

The Voice

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The Voice

Serving the
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Volume Two

September 2000

Issue 12

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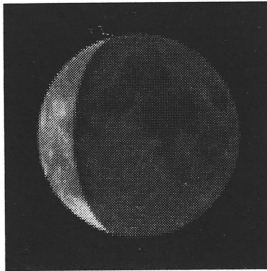
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New Have Your Say - Page 33



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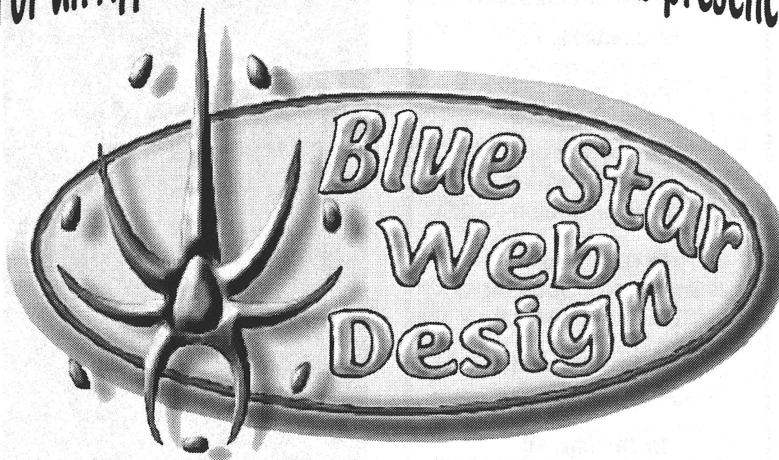
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Ever Complain About Tri-Pride?

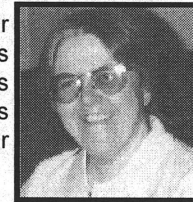
By Ms. A.J. Mahari

Do you ever show up to Tri-Pride here in Kitchener-Waterloo and wonder why there isn't more to it? Do you spend the day, among other things, hearing complaints about this or that? Do you find yourself complaining too?

What can you do about it? The answer is a complicated-simple one -- simple in that you could volunteer some of your time, energy, ideas and know-how to help those who work so hard each year to make our local Pride celebrations happen at all. It is complicated in that it takes time, effort, work and sacrifice to serve your community.

It is essential that the Rainbow Pride Committee grows. That is the

only way our Pride Festivities can grow. As our Pride goes so to goes our visibility.



Have you thought about getting involved?

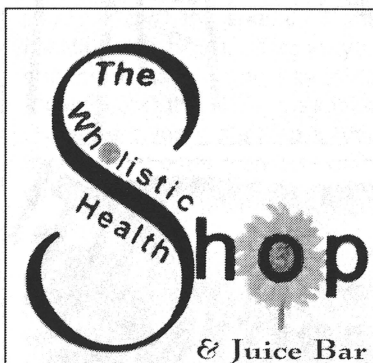
Beginning in this issue The Voice will run a column called "RPC Corner" each month to keep you as up-to-date as possible about what the RPC is doing in the service of you and your community.

The Annual General Meeting of the Rainbow Pride Committee will be held on Sunday October 1, 2000. (See page 5 for more information) This is an excellent opportunity for you to come out and meet new people and get involved in the process of helping to further build both community and our Tri-Pride event for next year.

Many people don't think about Pride until June. But it takes a year's worth of preparation, planning and organizing to make that weekend happen.

The more input that there is the more that can get done. Unless and until you bring your skills, time and involvement to the RPC table, what right do you really have to complain about the hard and dedicated work of those who have given of themselves to make things better for you?

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Editor's Note: Beginning this month, *The Voice* will be featuring a monthly column entitled, "RPC Corner." The Rainbow Pride Committee wants to keep the community up to date with what is happening and with the changes that are occurring with the RPC.

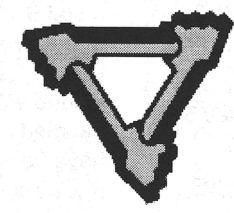
The Regional Pride Committee of Waterloo-Wellington (RPC) will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, October 1, 2000, for the purposes of ratifying a revised constitution, and of filling the available board positions. Members of our community are invited to meet October 1 at 11:00am in Room 104 of the Modern Languages Building, University of Waterloo for an informal get-together, followed by a potluck brunch, at 11:30 am. The RPC will supply drinks, plates, cups and cutlery. At 12:30, the Annual General Meeting will begin. This is your chance to have some say in the projects that the RPC undertakes in the next year. It's also a great way to meet other members of the community.

The Rainbow Pride Committee (RPC) is being restructured so that it can act as an umbrella organization in the Tri-City area to further benefit our community.

One new change is that next year's Pride Event Committee, which will be known as the Tri-Pride Committee (TPC), will be an off-shoot of the RPC, responsible solely for the Pride Events that will take place on June 22-24, 2001. This committee will report back to the RPC board. Be a part of this committee

and help shape next year's Tri-Pride festivities. You are needed!

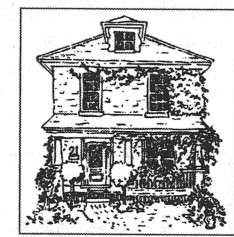
If you are interested in seeing the infrastructure to the Tri-Cities LGBT community improved, please attend this meeting. It is important that people get involved. Our community can only be as strong as the number of us who are willing to work to make it vital and strong.



Come out and meet new people, network and give a little time and energy to a very worthwhile endeavour -- the further building of our community.

It's easy to criticize what isn't in place. Why not come out and lend your voice and support to what you'd like to see happen in your LGBT community?

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PLANS TO REPEAL SECTION 28 SCRAPPED

British Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly will postpone until after next spring's elections his attempts to repeal the anti-gay law known as Section 28, following the House of Lords' rejection of repeal legislation July 24.

The vote was 270 to 228. The U.K.-wide law prohibits cities from "intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality" or teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools.

The law was repealed locally in Scotland by the newly created Scottish parliament on June 21.

JUDGE OK's AUSSIE INSEMINATIONS

Australian Federal Court Judge Ross Sundberg struck down the state of Victoria's ban on in-vitro fertilization of non-married women July 28.

A Melbourne doctor had challenged the ban as a violation of federal sex-discrimination laws.

At present, only two other states — New South Wales and Tasmania — permit single women and lesbian couples to access fertility services.

RADIOSHACK AND MOTEL 6 DROP DR. LAURA

Kay Jackson, Director of Media Relations for RadioShack stated, "RadioShack strictly adheres to a policy NOT to advertise on programs that might be politically or socially controversial or that promote any one individual's agenda or point of view.

In a statement by Cecile C. Kale, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer of Motel 6, the company announced, in a format such as that which Dr. Laura uses, numerous topics loaded with great emotion may be handled in the course of a day. We have no way to predict what tomorrow's dialogue will include.

RadioShack and Motel 6 join the following list of organizations that have dropped Laura Schlessinger: Procter & Gamble, Priceline.com, Natrol, Red Lobster, Gateway Computers, EchoStar/Dish Network, Skytel, Geico Insurance, Xerox, ToysRUs.com, More.com, BoxLot, the Ohio State Lottery, United Airlines (banned Laura from advertising), AT&T, American Express, Kraft, Kroger, Amica Insurance and TCF Bank.

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Ellen, Anne Are History 'Amicable' split after 3 yrs. for lesbian comic

Hollywood's most famous same-sex couple, Ellen DeGeneres and Anne Heche, have split.

"Unfortunately, we have decided to end our relationship," the pair confirmed to the Daily News in a joint statement yesterday.

"It is an amicable parting, and we greatly value the 3 1/2 years we have spent together.

"We hope everyone will respect our privacy through this difficult time."

The two funny blonds weren't divided by a third party, friends said.

"The relationship just ran its course," said a source. "It wasn't working."

"It was a mutual breakup," said another friend. "They're both very, very upset."

The two, who'd hung together through a frost brought on by their declaration of love, seemed to have found their place in the sun this year.

A source said DeGeneres was now living in the couple's Hollywood Hills home, while Heche was "staying with friends."

The pair also had shared a weekend retreat in Ojai, Calif.

The split is sure to come as a shock to a legion of gay fans who looked upon the couple as role models.

Excerpted from a New York Daily News Article by GEORGE RUSH - Daily News Columnist.



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*We Value Diversity in
our Community*

The Power of Self-Esteem

By Judy Saltarelli, M.A.



Esteem and self-esteem are significant issues for many members of the rainbow community, especially for those still in the closet or in the midst of coming out. Everyone wants to be respected and accepted by their family of origin, friends and colleagues. When others' homophobia conflicts with your own sexual orientation, this presents a painful dilemma. Self-esteem in large part depends on knowing yourself and being who you really are, but you may risk the esteem of friends and family if you are true to yourself.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines self-esteem as "a confidence and satisfaction in oneself; a proper respect for oneself as a human being; regard for one's own standing or position." It was originally defined as "self-conceit; an exaggerated opinion of one's own qualities or abilities." This lingering obsolete definition has given rise to the misunderstanding that self-esteem equates with selfishness or self-centredness. Self-esteem includes respecting yourself and being comfortable with your sexual orientation, the choices you make, your understanding of the purpose of your life, and your actions toward others. It means liking yourself and regarding yourself as a person worthy in your own right of being loved, nurtured, respected and protected. Internalized homophobia is not the same as low self-esteem; however, they often go hand in hand. You may have high self-esteem in general, accompanied by specific feelings about your sexual orientation.

Some believe self-esteem starts in the womb as a product of a mother's assertive self-care and her developing bond with her child-to-be. In any event, the origins of self-esteem are early in childhood. Healthy, loving

parents instill self-esteem in their newborn child when they gaze upon him or her with unconditional positive regard, and when they affectionately meet their child's needs for food, personal care and loving touch.

Later, knowing the characteristics of each developmental stage, emotionally secure parents support their child's growth with patience, training, protection, and expectations appropriate for the child's age. They accept and respect individual differences, and don't force the child to rigidly conform to society's developmental stereotypes. They provide protection from abuse and mistreatment. In short, they love their sons and daughters for who they are, and guide and protect them on their journey toward adulthood.

This healthy early parenting forms the basis of your innermost sense of self-esteem. If you have been lovingly and respectfully parented, you will integrate into your personality a sense of personal worth and value. You will know in your heart that you are lovable. Later in life, you will be able to accept healthy affection from others, and you will be able to nurture yourself in a healthy way and weather life's storms with resilience.

