Queer Communities (Sub-communities)
- Wed March 15: Dating
- Wed March 22: Activism
- Wed March 29: Gay/Lesbian/Queer Role Models
- Wed April 5: Safe Sex Workshop

Alice's Dinner Club, a Hamilton gay and lesbian group of food connoisseurs meets every 2nd Wednesday at 6:15 pm. For information call Joan/Barb at 905- [redacted] or Michael at 905- [redacted]

Thursdays

Hamilton Transsexual Peer Support Group (FTM - MTF) If you are post-op or pre-op transsexual or are dealing with gender dysphoria, come join this bi-weekly peer support group. Meetings are from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Hamilton AIDS Network, 512 James St. N. For further details, please call (905) [redacted] ext.43, or e-mail Janet at: [redacted]

www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/cafe/8922/

Shamrockin' St. Paddy's Day Bash

Friday, March 17

GREEN BEER!

Doors open at 9

Party till 3

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DOOR PRIZES FROM LABATTS

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 24 Charles Street West, Kitchener
 Info Line: 519-570-2406
 Toll Free: 1-877-635-2352

Sunday March 5

Advocating For Wellness - an interactive health fair with women who promote health and wellness in our community. **12-4 pm** at the Waterloo Community Arts Centre, 22 Regina St. S, in Waterloo. Sponsored by the International Women's Day Committee. For more information call Wendy at [REDACTED]

Wednesday March 8

Wealth Creation - Bonnie J Babin, IPC Guest Speaker Lynn Archbold, Barrister & Solicitor Legal Issues Confronting Gays & Lesbians This is the second of a five-part Seminar Series For Same-Sex Couples & Singles, presented by Bonnie J. Babin, sponsored by the Investment Planning Counsel of Canada. There is no admission cost for these workshops. If you or any of your family or friends would like to attend, please R.s.v.p. to Linda at (519) [REDACTED] Future seminars in this series are on April 5, May 24, and June 7.

Friday March 10

GLOW Term Dinner at 7:00 pm, Amadeus Restaurant, 17 Erb Street East (that's one block east of King & Erb). Come out and join GLOW for an evening of great food and friends! To reserve a spot or for more info, contact Steve [REDACTED] or Tim [REDACTED].

Sunday March 12

Waterloo-Wellington Region Pride Committee Meeting at 3 pm. Location: Conference Room, Davis Centre Library, University of Waterloo. Inquiries can be directed to the RPC at rpc@rainbow.on.ca. Visit our Pride 2000 page at <http://www.rainbow.on.ca/pride2000/>

The next committee meeting is on Sunday, April 2.

Friday March 17

PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meet at 8:00 pm. PFLAG is a support group for people who are learning to understand and come to terms with the sexual orientation of family members or friends in a confidential and supportive atmosphere. For the location of the meeting and more information, call Evie at [REDACTED] (Kitchener) or Sue at (519) [REDACTED] (Cambridge) or email them at pflag@rainbow.on.ca.

Saturday March 25

Hyperactive an all ages high-energy party event at the Fed Hall, University of Waterloo. The party starts at 9pm. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Website and ticket information to be announced. **Sponsored by H.Y.P.E.** "Over the next year we will be creating 8 to 10 high-energy special events around Southwestern Ontario. Our circuit will include K-W, London, Hamilton and Toronto. We hope to expand our playground to include Niagara, Kingston, Windsor and Ottawa by 2002. (See back cover for more details)

LGBTOUT Provincial Queer Youth Talent Showcase at the HangaR, 100 St. George St., Toronto. Show time is 10pm; dance until 3am! Cover with student ID is \$4, or \$2 before 10pm; without ID, the cover is \$5. Would you like to be a performer at our cabaret? Are you 27 or under, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and/or queer identified? Come and share your comedy, music, spoken word, song, drama, and other talents. Sign up today. Call 416- [REDACTED] or email: lgbout@campuslife.utoronto.ca Show dates: March 25 and May 27

Special thanks to David Welbourn for his compilation of community events online at The Rainbow Community Center. www.rainbow.on.ca/events

KITCHENER-WATERLOO

ACCKWA (The Aids Committee of Cambridge, K-W and Area) 85 Frederick St. E., Kitchener, Ont., (519) 570-3687

Anselma House: A crisis shelter for abused women with or without children. 24 hour crisis line: (519) 742-5894

Brethren Mennonite Council For Gays and Lesbians, P.O. Box 43031, Eastwood Square, Kitchener, Ont, N2H 6S9

K-W Distress Line- (519) [REDACTED]

Global: is available to help anyone in the Laurier community who is dealing with LGBT issues. Staff, students, or faculty can reach GLOBAL directly at the club's e-mail address 00global@mach1.wlu.ca Laurier Peer Help Line 884-PEER.

GLOW Phone Line: 884-GLOW. Information and peer support.

Sexual Assault Center: KW.....(519) [REDACTED]

Waterloo Region Alliance For Equal Rights-Kitchener-(519) 743-5832

Women's Centers: UofW (519) 888-4567 ext. 3457

WOODS: Women Out Opening Doors Socially is a social club for lesbians and lesbian-positive women in K-W and area. In Kitchener contact Wanda at [REDACTED] and in Guelph the contact person is Debbie at [REDACTED]

G U E L P H

ACGWC (Aids Committee of Guelph and Wellington County) 204-85 Norfolk Street, Guelph Ont., (519) 763-2255

GUELPH QUEER EQUALITY (GQE) University of Guelph - gqe@uoguelph.ca

HOWL: Hanging Out With Lesbians is a social group for women (lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gay friendly) ages 25 and up who are active in Guelph and area. Women may contact HOWL through Outline (519) 836-4550

OUTline: A support and resource phone line for people dealing with LGBT issues at the University of Guelph. Phone lines

are closed Wednesdays and Saturdays (for the summer) Open 7 to 10 pm other evenings. Call (519) 836-4550. outline@uoguelph.ca <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~outline>

Rainbow Chorus: is a choir that performs and will also be hosting dances for the LGBT community every month through to July and then starting again in September. For information you can contact Robert at [REDACTED] or Cory at [REDACTED] <http://www.webpoint.net/~cory>

Sexual Assault Center: Guelph.....(519) [REDACTED]

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Help Line: [REDACTED]
Sexual Assault Center: Cambridge.....(519) [REDACTED]

BRANTFORD

The Pine Tree Native Centre of Brantford

If you have a group or an organization that you would like listed here please call, write, or email us at The Voice. (contact addresses are on page 2)

HAMILTON

Alcoholics Anonymous-For the location and time of the Gay, Lesbian and Alternative Lifestyles Group in Hamilton call: (905) 522-8399.

