

The Voice

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Volume Three

February 2001

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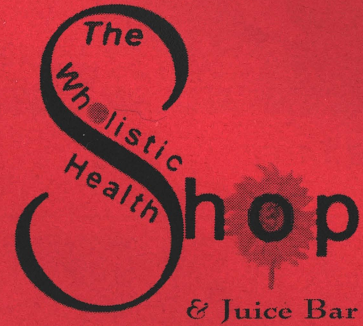
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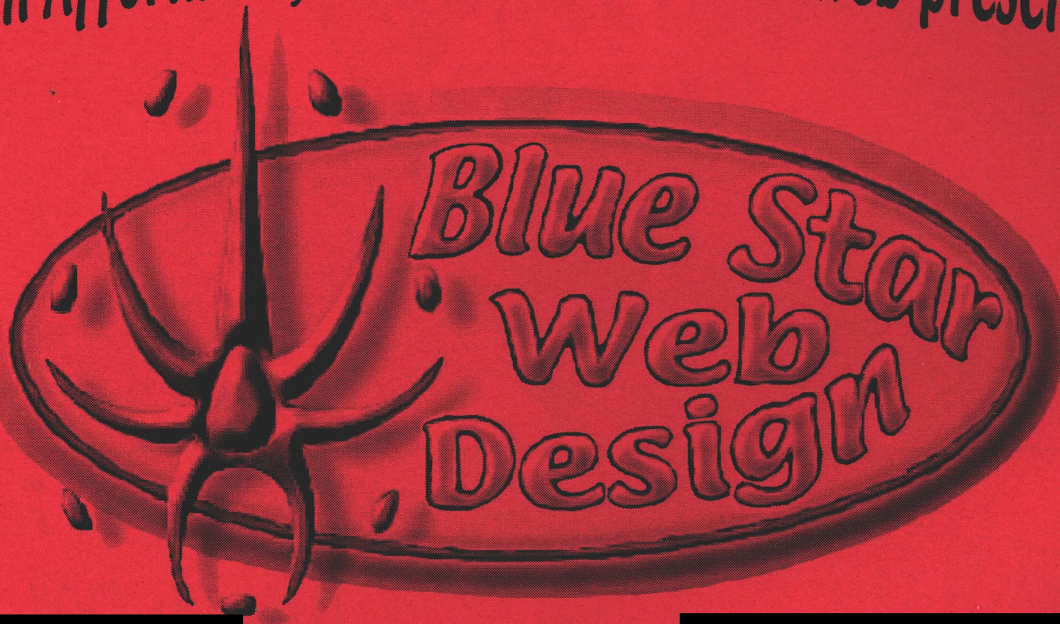
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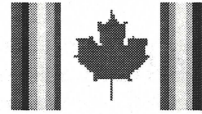
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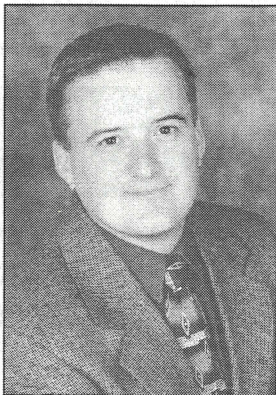
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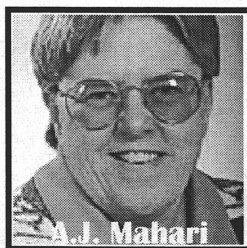
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FIRST WORDS

Fundamental?



A.J. Mahari

What is truly fundamental in the arena of our personal or emotional lives and our relationships? Is there one principle theory behind who we are as individuals? Do we share only one common foundation or basis from which we all relate?

NO!

Why then should religion be any different? Why are so many clamoring to be "the one" to best represent their faith and/or their god? Why do these same people think that they have any entitlement, whatsoever, to tell others what their truth is, or should be, how they should love, or whom they'd should love?

On January 14, 2001, at the Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto, during the morning worship service and before the historical lesbian and gay marriages took place, Cambridge's Erika Kubassek, allegedly interrupted the Church service and allegedly assaulted Rev. Hawkes. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to conclude that her actions were inappropriate. Kubassek would have us believe that she undertook these actions in the name of "God".

This is just one example of Christian Fundamentalist extremism. It continues to confound me how Kubassek and her ilk can act in direct opposition to the tenets of the religion they espouse. Their continued projection of their own hate-filled hidden agenda, which manifests itself in the condemnation of same-sex love, must be challenged by us. It is time that we speak up and speak out as loudly and as strongly as is needed. However, we must do this from a position of tolerance instead of simply returning the hatred that is directed at us.