If your parents didn't know about your emotional needs at various stages of your development, or if they weren't able to meet your needs because of their own unresolved issues, parenting beliefs or adult-life difficulties, you may have formed mistaken beliefs about your own inherent lovability and self-worth. It is a natural tendency for babies and young children to believe that their parents are strong, loving, perfect and all-powerful. When the parenting they receive is not all that the child needs, he or she automatically believes there is something wrong with or unlovable about himself or herself, because it would be too frightening to believe that their parent is not perfect. This is the source of low self-esteem.

As you grow and increase your time with people outside your childhood home, positive, supportive relationships with peers and teachers also contribute to your self-esteem, as do your personal achievements. These can enhance your self-esteem, but they usually aren't enough to completely make up for dysfunctional or uneven parenting.

As adolescents and adults, the way you treat others both stems from and affects your sense of self-esteem. You develop your own sense of what constitutes healthy interpersonal relationships and fair play. You learn (or don't learn) about tolerance, mutual respect and how to balance your needs with those of others.

Signs of high self-esteem include maturity, a quiet self-confidence, inner peace and a realistic sense of your own skills and abilities. You will also have good self-protective abilities, evidenced by appropriate risk-taking behaviour and strong personal boundaries.

Boundaries are the rules we use to guide our behaviour toward others and to protect against being hurt or taken advantage of by others. For example, you might decide that you have a right to be who you are, but not to hurt others. This can play out in the situation where you finally decide to come out to a straight spouse. You would claim the power to live openly according to your own sexual preferences and would also work to make the ensuing adjustments in your relationship in a mutually respectful way. You would think about and set limits on your behaviour toward each other and your children. It isn't necessarily easy, and can require a great deal of patience at a time when you may be impatient to assume your new life. The benefits lie in knowing you did your best to minimize the pain for others while asserting your need to be who you really are.

Repairing low self-esteem can be a wonderful adventure—a journey of loving self-discovery and healing. Some may need professional counselling, while others can get the help they need from self-help books and peer-guided discussion or support groups. A network of supportive peers and family

members can be invaluable. At your own pace you can explore the origins of your insecurities and mistaken beliefs about your worth and lovability. You can find ways to realize that they ARE mistaken beliefs, and that they reflect your parents' insecurities and society's rules about parenting and conformity rather than your own worth. You can gradually let go of these negative beliefs and replace them with positive affirmations. When integrated, these new positive beliefs will be the basis of that self-esteem you so richly deserve. You will know in your heart that when others are unable to accept you for who you are, it says more about their fears and inabilities than about your inherent "okay-ness." You will accept yourself and will be at peace with yourself.

Judy Saltarelli is a Counsellor and Personal Productivity Coach at A Different Way in Waterloo, Ont. This article is a Voice exclusive.

(See page 20 for more about Judy's business in this month's Business Feature.)

"I'm having assimilation anxiety. How can I keep doing this subcultural comic strip in a world where there's no more subculture? ... I don't want to be one of those people who gets, like, stuck in their outmoded politics. I really don't want to sound like this shiny old leftover."
-- Alison Bechdel

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THE BAR SCENE

By Charles W. Westfall



With the opening of THE NEW EMBASSY, Hamilton's compliment of LGBT friendly bars rises to four. I wish all the entrepreneurs luck in their ventures. At the same time, I try to figure out why the bar scene is so popular within the LGBT Community.

Because of poverty and ill health, I haven't been to a bar for well over a year now. I often get the urge, but find it quite easy to resist when I think of the loud music, the concentration of smoke, the price of drinks and the relative impossibility of carrying on a conversation.

At the same time, the bar scene is a popular, often ritualistic, factor in the life of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered Persons. So, I thought it might be interesting to try to figure out the why and wherefore of this phenomenon.

I suppose I find it quite understandable in a place like Toronto with its "village" mentality. People want to feel they belong. At the same time, they want to be free and safe to express themselves in whatever way seems natural at the time.

In other centres, I think the reasoning is much the same. Wanting to be a part of an identifiable group that offers opportunities to meet with kindred spirits and perhaps, get lucky in love.

Did I say that? Every professional counsellor I know screams it from the rooftops: "Bars are not good places to look for a mate."

Maybe there are other attractions. A person who was on the ball could make a bit of extra money, acquire a bit of narcotic, or find a good prospect for a one night stand. Maybe that person would just have enough moxy to escape having to pay for drinks all night. There are a lot of generous sugar daddies around.

In history, bars and pubs have been centres of intrigue and insurrection. They have served as headquarters for all kinds of nefarious and underhanded activities. I don't blame this on the proprietors, though. How can they monitor every conversation?

No, I blame it on the opportunists who take advantage of a good thing to profit for themselves. Besides, that's all history now, isn't it?

Now, I have to say this. My experience at the Hamilton bars leads me to believe that concerns over any kind of problem that may have or might occur seem to be well taken care of by those responsible for running them. When they're not taken care of, the patrons complain, long and loud. There is, moreover, a kind of mutual concern present that seems to be able to detect problems before they start and head them off at the pass.

Oh, you get all types in Hamilton bars, as anywhere else. The silent,

lone drinker who stops by for a quick one on the way home. The noisy, sloppy drunk who has answers for all the problems in the world but the problem of his own excessive drinking. The manipulative poseur who claims to be much more than in reality and who attracts a small entourage of opportunists, usually young, looking for freebies or some measure of inflated status.

There are the exhibitionists, strutting their stuff and flaunting it for all to see: "Look at meeee." Just look, though. Don't touch.

There are the activists looking for any opportunity to attack the establishment or any real or imaginary infringement on their real or imaginary rights.

There are those who just like to get together in a friendly atmosphere for companionship and entertainment and conversation. There are those whose main purpose in life seems to be keeping the dust off a bar stool. There are those who are escorted to the door every night only to be back in time for opening the next day.

Fundamentally, as I see it, there are two types of person in the LGBT Community. There is the assimilationist and the confrontationist. You find them both at a bar, sooner or later.

The confrontationist wants to wake up society to new freedoms and license, like sex in public places: something regularly championed by XTRA. The assimilationist works quietly from day to day, not closeted but not too out. The

assimilationist can have great fun with his brothers and sisters and can get along quite well with his colleagues and clients.

In Hamilton, the assimilationists seem to dominate. At the same time, this community can unite and put on quite a show, when necessary.

Maybe, at heart, that's what community is all about. Not marching in formation but engaging in activities of a common interest, while remaining one's own person and respecting the right of others to do the same. At the same time, it must mean not being afraid to stand up and be counted when the time comes. The Hamilton Community has proven time and time again that it can do this.

In their own way, the Bars and Clubs help foster this possibility by providing comfortable places where individuals can break down the barriers of bias and fear and distrust. They can find others, like themselves, who have been victimised, ostracised or just plain put down.

Ours is not a tightly knit neighbourhood. We are spread pretty far and wide. If the Bars and Clubs can bring some of us together for camaraderie and fun, then more power to them.

In sum, and in Hamilton especially, most of them do that very well.

Charles W. Westfall is a writer living in Hamilton. This column is a Voice exclusive.

Women: Take Back The Night

By A.J. Mahari

"Why is a woman still not safe when she's in her home?"

(Tracy Chapman song, "Why" from her first CD, "Tracy Chapman")

With the news of 5 murders of women in southern Ontario in the past 3 months as the result of domestic violence, the line from Chapman's song rings all too true.

Women must live with the threat of physical and/or sexual violence every day of their lives.

Locally, the Take Back the Night March will take place on Thursday September 21 at 6:30pm beginning at the Clock Tower in Kitchener's Victoria Park. The March ends at the Kitchener City Hall.

Kitchener-Waterloo's march has the theme of "Take Back..." Sue Barg, one of the event organizers and the Family Violence Prevention Co-ordinator for Wilmot-Wellesly, explained that the theme of "Take Back..." was chosen to reflect the reality that many women who come out and participate in this event do so for many different and very individual reasons.

"Every woman has her own thing that she needs to take back. Some women need to take back their self-esteem. Other women need to take back their self-worth for example" said Barg.

Locally, the march has seen varying numbers over the years. It is estimated that there were about 200 women who took part last year.

Organizers expect at least that many out again this year. Barg added, *"If everyone who is going to participate would invite a few friends we'd have so many more women involved. It's easier to come out when you know someone else who will be there."*

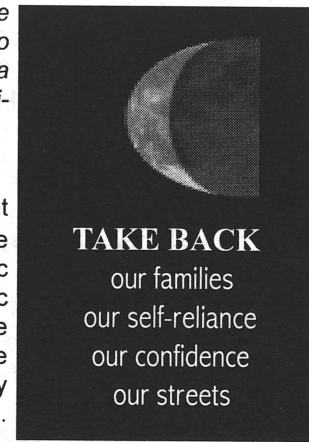
Last year was Sue Barg's first time attending the Take Back The Night Event. *"It was a very empowering experience. It was so neat to share common feelings about our rights, and the fact that we should be able to walk at night without fear, with the other women who participated. It was a very positive experience."*

Barg believes that the fact that some women are apathetic about this symbolic event and that more women don't come out stems primarily from two factors. One, many women, who haven't been affected by sexual assault or domestic violence directly don't feel that it is relevant to them. Two, there are women who have been the victims of sexual assault and or domestic violence who don't want anyone else to know this about them.

The history of this symbolic march has its roots in 1970's England. Due to a series of sexual assaults against women in Leeds and the petitioning of city leaders to do something, 10 o'clock curfews were imposed upon women and children. Women and children could not be out on city streets after 10pm with-

out being accompanied by a man. Women were justifiably outraged with the restrictions imposed upon them and took to the streets to reclaim their right to walk the streets without fear.

It was in 1976 that 1,000 women marched in New York City's Central Park in the "Walk Against Rape" This, along with a spontaneous walk through the streets of a San Francisco pornography district in 1978, motivated many other such marches in other centres in the U.S. and Canada.



The marches, now held annually around the world, symbolize a basic human right that women must reclaim: the right to be safe in the world, in any city or town, wherever women want to be, alone, without the protection of men and without the threat of violence. Men can show their support by lining the


side of the streets during the march.

In Kitchener-Waterloo, men are also invited to join the women after the march, at Kitchener's City Hall for refreshments.