Alternatives for Youth- 126 James St. South, Hamilton - 527-4469

Anonymous HIV testing by appointment 905-546-3541--walk-in sites:YWCA--75 McNab Street Hamilton, Ontario Wednesdays 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. 905-546-3541 for more information Hamilton General Hospital Outpatient Department Thursdays, 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. 905-546-3541 for information

Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Centre at McMaster University, Hamilton Hall Room 412 - Call 525-9140, ext. 27397

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth Line 1-800-268-9688

Gay Fathers Support Group-3rd Tuesday of each month. For information Call 522-0607

Greater Hamilton Gay & Lesbian Business Association (905) 526-1074

GLBT Centre at McMaster Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30 to 4:30 at Hamilton Hall, Room 412. (905) 525-9140, Ext. 27397 or e-mail: glbt@msu.mcmaster.ca www.msu.mcmaster.ca/services/glb/glb.htm

Hamilton Aids Network -- 528-0854 Anonymous Testing for HIV appointment only --546-3541

Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police-General Assistance: 546-4925 Jane Mulkewich, GLBT Task Force 546-4910 Complaints against Officers 546-4776 Street Crime/Hate Crime: 546-3831

Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department-Sexually Transmitted Disease Services, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 to 5:30 pm. A walk-in clinic; no Health Card required. Hamilton General Hospital, Outpatient Clinic

Community Education 546-3541 to book a presentation or consultation

Emmanuel House Palliative Care Good Shepherd Centres (905) 308-8401

MCC--Centenary United Church 25 Main Street West Hamilton (McNab Street Entrance) 2nd and 4th Sunday: 2 to 5 pm 526-1147

Narcotics Anonymous Hamilton: (905) 522-0332 Brantford: (519) 759-2558

PFLAG--Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians & Gays. For information call 662-1510

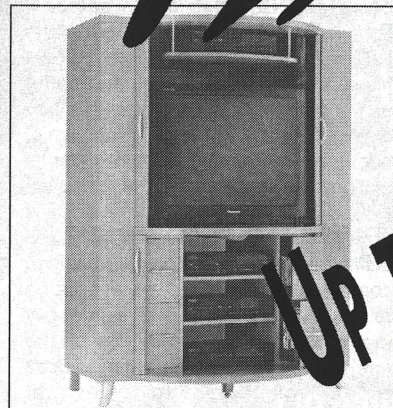
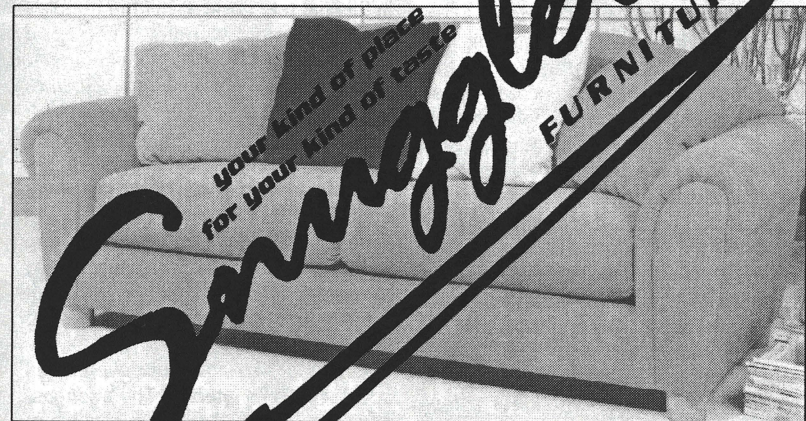
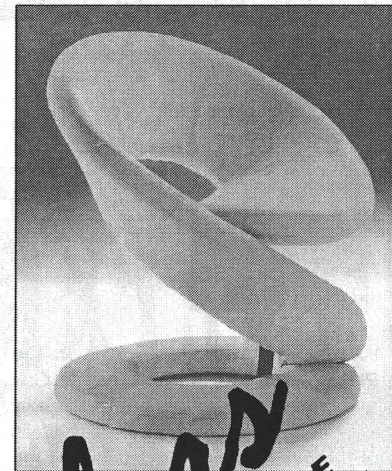
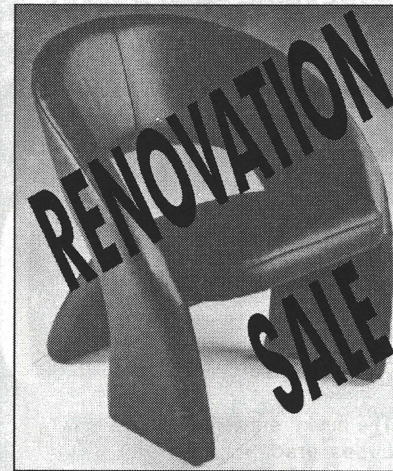
Sexual Assault Center: Hamilton.....(905) [REDACTED]

Sexual Health Information Line 905-528-5894--Confidential telephone counselling and information provided by a Public Health Nurse regarding sexual health issues--M-F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m

Street Health Centre-- Wesley Centre 777-7852

The Golden Horseshoe Leather Association: Has its own bar in the basement of *The Bombay Club* and holds their bar night on the second Saturday of each month. Monthly meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. Men interested in the Leather/Denim lifestyle are invited to attend both. For more information e-mail: pipeman.bill@sympatico.ca