The Religious Right (and many other churches in general) have a major advantage over us whether we want to admit it, face it, and deal with it or not. They are in a privileged position. Their lobbying is tax-payer supported. Ours is not. They are protected against hate propaganda by section 319 of the Criminal Code because they are deemed to be expressing their opinions (propaganda) on a religious subject but we are not. Our speech is not protected in that same way because it is non-religious. They are very organized and have a lot of money behind them. They have wider-ranging access to media and many many more spokespersons than we do.

Too many in our collective LGBT communities are not exercising their voices. The consequence is that only one side is heard by much of society. Is it any wonder then that so many people do not understand us, our love, our relationships, our need and our desire to have the equal rights that we still seek?

Each one of us has a role to play. Each one of us has to be an educator, a role model, an example, and an ambassador to heterosexuals. We need to be heard. We need to represent ourselves with the class and dignity that fundamentalism, by its extreme presentation, cannot muster. We must see both sides of the issues that divide us from them and approach them in a spirit of bridge-building dialogue.

What I know to be fundamentally true is that no one religion has the right to dictate to any citizen of this country.

Have an opinion? Write to us and we'll publish your comments in our Have Your Say section. *RAISE YOUR VOICE!!*

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The PineTree Native Centre

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HAVE YOUR SAY

I read your article "Being Out Isn't Enough" and it really made me think. I am a total supporter of all homosexuals and people of difference races. Although I am only 14, I have constantly been hurt for this. I go to a Christian private school, and because I am not Christian I am often discriminated against and put down. When I heard about the Matthew Shepard story I was incredibly hurt and I tried as hard as I could to open the minds of my peers. I mentioned it in my school English class and many people now do not talk to me. They believe that being gay is a sin and that gay people shouldn't be on this earth. This was deeply painful to me because my cousin is gay and I love him very much. I was deeply dismayed by this and I went home in tears. I am still unable to believe some people can be so cruel.

-- Carli S., Florida, USA

Hello there, I haven't really read anything in the Voice because I just found it. I think it's great that I can read it on my computer since I was having trouble finding a hard copy.

My big question is, where do I go in Kitchener to get a copy and most importantly how do I find out where there is a church that my partner and I can attend within the Kitchener area. I had heard there was one in Guelph but all my investigations have been futile. I have also heard about an MCC in Hamilton but can't find out where. Thanks so much for all your hard work.

-- Audra, Kitchener

HAVE YOUR SAY



If you have something that you like to say about what you read in *The Voice* send a letter to the editor. We'd like to hear from you!

You can email us at haveyoursay@thevoice.on.ca or go to our web site at www.thevoice.on.ca and click on **HAVE YOUR SAY** and use our form mail. If you'd like to snail mail us our address is on page two.

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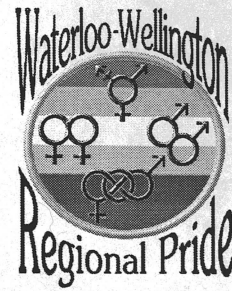
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Waterloo-Wellington Regional Pride

February Up-Date
By Audrey Charbonneau



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JUST IMAGINE...helping others by loving your pet. WWRP has just developed a partnership with Stable Income Strategies in their great fundraising program. *You can help by doing something you are already doing.* Simply by purchasing all natural, top quality pet food and pet products from CANUSA at 1-888-822-6872 and USING OUR REGISTRATION NUMBER - W2008WRP, then WWRP receives a portion of each purchase you make. Canusa is a Canadian owned company that will home deliver to anywhere in continental North America. You can continue receiving these great products while on vacation or when you move to a new town. What could be better? So if you always wanted to support WWRP but didn't have the time or extra money, you now have a way to help. Look for our brochure where you picked up the Voice, or contact WWRP, and we'll mail one to you. Web site info at: (coming very soon) <http://www.rainbow.on.ca/fundraising.html>

CLUB RENAISSANCE - "LOADED SODA PROMO PARTY" across from the Grand River Transit/Grey Coach Station on Charles Street, Kitchener

Mark you calendars for **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH, 2001** for the first Club Renaissance Pride Fundraiser. Of course there will be door prizes. We will also have raffles with some exciting items. To get you ready for Pride, pride wear is also going to be sold.

With the great music and LOADED SODA! this event will be outstanding. Come out and have some fun. Dance away the February Flurries. Practice for the Pride Celebration.