Take Back The Night is about women reclaiming their power and their rights. Women have a right to live in peace and to be safe in their own homes. Women will continue to blow whistles and beat their drums in these symbolic marches until the right of every woman to live safely becomes a respected and protected reality.

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Recognizing the Cycles of Abuse

By Dr. Jeff Chernin



I was shopping recently when I saw a woman hit her child with such force that he fell to the ground. I could see his physical and emotional pain, and I couldn't help but say something to her.

Later, I wished that I had said something different than what I did; I would have been more compassionate to both of them. I wish that I had told her that she must be having a hard day and offered her my assistance. In other words, I should have realized that she is not only the abuser, but also the abused.

Unable to let the incident go, I pointed out to the person I was shopping with that I was never hit as a child and, furthermore, that I was never abused. He replied that I was abused, if not by my parents, then certainly by the people around me.

When I asked him what he meant, he asked me what I was taught to believe about being gay as a child? I thought about what I was subjected to by classmates. And even before I knew what "gay" meant, I was called "fag" and teased for being different.

I later realized that I was indeed abused by people who wanted me to be different than who I was.

Were you also abused? Were you boys told not to act sissy? Were you told you should toughen up? Were you beaten or teased? Were you girls told to stop acting like your brother? Were you told to be more lady-like? Were you put down for being different?

One by-product of this is abuse is that, as adults, we often become our own abusers. To compensate for feeling inferior, did you become a perfectionist? Have you tried to please others instead of yourself? Perhaps you have just given up trying altogether.

Identifying our past mistreatment as abuse is not done for the purpose of labelling ourselves victims. Just the opposite; giving it the name Abuse frees us because you can recognize it, discover how it has affected you, and learn new tools to deal with it.

In order to recognize it and learn how it has affected you, any time you put another person down who is different from yourself—heterosexuals, gay men, different ethnicities, lesbians, bi's, trannies, etc.—you are most

likely acting out emotional pain by striking back. You are also most likely overcompensating for feeling "less-than" by making yourself feel superior.

Furthermore, if you take steroids to get bigger, drink and take drugs to excess, or are involved in violent or emotionally harmful relationships, you are most likely self-abusing and crying for help.

To begin to deal with it, you can say, "I was abused for being LGBT, and my self-defeating behavior is a by-product of former abuse Given my former abuse for being LGBT, of course I've acted this way! Who wouldn't?"

Part of our healing, as for the woman who struck her child, is to recognize that many of us have become our abusers not only abusers of ourselves, but of others. I have counselled many LGBT people who replay the internalized messages that they learned as children. They embodied their former abusers by sabotaging success, subverting relationships, hurting other people, and taking on other signs of being abused for being LGBT.

Other ways to deal with it include looking at the roots of current problems, gaining insight by linking the past with current circumstances in your life, and learning new ways to communicate your thoughts and feelings to others. In the meantime, you can put the label on your past abuse empowering yourself to call it what it is, taking good care of your body and mind, and refusing to willfully hurt others.

Jeffrey N. Chernin, Ph.D., resides in Los Angeles, California. He can be reached at [REDACTED] This article was submitted to The Voice by Dr. Chernin.

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Gender Wars?

By A.J. Mahari



Generally, women and men seem to be coming from opposite places. Yet they must continue to try to meet in somewhat of a middle.

What about gays and lesbians? Do we need each other? What can we gain from each other? Why are so many things in our community male-dominated? Why are there so few women taking part? What can we do about this?

Part of this issue can be explained in the different ways that we are socialized and in the ways that we socialize. However, let me make this clear: I do not think that the challenges facing us, as gay men and lesbian women trying to build community, can be laid squarely at the feet of men. NO! I am just as confused as to why many women do not get involved and advocate for what they want and need as I am at the unwitting misogyny and oppression I have experienced from some (not all) gay men.

Some would argue that it is pointless to continue to try to build an all-inclusive community -- lesbians, gays, and those who don't identify with either gender.

What is clear to me is that this is still a male-driven world. A male-dominated culture, and subculture, in our LGBT communities that sees women being asked to walk to the

collective beat of the "majority" -- within what is comfortable for gay men in order to (try to) be seen and heard.

Do men think about this? Do men ever ponder what it might be like to be a lesbian or what it is that we face? I think many women do this in terms of being aware of many of the issues that gay men face.

Do we respect each other? Can we? Will we?

Often, I am asked what can be done to get more lesbians involved in our community. Any discernible answer becomes less clear the more I think about it, and the more women I ask.

One thing that is clear, however, is that if we are going to succeed at further integrating our community, men are going to have meet women half way. I am not so sure that some men are willing to even consider this. It is not only men who have to change - women also have to make some changes to accommodate the many differences that exist between us.

In this new millennium are we still involved in gender wars? If so, why? Could it be that we are still judging each other based upon old stereotypical characteristics?

Do the experiences of gay males and lesbian women in our community and in the straight world vary that much? Are there lessons that we can learn from each other? Can

we benefit from forging ahead with friendships and with coming together more often in community events?

Unlike our straight counterparts, our immediate need for each other is not as dramatically apparent. Nonetheless, this need exists in its own right. Life is enriched when we can celebrate those who are similar to us as well as those who are different from us. We must also be willing to extend this openness to our way of thinking. It takes a conscious and concerted effort on the part of both men and women to build any community. It behooves us all to work to be as comfortable as possible with our own presentation of masculinity or femininity. First we must learn how to accept ourselves before we will be able to

accept each other.

Products of conservative thinking, gender wars are perpetuated by inflexibility and steeped in traditional sexist ideology.

If you want to understand me and I want to understand you, don't we both have to be willing to be open to dialogue and to change just enough to effect a compromise?

Through compromise we can begin to find our way to a more meaningful middle-ground. We don't have to fuel any gender war. We just need to learn to be more open.

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

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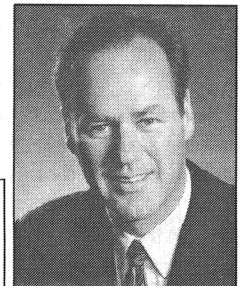
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ROYAL CITY REALTY LIMITED

What's All The Hype? Now For Something Completely Different

By Alan Fraser, HYPE-Executive Producer

A new generation of entertainment is about to hit the streets. It's a new concept from a new company called HYPE. With a history of bringing the community together and one "pre-launch" event under our belt HYPE is poised to take the regional party scene into new and uncharted territory.

Beginnings

Rising from the ashes of Out & About - Queer Radio's promotional fundraising events, HYPE is a multi-media entertainment group that will provide the LGBT community with an alternative to the local scene.

"We are very excited to see how this year pans out. We've been planning this season of events for a couple of months now and hope all the hard work pays off."

Unlike larger circuit parties, HYPE events will feature fantastic themes complete with backdrops and decorations reminiscent of movie sets, award shows and music videos. Complete with multiple video and still projectors, the scene is set for the pulsing rhythmic mix of house, circuit anthems, techno, and trance... again something just a bit different from the mainstream.

This year our resident DJ, Jayson Spank, will welcome a number of guest DJ's to the helm as they pilot us on our musical journey. Add the flash of podium dancers, the occasional surprise guest performance, a splash of glitz and glamour and you've set the stage. The goal is to transport our guests into a whole

new world of sight and sound.

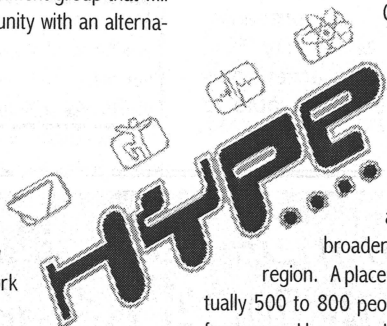
"HYPE events are designed to be more than just another dance. A great deal of planning goes into creating a vibrant, surreal environment in which to party. We will be creating circuit party environments on an affordable scale throughout Southwestern Ontario. Trying to bring that high-energy atmosphere to a crowd that couldn't otherwise afford the cost or transportation limitations of big parties in Toronto, Montreal or Chicago."

Our All Ages Events are designed to provide gay youth and those young at heart with a safe, accessible way to interact and socialize with the broader LGBT community in our region. A place where (we hope) eventually 500 to 800 people will gather to have fun, see and be seen, dance, socialize and feel good about themselves.

Sponsorship

Along with favourable support by the LGBT community, a key component to our continued financial success is corporate sponsorship. To support our lavish production ideas we're turning to the corporate world for assistance.

Commercial subsidizing will allow us to develop and offer spectacular surroundings at our events, with well-known DJ's, without having to charge a fortune for tickets. We pretty much spend our entire budget on decorations, lighting and entertainers at this point. With corporate support we'll actually be able to turn a profit, thus securing our continued success.



"We hope to make a profit on this venture to ensure its on-going growth and future expansion but in the end it's not about money -- it's about creating a unique environment for our guests (members of the LGBT community and their friends)."

Who are we?

HYPE consists of 4 business partners and about 8 volunteer production members. We have two business offices; a production office located in Kitchener and a sales-marketing office based in Toronto.

Combining the diverse talents of a business development specialist, two professional broadcasters, a sales and marketing director and a number of complimentary support experts; HYPE has all the bases covered.

"While this is the core group of HYPE, it certainly isn't the whole organization. To assist in planning, promoting and developing our ideas we have surrounded ourselves with many multi-skilled team-members."

"Our volunteers are extremely important to us and play a vital role in our success. We plan to continue to gather paid team-members and volunteers, as well as businesses on fundraising ventures that will strengthen our community and get people motivated.

"We're trying to respond to the demand for something different. For years we've heard the same refrain: 'I wish there was something else to do around here.' Well now there is. Everyone always complains about the lack of alternatives in our community, especially when it comes to gay entertainment choices. HYPE is trying to augment that selection with a combination of well-produced events that inspire a sense of community through a shared and anticipated experience."

HYPE (Kitchener office)
40 Roos Street, Kitchener N2P 1H9
519-895-
HYPE (Toronto office)
77 Carlton Street, Suite 801,
Toronto M5B 2J7

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This article was submitted to The Voice by Alan Fraser. He can be contacted at
or e-mail

(See ad back cover)

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**"A Different Way" Counselling
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Judy Saltarelli, M.A.

People often ask why I call my counselling and peak performance coaching practice "A Different Way."

I noticed that I was frequently using that term to help my clients understand themselves better and to help them solve the problems they brought to my office. I work closely with my clients to help them find different ways to think about their history and their challenges, and about how they can make positive changes in their behaviour and in their personal and business relationships. I was using it so often that it became my motto, and eventually the name of my practice.