Women's Centre of Hamilton-75 MacNab Street South, Hamilton 522-0127



30 Weber Street North, Waterloo 519-746-4268

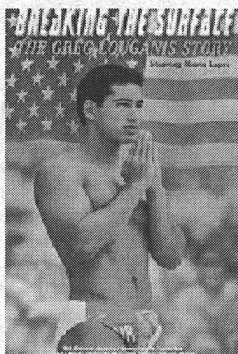
BETTER THAN CHOCOLATE

(1999, Canada)
 Dir: Anne Wheeler
 Starring: Wendy Crewson, Karyn Dwyer, Christina Cox, Anne-Marie MacDonald, Peter Outerbridge, Marya Delver, Kevin Mundy, Tony Nappo, Jay Brazeau

Winner of Audience Awards in the Philadelphia, London and Toronto Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals, this wildly enjoyable and refreshingly sexy tale tells of lesbian love winning against all the odds. When 19-year-old red head Maggie's nutty mother calls and says she is moving in – Maggie, who quit law school and has been sleeping on the couch of the lesbian bookstore – must find a sublet apartment and make it livable fast. To complicate matters, she has just met the sultry Kim, an artistic road warrior who has rolled in to town quickly moved into her heart and into her new home. But Maggie hasn't come out to her mother yet so its time to hide the sex toys and "straighten up." Add to the picture her lovesick best friend Judy, a MTF transsexual estranged from her family; her uptight lesbian boss; and Maggie's randy teen brother who gets a few lessons on life, and you get this boisterous and entertaining romantic comedy of errors and the frailty of the human heart. *Better Than Chocolate* is a raucous roller coaster of campy exploits and over-the-top situations with a gorgeous cast and a playful attitude towards sex. Body paint sales will skyrocket across the city because of one particularly sexy scene between the two young and gorgeous leads. Issues such as coming out, hate crimes and the continuing debate about the acceptance of transgenderism in the community are touched on with intelligence and sensitivity and humor. Adding to this wonderful romance is music by Bif Naked, Ani DiFranco, Ferron and Sara McLachlan. A mad frolic of a movie.

BREAKING THE SURFACE

(1997, 95 min, US)
 Director: Steven Hilliard Stern
 Starring: Mario Lopez, Michael Murphy, Jeffrey Meek, Rosemary Dunsmore, Aki Aleong, Bruce Weitz
 Label: Culture Q Connection

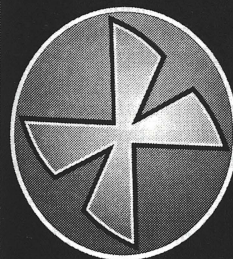


The hunky, eminently watchable Mario Lopez graduates from TV's guilty pleasure "Saved by the Bell" only to fail in this flat telemovie about the troubled life of Olympic winning diver Greg Louganis. The film, based on Louganis' autobiography, chronologically follows him from his tumultuous childhood with his adopted parents, through his young adulthood when dyslexia, low self-esteem and his long-hidden homosexuality combined to make his personal life miserable despite his athletic ability and success as a competitor. This should have made for more riveting viewing, but the bombastic soundtrack, awkward direction, tepid acting and "seen-it-all-before" story line (a youth overcomes adversity) limits interest. The strongest aspect is actually Greg's acceptance of being gay. Because of his personal demons, caused primarily by his own low self-worth, we watch as Greg destroys his college romance (Jonathan Scarfe) and then later suffers under his gay Svengali Tom. That latter relationship, one in which Tom inflicted both mental and physical abuse on Greg, is done quite well. But any drama will fail when its protagonist spends 90% of the time acting out his "victim persona" unable to confront his demons. And this being television, there is no visual sign of gay love other than a brotherly kiss on the forehead by Tom to Greg. Mario Lopez is a pleasure to leer at

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MJA/MJG Productions is pleased to once again present Canadian singer/songwriter **FERRON** in concert on Friday April 14th in Waterloo.

<http://fp98.sentex.ca/mja/ferronweb2.htm>

Ferron, one of Canada's most highly acclaimed songwriters, is currently touring the country to promote her latest recordings, **Inside Out (1999)** and **Still Riot**.

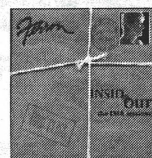
The Waterloo performance will be Ferron's only Ontario date on this tour.

Ferron will be performing solo, accompanied by her poignant reflection, stunningly beautiful poetry, and her marvelous offbeat sense of humour. This will truly be an evening to cherish.

Ferron, who was born in Toronto, and raised in Vancouver, has released 6 albums in her 20+ years career.

Perhaps the highest praise her work has received was from the Boston Globe which claimed that **"someday they will call Dylan the Ferron of the '60's."**

Ferron's latest CD is called, **Inside Out (1999)**. It is a CD on which Ferron sings cover



songs of songs that meant the most to her when she was in the process of coming out - included among them are: "Close To You", "Needles and

Plns", "My Girl" and "Happy Together" to name a few. These songs really come to life in a whole new way with Ferron's unique sound.

FERRON INTERVIEW

GATES EDEN: How has becoming a parent affected your music?

FERRON: *Becoming a parent opened up my heart chakra to the max and I want to write about a world I want to be in, and change language so that it is gentler.*

Muzikah: Ferron, where are you from, and how long have you been writing music?

FERRON: *I'm originally from Vancouver Canada and I have been writing music since I was a kid. Well, not music really, but lyrics.*

Mettaphor: Hi Ferron!!! Love your work! My question is: Do you write your own songs, and where do you get your inspiration?

FERRON: *Yes, I write my own songs and I get the inspiration from my desire to have a shared reality.*

Question: Is Ferron your real name, and if not, what is?

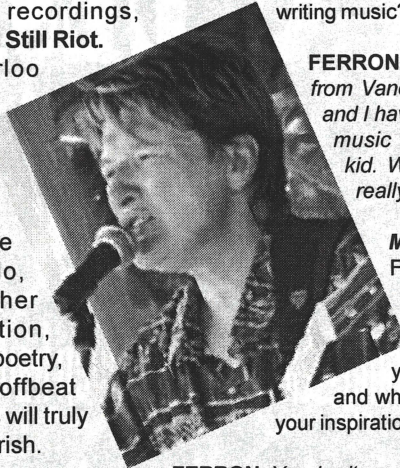
FERRON: *I have been called many things. Ferron is my legal name.*

Pallen585: Have you ever considered publishing a book of poetry?