Once again the staff at Club Renaissance will be volunteering their time and expertise at Pride 2001, Imagine: Be a Dreamer! We wish to thank this great group of dedicated

hearty partiers for last two years running the Beer Garden on Roos Island for the Pride Celebrations. We know that 2001 will be the best to date and wouldn't happen without there help. From make-up to mop-up this is the best crew I have ever worked with. No bitching, just pitching in and doing what we all love best...have fun. I hope all you partiers appreciate the gems.

MUSES CAFE - "AN EVENING WITH GREG UPSHAW"
12 King Street East, Kitchener

Check out what is fast becoming THE place to be in downtown Kitchener. Muses Cafe is a surprising mix of people from high school students to professionals. Essentially a vegean/vegetarian coffee house, Muses has become a casual, comfortable meeting mecca with a non-discriminatory atmosphere.

The mission of Muses is to create an environment that is artistically eclectic. The walls display the works of budding artist. In March, GREG UPSHAW, a local talent from Cambridge, will preform some of his original, easy listening music, using all the right moves on acoustic guitar and a great singing voice, Greg is a talent worth seeing and hearing. He will ring the walls with sounds that make your sole want more. Stay tuned! Date to be announced.

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GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE TO SAME-SEX COUPLES WELCOMED AS A STATEMENT OF RESPECT; EGALE DENOUNCES INTOLERANT RESPONSE OF CANADIAN ALLIANCE AND CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

EGALE, today denounced the intolerant response of those objecting to the Governor General's message of respect on the occasion of the marriage of two same-sex couples in Toronto last weekend.

"I was present in Church when the Governor General's message was read," said John Fisher, Executive Director of EGALE. "**Rev. Hawkes made it clear that it was not intended as a political statement, but the Governor General's comments were nonetheless appreciated by the congregation as a statement of respect.**"

The Governor General's message has since been denounced by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and by the Canadian Alliance, some members of which have called upon the Governor General to resign.

"The hysterical overreaction from the Canadian Alliance and Conference of Catholic Bishops is a reflection of how far we still have to go in our basic struggle for equality," said Fisher. "The Governor General is there to represent all Canadians - including those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and it was in our view entirely appropriate for her to express her best wishes to two same-sex couples on an important personal and public occasion."

"I do agree with the Conference of Catholic Bishops about one thing: 'Canadians should be able to expect the governor-general to respect and uphold their basic values and laws.' In our view, that includes the constitutional right to equality. Had this been a message sent to an opposite-sex couple, it would have passed without comment."

"It is a sad day for Canada and Canadian institutions when the Governor-General cannot even treat gays and lesbians with common courtesy and respect, without being publicly denounced and called upon to resign."

For further information:

John Fisher: (613) [REDACTED]

Executive Director, EGALE

A Separate Seat? Chairs for Charity & Art Auction, 2001

The Canadian Oxford dictionary defines a chair as a "separate seat for one person, of various forms. ..."

In the imaginations of local artisans, the "various forms" of a chair emerge as enchanting symbolic creations to delight and inspire you at **ACCKWA's 7th annual Chairs for Charity & Art Auction to be held on Saturday, February 17th**. Along with these chair interpretations, the art lover in you can feast on donated artwork in a broad range of media and styles.


This year's extravaganza includes the charming wood and acrylic structures of 9-year old Taylor Lethbridge, the evocative paintings of Toronto's Steve Walker, the whimsical clay sculptures of local artist Elaine Auerback, and the striking photographs of Tony and Barb Ward - to mention but a fraction of the talent you will see.

This special evening is held in the Rotunda of the Kitchener City hall and will begin with an hors d'oeuvres reception, music, and a cash bar at 6:00 p.m. At 7, the excitement will begin with a "quick auction" of small items such as gift certificates; then at 8, the action will intensify as the main auction unfolds.

Advance tickets sell for \$20.00 at the ACCKWA office, 85 Frederick Street, Kitchener, or at the following locations:

Kitchener: Pictures at Fairview Park Mall
Waterloo: Athena at Conestoga Mall
Cambridge: Wyndham Gallery
Guelph: Wyndham Art Supplies

For a taste of the art that will be available, visit the preview at the Rotunda Gallery in Kitchener's City Hall beginning February 1st. Then come and claim "a separate seat" at the auction on February 17th!




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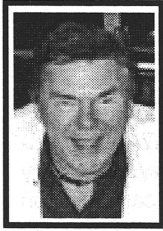
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HAMILTON LGBT



The HAN is in Good Hands

By Charles W. Westfall

"You're the right person, in the right place at the right time and don't let anyone tell you any different."