It also refers to the different way I now do therapy and coaching. When I first started my practice in Paris, Ontario, in 1993, I was doing primarily trauma recovery therapy, using Transactional Analysis and Inner Child preverbal regression therapy. They are very powerful tools for recovery, change and growth, but, as with most traditional therapies, it took a long time (often many years) for clients to attain their goals.

A few years ago I discovered a new family of therapies known as emotional acupressure, energy psychotherapy, or power therapy. They blend self-applied acupressure techniques based on ancient oriental acupuncture practices with mainstream western counselling, psychotherapy and coaching interventions. The result is a highly effective and less expensive tool for rapid and lasting personal change. It works especially well for people who "don't want to talk about it" in great detail.

Power Therapy can be used with many personal issues, including unwanted memories and post-traumatic stress, phobias, anger, tension, low self-esteem, depression, and a host of physical problems with emotional or psychological roots. It is also a very effective tool for improving one's academic, vocational, sexual and athletic or physical performance. Fear of public speaking, procrastination, mental blocks, and negative beliefs about our personal worth or ability also quickly improve or disappear, enabling productivity and

performance to soar. Simple issues, such as a fear of making sales calls, can often be resolved in a single session. More complex issues such as depression take a bit longer. Altogether, quite awesome!

I am a certified clinical member of the Ontario Association of Consultants, Counsellors, Psychometrists and Psychotherapists (OACCPP), and a charter member of the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology. I hold a Master of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Waterloo. I have specialized training in behavioural, cognitive and regression therapies, Inner Child therapy, and several of the "energy therapies" including Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Be Set Free Fast (BSFF), and Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT). Before opening my counselling practice, I was a behavioural therapist for people with severe developmental disabilities, and also an advocate for children receiving mental health services in residential treatment centres. In my first career, I was a bookkeeper and operated a small-business management services firm.

Located in a comprehensive health care clinic in uptown Waterloo, my office provides a high level of privacy. Daytime, evening and weekend appointments are available. I can usually schedule an initial consultation within 2 or 3 business days. The first half-hour of the 90-minute initial consultation is free. Some extended health care plans cover a portion of the cost of counselling, but most clients choose not to use it for confidentiality reasons. For those in business or professional life, my peak performance coaching and management consulting fees may be tax deductible.

I believe in empowering my clients. The first way I show this is by reviewing my qualifications, philosophy, ground rules and code of ethics with you during your initial consultation, listening to your concerns, and answering any questions you may have. This enables us to determine the goodness of fit between your needs and what I have to offer. The second way is by respecting your right to choose what work you do and how or when

you do it. Other ways are by making sure that my own issues never interfere with your work and by engaging in continuing education and clinical supervision.

My special interests are life transition issues, personal empowerment, productivity and performance enhancement, trauma and abuse recovery, sexuality and reproductive concerns, spirituality, grief, depression, low self-esteem, and the mind-body connection in illness. I'm straight and gay positive. I offer a safe place for people of all orientations, where diversity and acceptance are embraced and celebrated, and where healing doesn't have to hurt so much any more.

Editor's Note:

Part 4 of Starting a Small Business will resume in the October Issue of The Voice.

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GAY MONEY

by Bonnie J. Babin,
Investment Planning Counsel of Canada

Facts: ABOUT MONEY

RULE OF "72"

Your money will double at an exact point by dividing 72 by the % of growth.

- 72 ÷ 3% growth = money will double in 24 years
- 72 ÷ 1% growth = money will double in 72 years
- 72 ÷ 6% growth = money will double in 12 years
- 72 ÷ 9% growth = money will double in 8 years
- 72 ÷ 12% growth = money will double in 6 years
- 72 ÷ 15% growth = money will double in 4 yrs. 10mths.

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\$2,000@15% for 20 years =	\$ 32,733
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\$2,000@5% for 20 years =	\$ 5,306
\$2,000@0% for 20 years =	\$ 2,000
\$2,000@0% for 20 years =	\$ 2,000
Total =	\$ 55,494

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30%	2.9	4.3	5.7	7.1	8.6	10.0
35%	3.1	4.6	6.2	7.7	9.2	10.8
40%	3.3	5.0	(6.7)	8.3	10.0	11.7
50%	4.0	6.0	8.0	10.0	12.0	14.0

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"[The rate of return or mathematical table shown] is used only to illustrate the effects of the compound growth rate and is not intended to reflect future values of [mutual fund or asset allocation service] or returns on investment [in the mutual fund or from the use of the asset allocation service]"

Your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Please respond to e-mail address: ██████████

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Sundays

Westminster United Church (an affirming congregation): Services are held each Sunday at 10:30 am. at 543 Beachwood Dr. in Waterloo.

AWARE K-W : Christian gay-positive group Meets every 2nd Sunday of each month. For more information, call Gary at [redacted] or Fred at [redacted]

KW-Friends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling , resumes on Sept 10th. (see classified page for more details.)

Mondays

The **Lesbian Discussion Group** meets on the first and third Monday of each month. The **Lesbian Reading/Writing Circle** meets on the last Monday of each month. For more information call [redacted] or email: [redacted]

www.thevoice.on.ca Lesbian Groups

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 meets every first and third Wednesday of each month. Meetings start at 6:30 pm. Call us for more details: 905-526-1074, toll-free 1-888-338-8278 - info@gomorrahs.com

Rainbow Chorus: Holds rehearsals every Wednesday Night. The first rehearsal of the new season is Wednesday September 6th, 7:30-9:30 pm at the Guelph Unitarian Fellowship, 122 Harris St. at York Rd., Guelph. For more information call Robert at [redacted] or [redacted] <http://www.webpoint.net/~cory>

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

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 Sept 6 - What I Did Over the Summer
Wed Sept 13-Coming Out to Yourself
Wed Sept 20-Coming Out to Others
Wed Sept 27-Coming Out to Parents and Other Relatives

RPC'S RAINBOW COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GROUP

Wed Sept 6- Welcome back -Brainstorming
Wed Sept 13-Are we making progress?
Wed Sept 20- Platonic Relationships or Unrequited Love?
Wed Sept 27- Gay Humour?

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. For more info, call Marilyn at (519) [redacted]

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 [redacted] or Michael at [redacted]

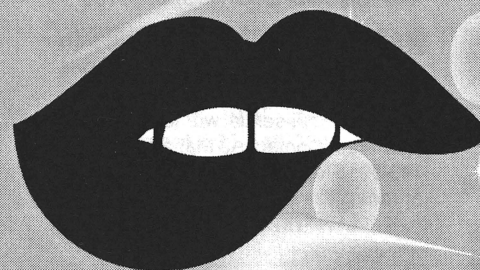
Thursdays

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. 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/

Wednesday Night Lineup

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

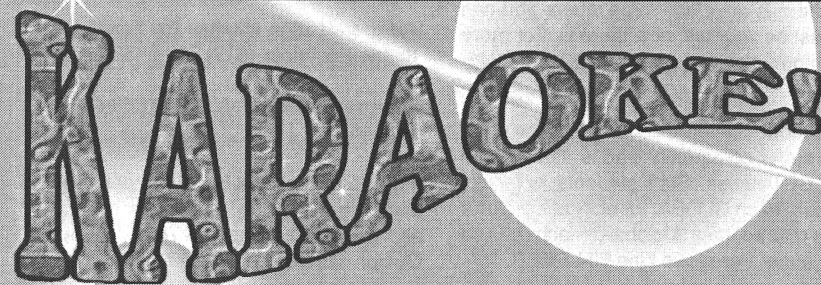


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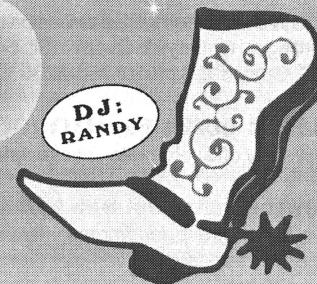
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Toll Free: 1-877-635-2352

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

NEW: Coffee Club - Attention: Lesbian and Gays -- If you like to drink coffee and just chat but you don't feel like there is anyplace to go where you can just be yourself, now there is. For more information call - Peter at [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.

G U E L P H

ACGWC (Aids Committee of Guelph and Wellington County) 2 Quebec St, Suite 206, 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
www.uoguelph.ca/~outline

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

K-W Distress Line- (519) 745-1166

NEW L.O.O.K - Lesbian Open Outreach Kitchener is a supportive and social organization for lesbian/lesbian positive and bi-sexual women in the K-W area. Contact AJ Mahari at [REDACTED]

email: [REDACTED]
or [REDACTED]

www.thevoice.on.ca

Click on [Lesbian Groups](#)

Sexual Assault Center:

KW.....(519)741-8633

Waterloo Region Alliance For Equal Rights-Kitchener-(519) 743-[REDACTED]

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

WOODS: Women Out Opening Doors Socially is a social club for lesbians in K-W and area. In Kitchener call 746-0132. In Guelph call Debbie at [REDACTED]

Rainbow Chorus: is a choir that performs and will also be **hosting dances for the LGBT community 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)823-5806

CAMBRIDGE

Sexual Assault Center:

Cambridge.....(519)658-0551

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)

H A M I L T O N

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-[REDACTED]

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

Community Education 546-3541 to book a presentation or consultation

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

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-[REDACTED]

Greater Hamilton Gay & Lesbian Business Association (905) 526-[REDACTED]

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/glbt/glbt.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

Kindred Spirits:a social and recreational group for lesbians and bi-sexual women in the Hamilton/Burlington/Niagara area. For further information please call (905) 541-[REDACTED] or: [REDACTED]@hotmail.com

Narcotics Anonymous

Hamilton: (905) 522-0332

Brantford: (519) 759-2558

St. Catherines: (905) 685-0075

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

Sexual Assault Center:

Hamilton.....(905)525-4162

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 (Hamilton) Monthly meetings

are held on the first Wednesday of each month & there is a bar night on the second Saturday of each month. Men interested in the Leather/ Denim lifestyle are invited to attend both. For more information email Bill at: [REDACTED]

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

Monday September 4

Lesbian Discussion Group gets together in the Student Life Centre on the UofW campus from 7-9:30pm. For more information call AJ at [redacted] **This group now meets twice monthly - the first and third Monday of each month.**

Friday September 15

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 more information, call Evie at [redacted] (Kitchener) or Sue at (519) [redacted] (Cambridge) or email them at [redacted]

Rainbow Chorus GLBT Community Monthly Dance at the CAW Hall, 611 Silvercreek Parkway North, Guelph. Doors open at 9:00 pm. Contact Robert at [redacted] or phone (519) [redacted] for more information. <http://www.webpoint.net/~cory>. The next dance is on October 13th!