FERRON: *Lots of people have asked me that question and I'm flattered. But the closest we've come to it is considering note cards with a quote from a familiar song. Does that sound interesting?*

Heystac: How do you feel that your attitudes/lyrics have changed over the years since you've matured?

FERRON: *That's a good question. I feel that the albums have moved from*



isolation toward community. Still Riot is specifically about this directional path.

GATES EDEN: What songwriters would you say influenced you the most? Dylan, Joni Mitchell, ?

FERRON: *All of the above but also Bruce Cockburn in his early acoustic days. Leonard Cohen and also many unknown Canadian artists who should be known. Lately, Raymond Carver poems have influenced me in that I am encouraged to strip the sentence down to bare essentials.*

GL91297: Who do you like in the music scene today?

FERRON: *I like the Indigo Girls, am excited about the new Shawn Colvin CD, still love Elton John, the Bodeans and Tina Turner and the great tribute to Carol King, Tapestry.*

LThomas51: I am delighted you have some new music out. I saw you in San Luis Obispo, Calif last year. You said: "first there is victim, then warrior, then gardener. Meet me in the garden." How is your garden?

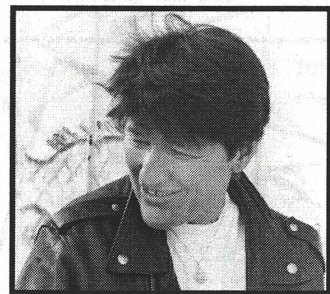
FERRON: *Flourishing. Being able to make the new music with people that I love and be able to tour during this time almost makes me feel like EVE.*

TConnor99: Ferron I love you for being such a wonderful normal person. I'd love to hear about the song Sunshine. signed, a man who easily cries.

FERRON: *Sunshine was useful to write so that I could go through loss and find the grace in change and transformation. I'm not sure that we have enough places to do the kind of grieving we sometimes need to do for even the little things. Rituals.* →

Ferron

In Concert!



"Essentially, Ferron's music is the testimony of an artist and a woman in search of the truth that eludes all but the faithful, the hopeful and the charitable. Her music graced the setting like a hymn." - Robert Reid
Kitchener-Waterloo Record

Friday, April 14 (8:00 p.m.)

TICKETS: 519-884-2665 & 416-323-3131

Emmanuel United Church

22 Bridgeport Road West, Waterloo

General Admission Tickets: \$18 (adv); \$22 (door). On sale in Waterloo at Words Worth Books (100 King Street South), in Toronto at Wonder Works (79A Harbord Street).

Note: This is Ferron's only southern Ontario concert on her current North American tour. Ferron is touring to promote her new CD, Inside Out.

More info: www.sentex.net/mja/ferronweb.htm E-Mail: [redacted]

GATES EDEN: Ferron, I've been listening to a wonderful tape from the Pacifica radio show last year, and you're so funny! I love when you talk about when you're 0 - 10 etc. and then 30 - 40 consumer reports on coffee table - Do you feel you've attained a peace at 40?

FERRON: No, I wouldn't say that. In fact a whole lot more questions came up on the horizon. but that's what makes it exciting. Still Riot explores some of that. HungryBtt: Ferron, I would like to thank you for gracing us here in SLC, UT and for your live album, "Not A Still Life", which I have listened to daily for the past three years... Will we get to see you again?

FERRON: It's been great chatting with you all in this format. You can always write to me at FerronFan@FerronWeb.com For now let me just say that the fall leaves are beginning their turning. See you all somewhere.

Excerpted from an interview conducted live on-line Monday September 30th, 1996.

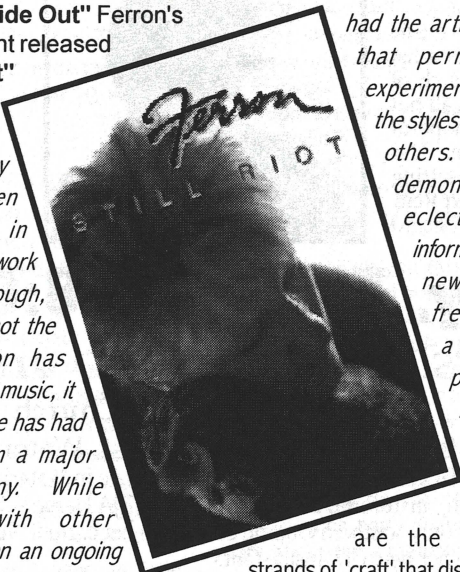
Ferron: A Review!

"Occasionally I hear of an artist of such stature that I think "how have I come this far in lifwe without knowing this work? The extraordinary singer-songwriter Ferron is such an artist. I heard her music for the first time a few weeks ago, and in that time have become immersed in a reflective world. Ferron's songs are autobiographical in the purest sense-- she writes about things that have really happened in her life. And the experiences are rendered with such emotional and artistic perfection that her songs become mirrors to the soul. While the outer events may unfold as a story, it is the inner, deeper landscape, the realm where feelings reflect fate, choice and paradox that beckons."

<http://ferronweb.com/>

Along with "Inside Out" Ferron's other most recent released CD is "Still Riot"

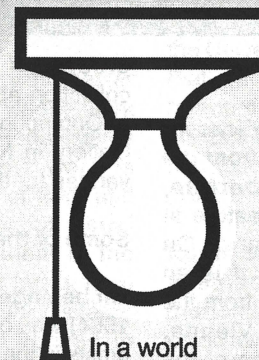
"Still Riot", is especially interesting when considered in relationship to her work as a whole. Although, "Still Riot" is not the first time Ferron has produced her own music, it is the first time she has had full support from a major record company. While collaboration with other musicians has been an ongoing process-- especially on her last two albums-- with "Still Riot", Ferron has



had the artistic control that permits more experimentation with the styles and ideas of others. The result demonstrates an eclectic but informed sense of new found freedom and artistic possibilities.