My parting words to Murray Jose may have sounded a bit patronizing or even paternal. They were, however, reflective of a deeply felt sentiment and came straight from the heart.

This attractive, personable, knowledgeable and capable young man has just taken over the Executive Directorship of the Hamilton AIDS Network (HAN). Aware of the challenges he faces and the troubled organization he has inherited, I was eager to talk to him about his hopes and plans.

So, we had a great morning tea party at my house and chatted on and on about the HAN and his ideas and what was happening.

It is of course not easy to refloat a vessel that has been submerged, if not scuttled, for some time now. Reorganization and restaffing do not happen overnight. I was most encouraged to hear that the current policy is to take the time necessary and to do it right. To that end, there is a lot of networking going on with health and social service organizations in the area. There is a careful monitoring of budgetary concerns to ensure a sufficient outreach to the areas beyond Hamilton that the HAN is mandated to serve.

At the same time, there is a more open and relaxed atmosphere surrounding these efforts than has been apparent for a long time. Anyone dropping in for a visit or information is pretty well guaranteed a choice of tasty treats and a warm welcome. A full staff complement within a very short time will go far towards providing programs of quality.

I was particularly impressed with Murray's observations about the all-important speaker's bureau. We agreed that information and facts are readily available. What a speaker's rostrum can provide is stories: personal accounts that will go farther to chang-

ing lives. To preserving them. It is no secret that condoms aren't the answer, only part of the answer. Changed attitudes and positive motivation are much closer to the kind of solution that will contribute to a better world and happier lives.

To this end, I was a bit pointed in my observations about public relations efforts. For some reason, when people hear about public relations they think about newsletters and press releases. In my mind, there's a lot more to be done and to be gained than what those provide.

So, I volunteered myself as an unofficial resource to help plan and execute the kind of public relations efforts that, I think are needed, yesterday. Unless the HAN becomes much more present and visible to the "out" community here in Hamilton, it will continue to lose credibility and support. Since many of the clients served by the Network are gay men, the question of outreach is a bit complicated. Ultimately, it is word of mouth and direct contact that will allow the HAN to touch the people who need the kind of support and information they provide.

At the same time, I am aware that efforts to relocate from what many Hamiltonians perceive as a remote location are underway. Everyone hopes that they will soon come to a successful conclusion and the HAN will be closer to the centres of community activity.

With a background in a number of service oriented agencies, Murray Jose reflects the kind of sensitivity and insight that can make these things happen. If they don't appear to be happening as quickly as some in the community might like, it's just the cost of doing things right. Volunteers and clients seem to understand this and a distinctly positive response is in evidence.

Maybe it's enough to know that the helm of the HAN is now in the

hands of someone who really does care. Someone who can say, we've got to have staff get together where people can share what's going on in their lives. If something is challenging or bugging them at home, we need to know about it and act accordingly. Maybe it's enough to know that there seems to be a very real and positive rapport between Murray and the Board, something not always there in the past. Maybe it's enough to know that there is a growing sense of purpose and collegiality.

Anyone who can declare a clear intention to avoid any sense of a "we/they" mentality or attitude has to be on the right track. Murray Jose recognizes only too well that the challenge of HIV/AIDS is something with which we have to work together and walk together to meet effectively.

The abstract long range plan that I heard so much about five years ago has kind of drifted into oblivion. I, for one, am not disappointed. I never understood it anyway. As the new HAN takes shape and becomes established, there will be new plans in place, including a renewed and realistic mission statement as a framework for effectiveness and dependability.

I must confess that there was a bit of a lump in my throat when I said to Murray that he was "the right person in the right place at the right time." No stranger to the kind of hurt that sensitive people in administrative positions can't escape, I guess I felt some of the pain that he undoubtedly will experience.

At the same time, my heart goes out to him and the Hamilton AIDS Network with the unwavering high hope that my view is right on too. And I really hope that no one will ever have the chance tell me any different.

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

Speaking of Public Sex

by Simon Sheppard

Public sex is dangerous, illegal, and frowned upon by polite society. Yet some of us are hooked on it, and many more of us have done it at least once or twice.

So just how public is "public?" What's called "public sex" can range from fucking around in the for-sex space of a backroom bar, to screwing in a car parked in lover's lane, to a blowjob at the movies, to cruising public restrooms, to balls-out naughtiness in a park or on a public beach. Some semi-public venues - sex clubs, for instance - provide the exhibitionistic thrill



but none of the danger. Still, lots of guys can be found sporting hard-ons in the steam room at the gym, potential loss of membership be damned.