Sunday September 17

Lesbian Open Outreach Kitchener (L.O.O.K.) is having a *potluck* and get-together at 3pm. For location, detail and any other information call A.J. at [redacted]

Fundraiser for the Lesbian Film Festival in London - Gala Auction - Viewing: 1:00 p.m., Auction: 2:00 p.m. Location: 289 Commissioners Road (off Rudy Street, across from the Highland Country Club), London. Rain date is Sept 24.

Monday September 18

Lesbian Discussion Group gets together in the Student Life Centre on the UofW campus from 7-9:30pm. For more information call AJ at [redacted] **This group now meets twice monthly - the first and third Monday of each month.**

Thursday September 21

Take Back the Night March at 6:30pm beginning at the Clock Tower in Kitchener's Victoria Park. The March ends at the Kitchener City Hall. (see page 12 for more information)

Sunday September 24

AIDS Walk Canada 2000 (Kitchener) We will gather at 12 noon in Kitchener's Victoria Park for Waterloo Region's 8th Annual AIDS Walk Canada. Funds are urgently needed for AIDS prevention, education and support services in our community. All proceeds from AIDS Walk Canada 2000 will directly benefit ACCKWA to provide much needed services to men, women and children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS here in Waterloo Region. Phone: (519) 570-3687. Toll-Free: (888) 689-2178. Fax: (519) 570-4034.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre presents "When We Were Singing", an award-winning musical by Dorothy Dittrich, begins its Toronto premiere. It runs from September 24 to October 15, Buddies In Bad Times is located at 12 Alexander Street, Toronto. Phone: 416-975-8555.

Monday September 25

Lesbian Reading/Writing Circle from 7-9pm in the GLOW Community Centre, Student Life Building, University of Waterloo. For lesbians to share the works and writing of other lesbians or women. We meet on the last Monday of each month. If you would like to get involved in this reading circle for lesbians, please contact *The Voice* at [redacted] between 5-7pm or email: [redacted] or link to www.thevoice.on.ca and then click on "Lesbian Groups" in the left frame's menu.

Special thanks to David Welbourn for his compilation of community events online at The Rainbow Community Center.

www.rainbow.on.ca

B R A N T F O R D

A Rainbow of Hope. Brant County HIV/AIDS Support Group. Call 753-4937 ext.261 for information. All calls confidential.

GBLT adult social/support group of Brantford and area. A safe place to meet people and be yourself. call 752-5132 ext.34

GBLT youth support group of Brantford and area. 753-4937 EXT 261

Pine tree Native Centre Of Brant Presents: PFLAG... Parents, Families & friends of Lesbians & gays Support group meetings held 3rd Tuesday each month. 7:00-8:30pm. all welcome. call 752-5132 ext.34 for details.

The Coalition for gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgendered youth of Brantford and area. (519)753-4937 ext.261. call and leave message. All calls will be returned. We advocate for you.

For any further information about events in Brantford email: gbltadultsocialbrant@yahoo.ca

"What a man believes upon grossly insufficient evidence,' Bertrand Russell wrote, 'is an index to his desires — desires of which he himself is often unconscious.' The Vatican's current obsession with homosexuality suggests that something interesting might be going on. Are some of the Catholic church's most powerful cardinals struggling with their sexuality? Could the Pope himself be gay?" —George Monbiot writing in Britain's *The Guardian*, July 13.

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Candy Containers have been popular since the late Victorian era. Collectors have long favored the glass containers, but now all types including tin and papier-mache are collected. Probably the earliest glass container sold commercially was the Liberty Bell made in 1876 for sale at the Centennial Exposition. Thousands of designs were made until the cost became too high in the 1960's. By the late 1970's, reproductions were being made and sold without the candy. Pez candy containers have enjoyed a new revival, and are a fun inexpensive to-day collectible.

Travel: BARBADOS

By Julie Casto (Travel Only)

This is Barbados, where beautiful beaches never seem to end, where natural wonders abound and where history is ever present. Visitors will find everything they could possibly want in a vacation in sophisticated Barbados.

This island's quaint colonial towns are enchanting - you'll find stately homes, neat cottages, rolling green countryside, afternoon teas and all day cricket matches. Its upscale shopping and gourmet dining will please the most discriminating vacationer.

The Bajans, with a delightful combination of English courtliness and Creole warmth, welcome you. The island is only 14 miles wide by 21 miles long, and it is crisscrossed with more than 975 miles of paved roads, making it easy to explore.

Bridgetown, the capital is among the most vibrant cities in the Caribbean. It's colonial charm blends well with its contemporary commercial buildings. It is a port city, though the deep water harbour that once accommodated British naval warships and merchant vessels now hosts cruise liner and pleasure yachts.

The city's waterfront used to be the main shopping area before the deep water-harbour

was built. Today many of its old warehouses have been converted into nightclubs, restaurants and boutiques.

Out on the island, a variety of sights awaits. For historical, cultural and architectural buffs, there are great houses dating back to the plantation era, when "King Sugar" reigned and turned the island into the wealthiest colony in the West Indies.

Around Barbados, its beach is almost one continuous white-sand stretch from Almond Beach to Brighton Beach on the West Coast. St. Michael and Christ Church parishes in the south have a string of beaches as well. On the west and south coast is where you will find many beachfront resorts.

Reefs and shoals ring the island; snorkelers and divers can observe a wide variety of marine life. Barbados is ranked among one of the top six destinations in the world with ideal conditions for windsurfing. The island is venue for one of the major events on the professional windsurfing calendar.

Bridgetown is often considered the duty-free center of the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados

Continued on page 45



CRUISE NIGHT

Wednesday, October 4, at 7:00 p.m. Italian Cortina Club, 12 Kevco Place, Kitchener Cruise Sale for any 2000-2001 Princess Cruises on from October 4 - 11. Call for details.

Please RSVP Julie Casto, Ph [REDACTED]

389 COLBORNE ST. BRANTFORD, ONTARIO N3S 3N4
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BACK INTO THE FUTURE: TRANSPHOBIA
IS MY ISSUE TOO
by Warren J. Blumenfeld

I am a gay man and my name is Warren Blumenfeld, or as my friends affectionately like to call me, "Estelle Abrams"—honorary Jewish bisexual woman from Brooklyn. Seriously, though, Estelle embodies the feminine side of my soul—my joyous, playful self, the creative, spontaneous, sensitive spirit that I have come to treasure and genuinely love. But this wasn't always the case.

When I was quite young, long before I learned what was considered the "proper" rules of conduct, I naively introduced Estelle to the world. Others, I was quick to discover, feared and even despised her. Children called her names like "queer," "sissy," "fairy," "pansy," "faggot," "little girl," with an incredible vehemence and malice that I did not understand.

Adults hated her too. Soon after I introduced Estelle to my parents, they sent me to a child psychiatrist when I was only five years old; over the next eight years, in a continued attempt to kill Estelle, they tried to exorcise her in the hope of forever eliminating all contact, all vestiges, all memory of her ever being a part of me.

This experience has taught me to cloak her from the sun's exposing rays, to keep her well concealed deep within my consciousness, to summon her only during those rare but precious moments of tranquility and safe solitude.

The forces that set out to kill Estelle—those societal battalions bent on destroying all signs of femininity in every male—nearly succeeded in coercing me into denouncing her, but through some power more potent than they, Estelle was victorious in fending off their attacks. Being mightier and more willful, she stayed with me through times of torment and times of treatment. Even when I began to lose trust and to doubt her, she never gave up on me.

The good news is that Estelle not only survived, but she thrives in me today. Each day I am alive, I thank her for the extraordinary gifts she gives to me. Her presence not only enriches me, but also gives special meaning to

my life, and for that I am truly lucky.

Some have asked me, "What was that energy, that force empowering Estelle to repel her would-be executioners?" Quite simply, it was a vision—a vision of social transformation articulated by feminists and later by early gay liberationists during Estelle's youth.

Earlier—much earlier—in the Middle Ages, the fairies—those men accused of same-sex eroticism—were rounded up, bound, tossed on the ground as if kindling, and set ablaze igniting women accused of witchcraft who were secured above. Later, the reverse would be true. Catching the spark of feminist thought and theory, fairies joined together exploding conventional notions of gender, most notably definitions of masculinity.

In 1993, during the National March for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Rights in Washington, D.C., I attended a reunion of the Gay Liberation Front, D.C., which—over twenty-three years prior—formed the leading edge of a movement rising like a phoenix from the ashes of the Stonewall Inn in New York City.

We held early meetings at Grace Church, the Washington Free Clinic in Georgetown, and All Souls Church on 16th Street, until we rented a brownstone on S Street, in Northwest for the establishment of a Gay Liberation Front living collective.

Meetings provided a space for gays, lesbians, and bisexual women and men to come together and put into practice what feminists had taught us—that the "personal is indeed the political."

We laughed and we cried together. We shared our ideas and our most intimate secrets. We dreamed our dreams and laid our plans for a world free from all the deadly forms of oppression, and as we went along, invented new ways of relating.

Continued on page 47

I just wanted to comment on the past two editorials you've had in *The Voice*. The one from July referred to a letter to *The Record* about the combination of the Rainbow Flag and Canadian Flag, and the August one referred to Stockpile Day.

In my opinion, the person who wrote to *The Record* felt that changing the Canadian flag was inappropriate and happened to have picked the rainbow coloring of the Canadian flag as an example. If the Green Party changed the flag so the red parts of the flag were green, this person would have felt the same way. I'm sure this letter wasn't meant as anti-gay or homophobic. While we are all entitled to free speech and expression of ourselves, I would think many feel altering the Canadian flag is inappropriate. I would agree. The rainbow coloring that was used is cute, and I suppose it is a way of showing how Canada is inclusive, but perhaps there is a better way of demonstrating that.

We've achieved equal status to common-law relationships in Canada and for now, that is all

I wanted to write to you to let you know that me and many of my friends think that you are doing a great job. We really love *The Voice*. There is a lot of interesting stuff in each issue. We look forward to reading it each month. We also think it's amazing that a woman is the editor. Keep up the great work. - *Suzy S, Hamilton*.