At the heart of the album, however, are the continuing strands of 'craft' that distinguish her work. <http://ferronweb.com/>

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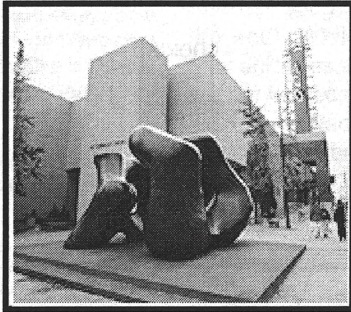
Golden Triangle On Line, 276 King Street West,
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 1B6.
Telephone: 519-576-4649 Toll-Free: 1-888-576-0077
Internet: <http://www.golden.net>

Apostles, Farm Houses and Nudes... What do these 3 things have in common?

By Rebecca Anstett

The game:

"From Michelangelo to Picasso: Great Master Drawings from the Collection of the Albertina, Vienna" is the present feature at the Art Gallery of Ontario. On display until March 26, it is an exhibition of 45 drawings from the Albertina museum in Vienna, containing works by some of the greatest artists in history — Michelangelo, Raphael, da Vinci, Durer, Poussin, Rubens, Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Klimt, Schiele, Klee, Kandinsky, Cezanne and Van Gogh.



THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

The selection of drawings in this exhibition demonstrates the wide expanse of the Albertina's holdings, providing an overview of 550 years (1420-1988) of European drawings from Austria, Flanders, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Highlights include Leonardo's Figure of an Apostle, Michelangelo's Studies for Two Arms and Seated Male Nude, Durer's Head of an Old Man, Rembrandt's Farm Houses under a Stormy Sky and Picasso's Head of a Woman.

The Albertina has one of the greatest collections of drawings in Europe and seldom does it send

groups of drawings from its collection abroad. The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and the Frick Gallery in New York are the sole venues for this exhibition.

Some of the players:

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was one of the most influential artists in the history of Western art. A sculptor, painter, architect, draftsman and poet, he is best known for the Sistine Chapel ceiling (1508-15), as well as his classical male nudes, such as the marble statue of David (1501-04).

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was an Italian painter, draftsman, sculptor, architect, musician, author and engineer. In addition, he was an investigator in the field of aerodynamics, and the leading physicist, botanist, anatomist, geologist and geographer of his time. His Last Supper (1495-97) and Mona Lisa (1503-06) are among the most popular and influential paintings of the Renaissance.

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) is often characterized as a German da Vinci because of the breadth of his knowledge and his many achievements. His extensive body

of work includes altarpieces and religious works, numerous portraits and woodcuts. In 1498 he painted one of the earliest known independent self-portraits.

Raphael (1483-1520) was master painter and architect whose work represented the High Renaissance ideal of harmony. His work is admired for its clarity of form and composition, and for its visual achievement of the ideal of the human grandeur. He is best known for his Madonnas and for his large compositions in the Vatican in Rome, including the School of Athens (1509-1510).

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) was a Flemish painter who explored the vitality and sensuousness of the Baroque period. Rubens exercised in Flanders, a stylistic authority at least as great as that of Michelangelo in Italy, in the previous century. He spoke and wrote six languages, including Italian and Latin. Rubens is perhaps best known for his religious and mythological compositions.

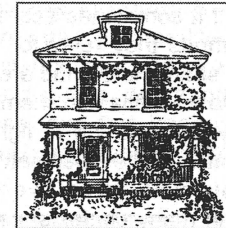
Rembrandt (1606-1669) was a Dutch painter, draftsman and etcher of the 17th century. His paintings are characterized by expressive brushwork, rich colour, and a mastery of chiaroscuro, a lighting technique designed to create drama. Rembrandt's biblical scenes and self-portraits were atypical of Dutch paintings of the 17th century as his contemporaries tended to paint landscapes, still lifes, or common scenes of everyday life.

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), an Austrian muralist, founded the Vienna Sezession, a group of

painters who revolted against academic art in favour of a decorative style similar to Art Nouveau. He painted three allegorical murals for the ceiling of the University of Vienna auditorium that were violently criticized and rejected because of their erotic symbolism and pessimism. One of his most popular works is The Kiss (1908).

Egon Schiele (1890-1918), an Austrian Expressionist painter, draftsman and printmaker, was noted for the blatant eroticism of his figurative works. He was strongly influenced by Gustav Klimt, and the characteristics contained in Schiele's work owe much to Klimt's decorative elegance. Schiele emphasized expression over decoration, heightening the emotive power of line with feverish tension.

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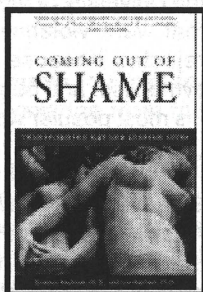
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Coming Out of Shame : Transforming Gay and Lesbian Lives

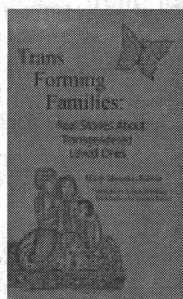
by Gershen Kaufman Phd, Lev Raphael Phd, Lev Raphael, Gershen Kaufman
Paperback - (January 1997) 287 pages



Basing their approach in the psychology of Silvan S. Tomkins, who believed humans are governed by emotions rather than, as Freud averred, sexuality and aggression, Kaufman and Raphael explain how one emotion--shame--affects, overwhelmingly negatively, the lives of homosexuals and what gay individuals and couples can do to transcend shame's ill effects. They neatly dovetail theory, illustrative anecdotes, and prescriptive advice as they exhaustively survey the almost innumerable ways in which shame undermines personal security, happiness, and mental health. If it sometimes seems that the methods they relay for transforming shame into pride are inadequate to the battle with shame they see gays as doomed to fight and refight, at least they themselves, as a couple who have overcome shame in many contexts, can cite their own experiences to argue that specific victories are possible.

Trans Forming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Loved Ones

by Mary Boenke
Paperback - (January 31, 1999) 164 pages



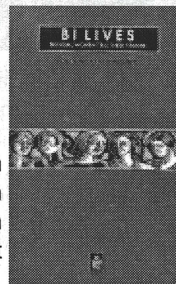
Trans Forming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Loved Ones includes 31 stories by parents of very young gender variant children, by parents of adult transgenders, by spouses and partners, and by special others - grandparents, siblings, adult children. It is the first book published detailing the journey families experience when their trans loved ones comes out to them - shock, denial, dismay, and finally understanding and acceptance. These are role models for all trans folks' families.