I just recently moved to the K-W area. I am still searching out activities and things in an effort to find the LGBT community here. *The Voice* has been very helpful to me with this. Thanks. Where are all the women? How about a column on how women can get together in this area? - *T.G., - Kitchener*

Do you ever get off of your soap-box A.J. Mahari? Really! Between reading you here and in *The Record* enough is enough! Talk about polyanna -- you take the cake. Why do you care if gays and lesbians get along? As a gay man, I don't see any need to get along with or even bother with women. - *Jake W, - Kitchener*.

we are, but that is a significant breakthrough. If we hope to attain the ability to marry in the future, for those that choose to, we have to work on gaining equality, not special status. This means helping society to understand us better and we also have to understand society better. We will never achieve total equality as long as we feel there is a homosexual world and a heterosexual world.

Your comments about Stockpile Day were good. Certainly his views are dangerous and don't sit well with most people. I do feel there is a place in politics for religious values. The problem with Stockpile Day's values is that he comes from a fundamentalist Christian background and this view tends to ignore what is best for society, as there is the idea that some people are entitled to a different status than others based on how they live their lives. Stockpile Day is still entitled to give his opinion and hopefully he does so honestly, so that when the next election comes along, people can make an informed decision. - *Paul Warder, Waterloo*.

Hey, I just wanted to say what a cool magazine! Recently friends of mine from Kitchener sent me a few copies. Wow! Terrific! I sure hope you will get some copies to London regularly. - *Brent Davis, London*.

I enjoy reading *The Voice*. You have managed to consistently provide a fairly balanced mix of things that would be of interest to all the different segments of our community. Kudos for that. David T., Brantford.

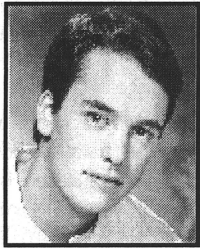
HAVE YOUR SAY

If you have something that you like to say about what you read in *The Voice* or about what is going on in our communities please send a letter to the editor. We'd like to hear from you!

(address is on page two)

My First Daddy Bear

by Kirk Read



My very first daddy bear was a straight guy. Tom was a fortysomething grizzly with a hearty laugh and enormous paws. At Christmas, he was everyone's favorite Santa. Straightaway, my little teenage heart was aflutter. He would become the blueprint for my favorite kind of man: big, rough, and sweet. Of all the big, rough and sweet men I've dated, few have been as attentive or kind. He was like Mike Ditka on anti-anxiety medication.

I met Tom at Henry Street Playhouse. He was the flaming king of our town's community theater scene, and I was a mere child, playing Prince Charming and singing so badly that my mother expressed relief when I began writing plays instead of butchering them. I was not the only little drama fag who dreamed of being his Goldilocks. His mellifluous baritone captivated

many hearts and loins, male and female alike. But I knew, even then, that successful romance required good, solid strategy.

Tom owned the print shop around the corner. In high school, I visited his shop once a week to make copies of poems, plays, and stories. I'd stand at the counter and get all googly-eyed as he pulled on his moustache and flashed his wolfish blue eyes at me. He had the kind of broad smile that babies give you when they're messing a diaper. This man destroyed me and he knew it. He never let me pay for copies and always kept a copy of anything I wrote. He'd read from my work and drop phrases I'd written smack dab into the middle of our conversations. The words always sounded better coming out of his mouth.

We became friends. He'd invite me back to chat and look at his scrapbooks, which were filled with theater programs and photos of friends. He'd spent a number of years on Fire Island as a carpen-

ter. I shudder to think what kind of reception he got there as a lumberjackish straight guy who wasn't freaked out by swooning gay men. If ever there was an argument for genetic cloning, he is it.

As if to torture me, he'd listen to his police scanner while we sat and talked. He was a volunteer fireman and rescue squad member. At times I imagined engineering a barbecue grill accident or faking an aspirin overdose just for the experience of being gathered up in Tom's arms and carried to the ambulance. I ask you: how green was my garden?

On the doorway of his shop is a picture of him engaged in his favorite weekend hobby, which I can only discuss in hushed tones. Tom's favorite gatherings involved burly men wearing kilts and throwing telephone poles. It was a cultural thing, apparently.

He became my muse. Perhaps as a way of luring him to my house, I began writing plays with characters who just happened to be protective fortysomething mentors to sinewy, wayward teenage boys. One play, which I wrote when I was 15, was set in the 1950s between a street hustler and a Horatio Alger-type savior figure. Tom wasn't freaked out by the material and kept encouraging me to write. When I went to college, he kept up with me through newspaper clippings and demanded updates on my writing when I was home for the holidays.

Yesterday, my mother told me Tom's got rectal cancer. I've thought about editorial methods to gracefully transition to this point, but

it's necessarily brutal and abrupt. My big daddy bear is sick.

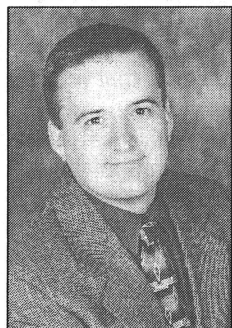
He's sick because our culture is scared of butts. He's sick because doctors don't do routine, thorough examinations of our butts. He's sick because an important part of his body has been neglected by medicine. He's sick because guys don't have booty gynecologists.

I'm one of the organizers of the Gay Men's Health Summit, which brought over 400 gay men's health providers together this July in Boulder, Colorado. Anal health care was a major issue at the Summit. Doctors discussed anal pap smears, checkups, and new treatments for warts and anal cancer. These brave souls are pushing the medical establishment to acknowledge the butt as a source of pleasure and identity as well as disease.

Once again, LGBT people have a gift to offer the world. We've dealt with our shame and fear of butts more than any other group in this culture. As we push the gay men's health movement out into the heartland, it is my hope that big heterosexual daddy bears everywhere will benefit from our efforts. Gay people have shifted the sexual, political, and cultural landscape of the world. The gay men's health movement champions the well-being of men whose needs have long been neglected. It's time for us to grease the way for healthy butts, gay and straight alike.

Kirk Read lives in San Francisco and can be reached at [REDACTED]. This article was submitted to The Voice by Kirk Read.

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SWEET PEA & BABYCAKES
Story and Comic by Laura J. Saunders

"What are you doin', Baby Cakes?"

"I'm writing my memoirs."

"Memoirs? You know what that word means?"

"Of course I do, Sweet Pea. I'm writing a book and I'm gonna call it, 'Memoirs of the late great Baby Cakes.'" What do ya think?"

"I think you're off your rocker. Don't you realize you have to be dead first to have a title like that one?"

"You're the one who's off her rocker, Pea. How can I write a book if I'm dead?"

"I give up! Have fun with your book. Knowing you it's probably only going to be a passing fancy, anyway. See ya later."

"Finally, she's gone. Now I can get back to work. Hmph.....passing fancy, my ass! I think I'll start my first chapter from the day I met Sweet Pea."

"MEMOIRS OF THE LATE GREAT BABYCAKES"

By BabyCakes (not dead, yet)

CHAPTER 1

(Just when you thought life sucked!)

I'm forty years old, but I believe the day my heart truly started beating was the day I met my wonderful Sweet Pea.

It all began on October 3rd, 1999. I had made a decision to go bowling with this group of gay men and women whom I'd met only once, previously. The day was warm, the sun was shining and the birds were singing up one hell of a shit storm. I chose my clothes carefully, not expecting to meet the love of my life, but rather just wanting to impress any watchful eye. After donning my best flannel shirt, I set out for the bowling alley.

When I arrived at my destination, I casually flipped up my shirt collar, set my eyes to "twinkle" mode and put on one of my most flattering smiles. After all, one never knows whom one's going to meet when one's not even expecting to meet anyone, ya know? I carefully and inconspicuously scanned the room looking for some fresh new meat ... I mean looking for a potential new friend. My future was starting to look bleak when all of a sudden in walks the fresh new friend I was talking about. She was absolutely beautiful!

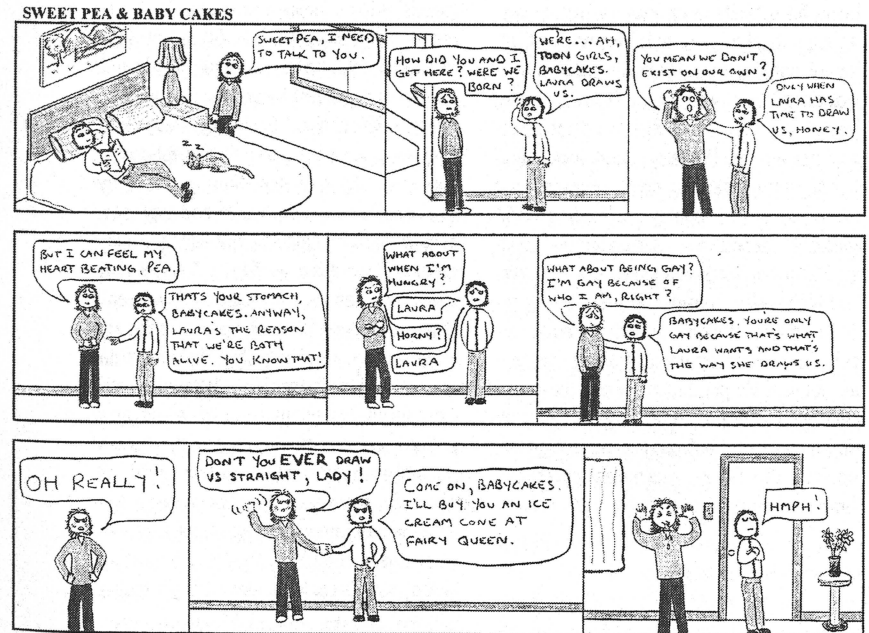
Shortly after arriving, she came right up to my table and introduced herself. "Hi, my name is Sweet Pea," the fresh new meat said. I introduced myself, but I'm quite sure I said "BabbleCakes" instead of BabyCakes. I gotta tell you, I was either having one bad case of indigestion or my

heart was starting to swell with excitement. I knew I liked this woman the second I met her. She had this wonderful natural blonde hair and I thought it was kind of neat when she told me that she dyed the roots a darker color because she "liked it that way." Her pretty yellow-flecked green eyes just melted my heart and her body, well, lets just say "hubba hubba! Sweet Pea had her sixteen year old daughter with her and soon I discovered there were two more daughters to meet.

As fate would play its trump card, I landed on Sweet Pea's team. Was I ever happy about that! I got to watch her wiggle her cute little butt when she was up bowling. We chatted up a storm and it was clear to me that Sweet Pea was intelligent, funny and a down to earth kind of girl. After bowling the group decided to go out for a bite to eat. More time to spend with Sweet Pea?? As Austin Powers would say, "Yeah, baby!!" I was having far too much fun for this day to end.

By the time the evening was over, we had exchanged our phone numbers and made plans to get together the following Friday, five days later. What caused us to see each other every single day before the Friday and constantly yak on the phone when we were apart would soon be realized. Who would have thought, BabyCakes, the self-proclaimed chick magnet, was falling in love.

(Stay "toon" for Chapter 2)



By: Laura J. Saunders

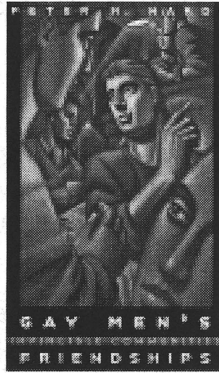
No Place Like Home: Relationships and Family Life among Lesbians and Gay Men - by Christopher Carrington



Hardcover - 240 pages (Dec 1999)

In this sociological study of "lesbigay" domestic partnership, Christopher Carrington explores the expanded views of family that inform the lives of the 50 established Bay Area couples included in his study. Drawing from in-depth interviews, as well as weeklong field observations of eight households, he develops arguments on housework, caregiving, division of labor, "kinship work" on outside friendships and biological families, and the tricky concepts of fairness and egalitarianism within partnerships. Although far from a random sample of American gay men and lesbians, his subjects range widely in age, ethnicity, class background, and income level, although only five households with children were included. Couples were interviewed separately, revealing amusing disparities in their accounts of domestic life. The jargon and sociological hairsplitting make for some unintentional humor, as in the chapter on "feeding work" (known to the rest of us as shopping and cooking): "Planning meals, learning about foodstuffs and techniques, considering the preferences and emotions of significant others, and over-seeing nutritional strategies frame the essential yet invisible precursor work to the actual daily process of preparing a meal." Let's eat! Not the perkier book on gay and lesbian life, *No Place Like Home* nevertheless covers unfamiliar territory with intelligence and insight

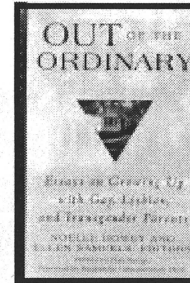
Gay Men's Friendships : Invincible Communities - by Peter M. Nardi (Co-author of *The Voice's Q-Health* August 2000 column)



Paperback -253 pages (July 1999)

Representations of the gay community have come a long way since the bitchy banter of *The Boys in the Band*. In *Invincible Communities*, Peter M. Nardi makes it clear how powerfully supportive and influential friends can be in the lives of gay men. "Over and over again," notes Nardi, "I hear and continue to be told a central narrative of gay men's lives is that of how important their friends are to them, how this 'rich network of friends' is like a family, how sex has been a dimension of their earlier friendships with some of their friends, and how, for some, their friends mean more and last longer than do their romantic relationships." Basing his study on 30 interviews and the results from a questionnaire survey of 161 gay men, Nardi explores the ways masculinity is organized and expressed in contemporary America. Interestingly, in discussing "Friendship as Kinship," Nardi challenges the gay commonplace that we create "families of choice" through our friendships with other gay people. Suggesting that the metaphor of friends-as-family is a "strongly American concept," an adaptation to a conservative political culture, he points out the "gay-bi boom" has revalorized the nuclear family unit, albeit with same-sex parents and often the involvement of interested third parties: donors, ex-partners, coparents. Part history, part sociology, Nardi's study will interest psychologists, activists, and students of gay culture.

Out of the Ordinary : Essays on Growing Up With Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Parents - by Noelle Howey (Editor), Ellen Samuels (Editor), Margarethe Cammermeyer, Dan Savage (Preface) **Paperback - 240 pages (Aug 2000)**



While hearing "faggot" yelled at you in a high school corridor would upset almost anyone, here is evidence that hearing "Your father's a faggot" isn't nearly as bad, and that you might find yourself levelheadedly retorting, "No, my father's a transgendered lesbian." This unprecedented collection of short memoirs by adult children of gay, lesbian, and transgender parents demonstrates once again that love cannot be policed or regulated, and that the bond between parents and children transcends petty categories. Kelley Conway's "My Mother and the Nun" describes the confusion a 14-year-old girl feels when her mother falls in love with another woman at the same time that Conway herself is beginning to recognize her own attractions to other girls. In Peter Snow's "Acting Lessons," a college boy returns home to find that his parents, who have always been unhappily married, are still together, and in fact are cozied up on the couch watching television with his mother's lover, Jackie. What is missing from this volume are essays by children who were born or adopted into same-sex families. Without this perspective, the memoirs are somewhat skewed, since almost every writer had to deal not only with a parent's coming out but with a wrenching divorce, often caused by that parent's sexuality. Nevertheless, this collection should prove helpful to therapists, youth counselors, and families with gay members, and contribute positively to the debates on same-sex parenting and adoption.

The Other Woman - by Ann O'Leary - Paperback - 208 pages 1 Ed edition (April 1999)



Story Description from the author:

In *THE OTHER WOMAN*, Fiona resists a powerful sexual attraction, knowing where it will lead, while Joanna becomes obsessed with that attraction, initially blind to its greater ramifications.

Joanna Kingston, a successful real estate consultant, believes that the notion of deep and lasting romantic love is an illusion that inevitably leads people to heartbreak. But her cynicism provides no protection when, by chance, she meets the cool, stunningly beautiful, compassionate and emotionally strong Dr. Fiona Maddison.

Fiona's instant attraction to Joanna worries her. Joanna's raw beauty, athletic body and chic nonchalance are hard to resist. "But she knew all about those sexy charmers with drop-dead smiles who liked to keep on the move, and she was finished with that kind of woman. A friendship with Joanna would be ideal, and that was all." Joanna, wanting a no-strings affair, hotly pursues her, but Fiona, knowing that she would fall for Joanna hard, does her best to keep her distance.

Joanna, already weakened by recurring dreams about her troubled distant past, finds her feelings for Fiona tumbling into unfamiliar territory--both frightening and wonderful--that is difficult for her to deal with.

Set in Melbourne, the hot, dry landscape of the northern Victorian bushland, and the tropics of Far North Queensland, the story is intensely passionate and includes some poignant and heart rending scenes.

JEFFERY by Paul Rudnick
Review By The Voice's Assistant Editor

Presented by KW Little Theatre
Directed by Roberto Machado

BRAVO to KW Little Theatre for having the courage to stage JEFFREY by Paul Rudnick. JEFFREY is a play that deals with the issues of gay men's sexuality, relationships, AIDS and death. In some ways it looks at gay bashing and fidelity and aging. Thus it covers practically all of the issues that concern gay men and does so in a poignant but subtly humorous way.

Jeffrey is a young gay man who, after a fairly promiscuous existence, decides to become celibate fearing infection from AIDS. However, he meets Steve who is HIV Positive. The play then focuses on Jeffrey learning how to overcome his fears and to allow himself to fall in love. Included in Jeffrey's journey are many interesting characters who start out as stereotypes (the interior decorator and the Broadway dancer) but who develop into very complex, believable characters. Included also are many situations that range from the darkly humorous scene where characters are "camping" at a friend's aids memorial to the violent scene of a gay bashing. Interesting also are ironic touches such as the appearance of Mother Theresa at significant points in Jeffrey's life.



ing melange of swiftly changing scenes in which many of the actors have to assume many different roles. Performed on a bare stage with just suggestions of costumes and very little furniture, Machado's version moved swiftly and seamlessly without pause through the text, forcing the audience to concentrate and think. The set, a bare white box with the names of AIDS victims written on all the walls, was an ever present reminder of the reality behind the play.

The acting in this production was honest and genuine. One never felt that any role was over-played. Dimitri Pecherski as Jeffrey was able to impart an innocence and candour to the rather wordy role of Jeffrey even though he was performing in a language that is not his native tongue. John Strucke as Steve was especially strong and exhibited a vocal dexterity that was impressive. Of special note was Jennifer Corbett who as "Assorted Women" demonstrated a range of skills that was impressive.

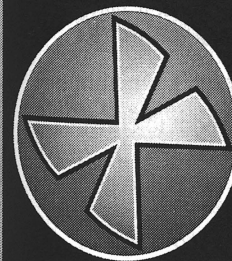
Congratulations KW Little Theatre and thank you for a very enjoyable and provoking evening. Let us hope that other gay themed plays will become part of every season.

As a play JEFFREY is an interest-
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Spiritual Life: The Quest for Freedom The Way In - Part 2

By Noel Springwood

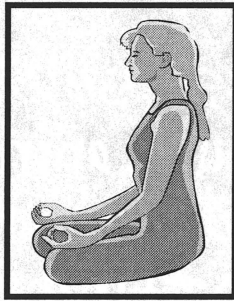
So, there you are. All set to begin meditating and wondering what to do.

Right off the top, let me say that the less you do, the better. At the same time, human beings have a lot of powers and abilities that need to be catered to if anything is to happen. There's the intellect, the imagination, the emotions and the senses. If you can forget about these factors, good. That's pretty hard to do though.

To begin, then, it's often good to have a kind of focal point. One of the most basic ways of achieving this is through what is known as a "mantra." There is nothing magic about a mantra and it could be as simple as repeating a single, favourite word or expression: "Life is good," "I am good," "Peace and Joy." It could have a religious connotation. Many Christian practitioners invoke the name of Jesus. Others use the ancient Hebraic term, "Maranatha", translated freely as "Come Lord." Other religions and traditions have other mantras. In some, as in Transcendental Meditation, an especially wise and knowledgeable person might assign a mantra to the novice meditator. It could be a simple syllable, as was the popular "Om" sound during the 60's and 70's.

Whether the mantra is recited out loud or in silence, it should be repeated at a regular pace with little or no inflection or emphasis. It is there simply to help focus the entire being on the experience.