The stories includes a wide variety of transgenders - FTM's, MTF's, crossdressers, intersexed, young and older, married and single, several from other countries, some with disabilities.

The book is already selling very well and it is predicted to be a best seller within the gender community and gender service providers.

Bi Lives : Bisexual Women Tell Their Stories

by Kata Orndorff (Editor)
Paperback - 288 pages (May 1998)

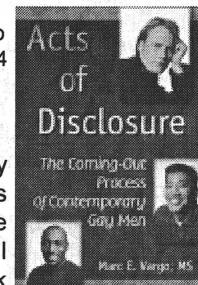


Eighteen interviews with bisexual women reveal a vast range of back-grounds and adult experiences, from childhoods in urban settings to youth spent on a southern Virginia farm, from a woman currently married and monogamous as well as not very sexual to one who is now nonmonogamous with both a woman and a man. "Susan," age 43 and an incest survivor, regards her bisexual activities as reflecting her need to please and be praised for being "hot." Radical feminist political organizer "Lani" ponders the philosophy of lesbian separatism and the hurt she endured because of it. HIV-positive "Mary" had been in an open relationship with a man, and both enjoyed going to parties and "playing" before learning of his HIV status (when interviewed, her health was failing, but an epilogue reveals that later her viral load

diminished). Along with the interviews come safer-sex guidelines and a bisexual resource list, which round the book out as a valuable resource for collections strong in sexuality issues and women's studies

Acts of Disclosure : The Coming-Out Process of Contemporary Gay Men

by Marc E. Vargo
Paperback - 164 pages (May 1998)



As a young gay man who has come out of the closet already, I found the book a thoughtful and accurate portrayal of the feelings and concerns that I went through on my own. Having this book at that time would have made my life a lot simpler. Mr. Vargo has written a book that recognizes the need for the individual to express him/herself, but also recognizes the need to keep a personal part of ones life private, at least in some parts of ones life. Coming-out is not a one step process, and this book will help anyone in any stage of that process.

LESBIAN READING/WRITING CIRCLE

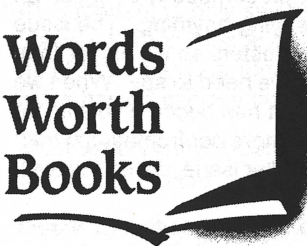
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www.thevoice.on.ca/lesbian.html

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INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES FOR INDEPENDENT MINDS

Ten Ways to Ruin a Perfectly Good Relationship

By janelle t. wielhouwer, M.S.W.

1. **Never say you are wrong.** One way to destroy a relationship that might otherwise function well is to never accept responsibility for making mistakes, for messing up, or for otherwise being just dumb, like we all get sometimes. When you never say you are wrong, the disappointments, hurt, and anger get to live longer in your relationship, growing dissatisfaction - dissatisfaction with each other, yourselves and your relationship.

2. **Never say you are sorry.** Saying you are sorry helps repair some damage inevitably done to relationships as they tumble through the heavy-duty cycle of life's washing machine. When people relate, live together, love each other, stuff happens that hurts - sometimes big hurts, sometimes little hurts, sometimes accidentally and sometimes on purpose. Sometimes people show they are sorry in lots of little ways - an extra cup of tea or coffee, or taking the garbage out when it isn't their turn. Those are good things, indeed - but not as healing as hearing 'I'm sorry'. These are two of the most difficult words to use enough - and good relationships can be ruined without them.

3. **Say things when you are angry that you would be mortified to say without anger.** You all know the kinds of things I'm talking about here, things that are hurtful, untrue, or sometimes unnecessarily true. We've all said them and then thought 'Oh, I really cannot believe I said that', and found no way to reverse time. We can treat anger like going down a water slide, and throw caution to the wind which takes away some of the trust in relationships, the safety felt with people who know us well, and love us anyway. The wounds will scab and then scar, but if we do this very often at all there simply isn't enough time to heal in between. Eventually we stop trying to heal and the damage is irreversible.

4. **Hold back from saying difficult things for fear of hurt feelings.** Finding the right amount of honesty is a very difficult thing. Too much can be a very bad thing, and too little can be equally bad. The thing is, when something is difficult to say because it might hurt somebody or cause an argument. The natural tendency is to avoid saying anything. The issue doesn't go away, it just goes underground and festers so it's bigger than ever and with more pressure behind the words we need to say. When we do build up the courage to approach the issue, it has become volatile for us so that we react badly or use words that are more confrontational than we might have originally been. Instead of a smaller issue, we end up with a bigger one.

5. **Hold onto anger like a security blanket.** Okay, so anger gets in here a few times. (No, it didn't bribe me!) Sometimes we give anger just way too big a space in our relationships. It's an important feeling, it lets us

know when there is something to which we need to attend. But it can be a bit of a trickster, because it also covers up feelings like sadness, hurt, grief, embarrassment, or shame. So, while we need to talk about anger, we also need to not let it hog all of our attention, so we can give equal time to the feelings underneath the anger - like maybe hurt feelings, or fear. Hold your anger tightly to you and it may be the only companion you'll have to cuddle in the middle of the night.

6. **Laugh too little.** Laughing lets people play, be joyous, spontaneous and comes with having fun. There is some of this to be had in almost all circumstances. When we take ourselves, and our struggles too seriously and leave too little time to laugh together, it weakens our relationships. Laughter is the Vitamin C of relationships.

7. **Give the relationship the time you have left over after everything else** - the job, the kids, the sports, the theatre, the activism, and yourself. Guess what - give your relationship the left-overs of your time and you will have a barely warmed-up relationship.

8. **Give all of your time to the relationship.** Balance in all things is the key. Make your relationship a priority, but not the only priority. Keep growing as a person, so that your relationships with others and with yourself will constantly involve discovery and new intimacies.

9. **Be defensive.** Now, feeling defensive is pretty natural, especially if someone is angry or upset with you. Unfortunately, it gets in the way of understanding what the issue really is, and what you may have contributed to it. Defensiveness invites arguments to that murky state where you are never sure what you are arguing about or how to solve things.