Other ways of focusing include the use of visual symbols or images, icons or photos of loved ones who have passed on. They could involve the passing of beads through one's fingers or a quiet rocking motion. They could call on incense or other kinds of pleasant and relaxing aromas. There could be quiet music or sounds to help keep out the clutter and noise that seems to be always too near.



Some meditative techniques use an imaginative springboard. It could be picturing a particular place which you enter and explore until you find some kind of resting spot. It could be picturing a favourite kind of place, hidden and known to you alone. It could include one or more other figures or just you alone. One of my favourite imaginative springboards is to imagine myself lying on a bed of fluffy clouds and just floating along.

At first the time will seem to crawl; but, then, one day it will whiz by in a flash. Then it will crawl again and speed up the next time. You will feel that nothing is happening and that it is all a waste of time. Be assured,

it is not a waste of time. Something is happening. The encrusted layers of busy-ness and worry and anticipation have to be breached before the inner self can be really known.

It is happening and it will continue to happen, as long as you persist and don't give up. When the time seems too long, don't be afraid to stretch it a bit. When it seems too short, don't be afraid to shorten it a bit. Why? To counter the expectations that are colouring your experience and preventing it from being real. In some way, you are probably trying to control it too much, rather than just letting it happen.

A great help in this regard is a journal. The keeping of a journal to record one's experiences, positive and negative, helps gain focus. Furthermore, it can help to balance the positive and negative dimensions of your life. In good times, read about the pain and disappointments to remind yourself that good times can vanish all too quickly. In bad times, read about the happy and enriching moments you've recorded to remind yourself that pain, too, is fleeting.

I'll probably write a more specific article about the keeping of a journal sometime in the future. For now, try not to be prevented by the feeling that it has to be any kind of literary masterpiece or psychological treatise. Keep it simple and follow your instincts. Some days you may only be able to record the date and the time. On others, you may want to paste in a picture that struck you as especially relevant at the time. On still other days, you may just want to draw a picture or write down a series of seemingly unconnected

words.

The important thing here, as with meditation itself, is to put something down. Invest in a notebook with an especially attractive cover. It will help remind you that you are creating a kind of personal treasure that is worth every bit of effort you put into it.

One factor that often prevents people from meditating is the fear of falling asleep. If the body is tired, it will fall asleep. Making efforts to stay awake will get you nowhere. On the other hand, one day you will seem to fall asleep but will realise in a remarkable new way, that you hadn't fallen asleep. You had been in touch with a deeper dimension of your self and your life.

The key notion in all of this is to allow the process to happen. To try too hard to make it happen is counter productive. I realise that this concept is definitely counter cultural. At the same time, I believe that it offers individuals a power of understanding and insight and more.

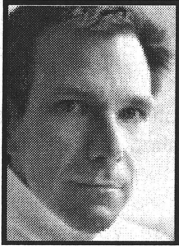
At the same time, the way in is not always smooth. There are monsters and demons waiting to ensnare you and keep you back from the kind of growth in realisation that you seek.

For now, I'd just like you to know that these cannot hurt you. They are simply parts of your psyche that you don't like. In time they will evaporate. Don't let them frighten or discourage you. You are better and worth more than all the rotten

Continued on page 45

Confessions of a Late Bloomer Is It Over? (Part 1 of 2)

By Randy Siegel



Four days had passed and he had not called. "Is it over?" I asked.

How would I feel if it were over, I wondered, fast forwarding into the future. I surprised myself by answering that I could find peace either way.

Maybe I was finally learning to surrender to life. Instead of trying to force a relationship, I was more open to whatever direction it took.

Then again, maybe I simply wasn't ready for a relationship.

We had hit the critical five-month mark. "At five-months, you can tell if the relationship has staying power," a wise friend once shared.

I knew after five months the real work began, and I wasn't sure I was up to it.

Our rose-colored glasses were off, and we could see each other clearly, warts and all. Routine had dulled our shiny new relationship, and I was missing the freedom of my single days.

At the same time, I feared being single again even though I knew being by myself did not mean being lonely. I could be just as lonely in a relationship as I could single.

Still, I longed for a forever-relationship. I wanted to grow and share my life with one person and not change partners every 18 months.

Some warned I was not realistic. Relationships cannot last forever, they said. As we grow and change, our needs change and so will our partners.

My experience was different. I loved my wife of 14-years more towards the end of our marriage than when we first married. Our relationship had become richer over time.

Since coming out and my subsequent divorce, all I thought about was replacing that

relationship. I had a hole in my soul that I wanted to fill as fast as I could.

For five years, I searched the horizon, looking for the white knight to come and rescue me. Like Sleeping Beauty, I prayed the prince would find me, kiss me and wake me from my deep sleep.

I now knew the white knight may never come, and the prince does not have the power to awaken me.

Like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, I have learned I had the answers all along. Instead of relying on the Wizard, I am relying on myself.

I once read, "Instead of asking for a partner to make you whole, ask for unconditional love that celebrates your wholeness." Now that I had a shot at unconditional love, I wasn't sure I was ready to give or receive it.

A committed relationship meant a little sacrifice and a lot of hard work. Was this the person I had been waiting for or was I settling? By choosing one path, I forsook another. Was I giving up the pot of gold that waited at the end of the rainbow? The perfect partner could still be waiting in the wings.

Maybe this relationship had been too easy. We met only weeks after I had stopped seeing a man I had been dating for 18 months. I began a new relationship before I was over the last one.

Then again, some say relationships come to us when we least expect them.

I wondered if he could live with my weaknesses. In my previous relationship, I had felt I was not enough. Now, I might be too much. This guy was much more low-key than I.

I asked if I could live with his weaknesses. After five months, I was not sure.

We were so different. Opposites are supposed to attract, but can they survive the long haul?

I also was not sure if I could give up the bachelor's life. I longed for the stability of monogamy, yet I missed the sexual promiscuity of my single days.

I felt torn. I treasured my time alone, yet wanted someone with whom to share my life. One side wanted upheaval and passion. The other side craved stability and comfort. I wasn't sure what I wanted.

I had so many questions, and I didn't have all the answers. After five months, I couldn't be expected to.

Besides, he hadn't called me. If something was up, I needed to talk to him instead of running these scenes in my head.

I took a deep breath and struggled to become present. Picking up the phone, I dialed his number.

Randy Siegel is an Asheville, NC-based writer and speaker who specializes in the challenges of coming out later in life. He can be reached through [The Voice](#) or at [REDACTED]

This article was submitted to [The Voice](#) by Randy Siegel.

Travel: from page 30

has some of the lowest prices of the entire Caribbean on particular types of merchandise. You will find bargain prices on English goods, especially china, crystal, porcelain, and perfume. Broad Street, the main shopping street in Bridgetown is where the upscale shops and duty-free departments stores are found.

Your fun in Barbados does not end at sunset. An option may be candlelit dinner at a restaurant by the water's edge might just be the perfect prelude to an evening of tropical jazz, reggae, or calypso. Around the Careenage waterfront area, are some notable cafes and bars where you can enjoy the beauty of the city by night.

In Barbados you will find exactly what you want from your vacation – whether it be relaxation and tranquility or excitement and adventure.

Spirituality

Continued from page 43

images about yourself that you or anyone else could ever imagine.

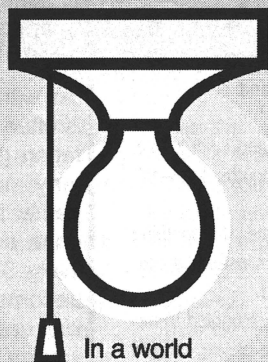
As with so much in our lives, it is often helpful to have a meditation group that meets regularly, not just to meditate together but to share the experience and reflect on it collectively. Such groups, in fact, have become quite popular. If that kind of experience will help keep you on track and self-assured, then go for it. On the other hand, such groups can be infiltrated by controllers and organisers that can ultimately undo all the good the group may have achieved. Just be careful and keep your guard up.

As you begin your journey, then don't forget that to attempt it alone will be difficult. In the next in his series, I'll suggest a few ways of finding the kind of support and guidance that will help you see, not just where you have been but where you are going. If only for that meditation could be the most rewarding self-improvement project you have ever undertaken. I know it can be. I hope it will be for you.

NOEL SPRINGWOOD (a pen-name - "Out of respect for his former associates") served most of his life as a Roman Catholic Priest. He now lives in voluntary exile from that ministry in order to live and work openly within the LGBT community as a Gay Man. You can contact him through [THE VOICE](#) or email him at [REDACTED]

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TRANSPHOBIA

Continued from page 32

For the men, we came to consciousness of how we had been stifled as males growing up in a culture that taught us to hate the woman within, that taught us that if we were to be considered worthy, we must be athletic, independent, assertive, domineering, competitive, and that we must bury our emotions deep within the recesses of our souls.

Looking back over the years, as our visibility has increased, as our place within the culture has become somewhat more assured, much certainly has been gained, but also, something very precious has been lost. That early excitement, that desire to fully *restructure* the culture, not merely reform it, seems now to lay dormant in many sectors of, at least, the gay male community.

I do remain hopeful, however, for I believe that bisexual women and men and transgenderists today are on the cutting edge of the discourse on gender, having the greatest potential to bring us back into the future, a future in which Estelles and Butches everywhere will live freely, unencumbered by other's notions of behavior, one in which the "feminine" and "masculine"--as well as all the qualities on the continuum in between--can live and prosper in us all.

So therefore I say, let us not work only toward lifting the ban against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in the military, but let us also work toward lifting the ban against our transcending and obliterating the gender status quo.

Let us not limit our efforts to defeating homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, and the many other categories of oppression, but let us also work toward conquering personal, institutional, and societal forms of transphobia and its offshoot, what some of us have labeled "effemiphobia"—that insidious and dehumanizing fear and hatred of anything even hinting at the feminine in males, which is, as we all know, basically the fear and hatred of females.

Let us continue to work on issues around same-sex marriage and domestic partnership,

but let us not fail to put efforts into strengthening a partnership between our masculine and feminine qualities making us all whole, integrated human beings.

If indeed it is true, as the old saying goes, that the fish is the last to see the water because it is so pervasive, then from our vantage point at the margins, we have a special opportunity, indeed a responsibility, to serve as social commentators, as critics, exposing and highlighting the rigid gender roles that dampen and saturate our environment, and to challenge the culture to move forever forward and to grow.

This is my view of true and lasting liberation. I hope it is part of yours too.

This article was submitted to The Voice by Warren J. Blumenfeld. He can be reached at: [REDACTED]

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