10. **Never tell your partner all of the wonderful things about them.** There are things that attracted you to the people in your life. Every time you look at them on some level you can remember what those are. The more times, and the more unique ways you can tell someone what you like about them, what you admire, what you value, the more you add to the good feelings between you, to the sense of trust and openness. You are reminding both of you of the sacred trust that relationships of any kind involve. Hold those things dear and to try not to injure them frivolously. It's important to only say things you really believe here, because both of you would detect instantly any deceit, and it would make you both doubt all of the other true things you have said. The world can always stand more honest compliments!

Watch out for these ten relationship eating gremlins at your house, at your work and in your friendship circles.

janelle t. wielhouwer, m.s.w. is a psychotherapist in independent practice whose next social activism project will involve a game farm for relationship-eating gremlins where they can live in peace without feeding on otherwise lovely relationships.

I am Hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult. I have decided --

I would like to accept the responsibilities of a six year old again.

I want to go to McDonald's and think that it's a four star restaurant. I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make ripples with rocks.

I want to think M&M's are better than money, because you can eat them. I want to play kickball during recess and paint with watercolors in art.

I want to lie under a big oak and run a lemonade stand with my friends on a hot summers day.

I want to return to a time when life was simple. When all you knew were colors, addition tables and simple nursery rhymes, but that didn't bother you, because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care.

When all you knew was to be happy because you didn't know all the things that should make you worried and upset.

I want to think that the world is fair. That everyone in it is honest and good.

I want to believe that anything is possible. Somewhere in my youth...I matured and I learned too much.

I learned of nuclear weapons, war, prejudice, starvation and abused children. I learned of lies, unhappy marriages, suffering, illness, pain and death.

I learned of a world where men left their families to go and fight for our country, and only to end up living on the streets...begging for their next meal. I learned of a world where children knew how to kill...and did!

What happened to the time when we thought that everyone would live forever, because we didn't grasp the concept of death? When we thought the worst thing in the world was if someone took the jump rope from you or picked you last for kickball? I want to be oblivious to the complexity of life and be overly excited by little things once again.

I want to return to the days when reading was fun and music clean.

When television was used to report the news or for family entertainment and not to promote sex, violence and deceit.

I remember being naive and think that everyone was happy because I was.

I would walk on the beach and only think of the sand between my toes and the prettiest seashell I could find.

I would spend my afternoons climbing trees and riding my bike. I didn't worry about time, bills or where I was going to find the money to fix my car.

I used to wonder what I was going to do or be when I grew up, Not worry about what I'll do if this doesn't work out.

I want to live simple again. I don't want my day to consist of computer crashes, mountains of paperwork, depressing news, how to survive more days in the month than there is money in the bank, doctor bills, gossip, illness and loss of loved ones.

I want to believe in the power on smiles, hugs, a kind word, truth, justice, peace, dreams, the imagination, mankind and making angels in the snow.

I want to be six again.

Life In Between

By A.J. Mahari

Difference meets with thunderous-silence
Stormy seas of self slosh from side to side
Do it differently - do not sit on the fence
Strangely-familiar - the pain is wide

I will not hold what I cannot carry at all
Feel it, grieve it, let it go and move on
Tired of the maze - social wall after wall
Closed minds - the chances are all gone

Wind-whipped tree
Bending, bending
Lost-foundness is the epitome
Of triggered-time that is never-ending

Foolishly fickle fall wind howls and haunts
Minsunderstood-healing abounds
It has all to do with the child's wants
Too much to hear in a diversity of sounds

I went to OREO.COM and it gave my computer a cookie!

A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.

I'm not lost, I'm "locationally challenged."

I'm not rude, I'm "attitudinally challenged".

I don't have an attitude problem. You have a perception problem.

I'm not nearly as think as you confused I am.

I'm so broke, I can't even pay attention.

I'm on the crest of a slump.

I've told you a million times not to exaggerate

Aromatherapy makes scents.

Why can't life have an "undo" button?

To my ex: Be careful when you "find yourself." There's no one there.

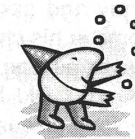
I called the TV lawyer to talk about my pain and suffering because his commercials are killing me.

'Veni, Vidi, Velcro' - I came, I saw, I stuck around.



"I'd love to make music with George one day. I've worshipped him for years. He's fantastic. I like his smile, as well."

--Ricky Martin on George Michael according to Melbourne, Australia's Sun Herald



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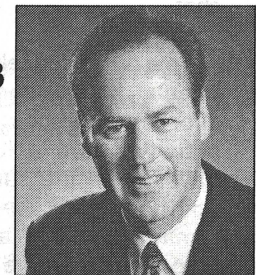
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Looking For a Spirituality or a Spiritual Home

By Charles W. Westfall



Not so long ago, I was stopped on the street by a tall, handsome, well-groomed young man. He asked me if I had ever heard of

the church he represented. I said that I had and gave enough information to establish my credibility. Because he was so good-looking, however, I decided to rattle his grey cells a bit. I told him I was gay and asked if I would be welcome in his church. He told me I would be as long as I didn't spread it around. (Did he think I had a contagious disease?)

After a bit more banter, centering mostly on my notions of spirituality and organized religion, I asked him if he thought I could be saved. Unhesitatingly, he said that I couldn't. And there went my chances of ever singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

I do, however, like to chat occasionally about spirituality and religion. Not argue about them; but, chat.

To me organized religion is like an ocean liner, complete with directional devices, programmed activities and a lot of people travelling in the same direction. Spirituality, on the other hand, reminds me of a rudderless sailboat, responsive to the gentle winds of the spirit, wherever they might direct it.

I have met many in the LGBT community who are looking for one or the other. Many without much success. Fearful of looking too deeply within themselves, they also fear the kind of compromise that joining an established group might bring.

Mark Twain once wrote, "They say that God created man in his own image. Well, I believe that man, not wanting to be outdone in generosity, returned the favour." His political incorrectness notwithstanding, the observation has some merit. It is used as an argument against those who seek to discover their own spirituality. At the same time, it is used as a broadside against the images of God that have been presented traditionally.

I'd like to look at each perspective in turn.

Spirituality, as I understand it, depends largely on how I see myself as reflective of God, the Spirit, Life Force, Goodness, Love or whatever is strongest in my notion of an all pervading and sustaining Power. To accomplish this, I require solitude and quiet. I need to reflect, ponder and meditate on who I am, what I am about and what it all means. Not an easy task because, to do so, requires the letting go of a lot of conditioning and ingrained bias. I've got to start from nothing and that's hard to do since I know I'm not nothing. Oh well, that's just mysticism and many religious disciplines see it as a way to spiritual enlightenment. For a

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered person, this means finding a healthy and positive self-image to start from.

On the other hand, organized religion can be very busy about the business of analysing, judging, directing and doing. Making something. Mostly, making a community that can be either inclusive or exclusive, tolerant or intolerant, broad- or narrow-minded, joyful or sombre. You know the kind of atmosphere you find in many church communities. Often it's not so much a case of "God is dead" as it is, "God is deaf". LGBT's, no matter how "officially" welcoming such a group might declare themselves to be, risk feeling like outsiders. Often, too, the morality of such a group is such as to try to effect a change in one's sexual orientation because it is viewed as something out of the ordinary - not normal. The Roman Catholic Church calls it, an "objective disorder". Other churches see it as, "a ticket to hell".

Don't lose heart, though. That's not the end of the story. There is hope and there are church communities that not only welcome and involve people like us but some, too, that have been established and sustained by Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgendered.

Two lights have appeared in Hamilton, recently, that provide options for those seeking for acceptance within an organized religious context. One is on Dundurn Street: The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. It flies the Rainbow Flag on its facade and it is rapidly attracting an appreciative

and loyal following. For those who wish a bit more ritual and group expression, the Metropolitan Community Church meets on the second and fourth Sunday of every month at Centenary United Church on Main Street West. They have regular Bible Study sessions, Administration Meetings and Social Events.

Some LGBT's just go along with the establishment, filtering out what they don't want to hear and refraining from what they don't want to do. I suppose that this, too, is a valid religious experience. It is not easy to dismiss a lifetime, however brief, of indoctrination and conditioning. Nor is it easy to turn one's back on those things that family and friends hold to be sacred and true. At least some sense of belonging is gained and with that, a sense of direction and self-worth. They, at least, are the foundation for a positive and fulfilling life, from almost any perspective.

So, if we don't see one another in church, we can still share our common humanity and our wonderful and unique gifts: whether they be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered or Straight. It is not the song of the bird that is important, after all, but the fact that the bird sings.

Charles W. Westfall is a resident of Hamilton, Ontario. This column is a Voice exclusive.

"Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny;

-- Samuel Smiles

My Week On Crew (Part 2 of 2)

Continued from page 11

I was a little surprised at my exhaustion. The dirt. The rich dark thick dirt. I cleaned each night in the creek. Even more so than many but I really had to try to be somewhat clean for myself. Wearing blackened muddied pants more than one day in a row was different. Thick muddied boots left at the tent opening to put on each morning. I went to bed as early as I could and was aware of my intake of water, calories and fiber like I'd never done before! I couldn't remember the last time I'd worked that hard, over so many hours and so many days all in a row. As the days wound down in my exhaustion I still kicked back in a chair and took in the trees some. The babbling creek. The diverse conversation from the diverse group of women that surrounded me. I was in awe at the whole trip.

We had met a couple at a through hikers motel we stayed at the night before leaving to meet the crew in Hot Springs that were from Holland. They had taken several months off to hike from Georgia to New York. We had told them we would be working somewhere on the trail and wished them well in their hike north. After two days working crew, we were returning to field camp and the couple was there, resting at the intersection of the Appalachian Trail and the cross trail at the creek near our camp. We greeted each other and they talked about their hike over the last two days from Hot Springs to this point in the trail. They asked for directions and we pointed on past our camp towards our work site

and up over the next mountain gap. We new they would see where our new trail peeled off from the main trail until its' official opening. It was so neat to think that they were here in our country to enjoy our trails. The ones we worked on to maintain and build. They would take these sites and experiences home with them. Sites from our North Carolina mountains and I was a part of it. They saw this group of women coming into camp, dirty and tired, working on the trail they walked.

We moved several tons of rock. We laid over a dozen rock steps and placed as many stones as a part of the path. We prepared a part of the trail that would be a future part of the Maine to Georgia Appalachian Trail that would last for 20 to 30 years. As I ease into my nice hot bath I think of the hours and hours of sweat and toil. I mull over the pictures I took of the sections I worked on. I think of the faces of the women I worked with and laughed with over this past week. I recall breaking camp and hauling it all back to the van. These thoughts so vivid of our hugs before we had to go with the ache still in my muscles, the dirt still under my nails.

Vacation? It's all in the interpretation! I know that the next time I take the kids to camp at a state park along the Blue Ridge or hike a section of the Appalachian trail I'll be thinking of the men and women that made it possible. That worked hard hours to have a place for us to see. To enjoy. It was hard, hard work. But I wouldn't trade the mud, dirt, camp food, smiles or camaraderie of my crew for anything in the world! My week on crew.

"There's been a change in a generation which you wouldn't see in any other community. I don't think there's a social comparison. In a way, we have almost done ourselves out of a role. And if we'd been asked at the start, I think we'd have said this is what we'd like to see happen. The gay community has become more of a niche market than a marginalised community. I think being gay is rapidly becoming no more extraordinary than being lefthanded."

-Danny Vadasz, founder of the gay Melbourne (Australia) Star Observer, to the daily newspaper The Age

"When I was growing up in Utah, my perception of gay life was that gay men were promiscuous, anti-family and that it was all about gay bars and cruising. When I finally 'came out' to myself, I realized there was a whole lot more to being gay than the stereotypes. I realized I didn't have to change any of the values or beliefs that I held about families, relationships and commitments just because I was gay."

-Hero magazine co-founder Sam Francis to the Salt Lake Tribune

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The Voice Classifieds Page

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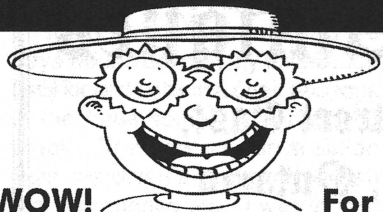
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