Why do it?

One aficionado of encounters in the park, a.k.a. a "bush queen," says, "God, I love public sex. I like the riskiness of it, the idea that I'm getting pleasure where it's forbidden, that even in the most tedious of public places, like the restroom at the mall, sex can rear its swollen head." Risk is, of course, a relative concept. That guy, for instance, says he always uses condoms and is careful to zip up when those not obviously into sex enter the scene.

Others are more brazen, and not everyone is happy about that. "I hate it when I walk into the steam room of my gym," says another gay guy, "and dudes are jacking each other off and don't even bother to stop to see who's come in. I'm not a prude, but it's a

mixed gym, and I don't want some straight guy to get upset and blow the whistle. Hell, it even makes *me* uncomfortable to see it sometimes."

Heedlessness, of course, can have its consequences. Many of the guys who cruise public restrooms, or "tea rooms," aren't even gay identified. They may be married guys in search of anonymous relief, but if they make the wrong moves to an undercover cop, it's their cover, not their dick, that gets blown. A

number of lawsuits have targeted sexual entrapment by the police, but it's a tough issue for many gay politicians, who'd rather talk about gay marriage than quickie sex with truckers.

Still, public sex goes on, pretty much everywhere and pretty much always. And what's the big deal? The outrageousness of public sexuality is a culturally relative thing. Things that can get you busted in the Bible Belt wouldn't raise an eyebrow in Amsterdam, and in olden times, the concept of "sexual privacy" was limited to folks rich enough to own a bedroom. And even in the U.S.A. there are certain events, such as Mardi Gras in New Orleans or San Francisco's Folsom Street Fair, when people "do it" in the road while the law looks the other way.

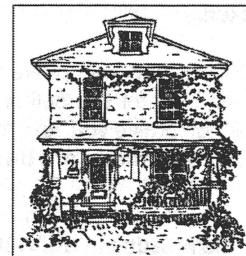
"It's just so weird," says a gay libertarian into public nookie. "Anybody can turn on the TV and watch half-naked boxers or pro wrestlers beating the crap out of each other, but the sight of two guys having sex is presumably so offensive that getting caught at it can send you to jail."

There are rituals and folkways connected with various forms of public sex - the foot tapping beneath the restroom stall, for instance - that can make things a little clearer and safer. But public sex, by its nature, always carries an element of risk. Queers aren't the only ones who know where the cruising grounds are; police and bashers know, too. Saying "be careful" is all well and good, but in the long run, the safest thing is to keep your dick behind locked doors.

But then, as some sage pointed out, in the long run, we're all dead. And in the meantime, some of us like public sex.

Simon Sheppard is the co-editor of *Rough Stuff: Tales of Gay Men, Sex, and Power* (Alyson Books). He can be reached care of this publication or at [REDACTED]

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CLAIM YOUR POWER



The Power of Forgiveness

by Judy Saltarelli Neal



Forgiveness: how many times have you been advised by self-help books, your spiritual advisor, or a counsellor to “forgive” someone who has offended or hurt you? You’ve probably heard that message many times. Perhaps you know that at some level that you “should” forgive someone for something they have done to you, but you just can’t do it. If you did forgive them, it would feel like they got away with something. Forgiving just isn’t that easy.

In the rainbow community, many have been on the receiving end of a lack of forgiveness. Too many have had the unfortunate experience of being rejected because by friends and family members who could not forgive them for their sexual orientation (as though it were a choice) or for living the lifestyle that feels most comfortable. In return, they may be unable to forgive their family members for the positions they have taken.

To better understand the power of forgiveness, whether for yourself or for those who cannot forgive you, let’s look at the consequences of being unforgiving.

First, we may adopt a Victim orientation and continue to feel the emotional pain of the original offense long after it occurred. This can be very disempowering and can prevent us from learning valuable lessons about our self-worth, our boundaries, and assertiveness. It can also lead to a tendency to attract similar experiences and people into our lives, perpetuating our victimization.

We can also adapt a Persecutor stance

to protect against being victimized again, and approach others with a huge chip on our shoulders. We may inaccurately see similar behaviour in others who remind us of our offender. Or, alternatively, we may develop a heightened sense of injustice and assume an exaggerated Rescuer stance, rushing in unbidden to help others, denying them the opportunity to grow by resolving their own problems. This often leads to rejection, with the result that you find yourself saying “but I was only trying to help!”

An inability to forgive usually also means that we continue to allow the offender to control how we feel and behave. We end up reacting rather than responding, because the unforgiven offense acts like a template, colouring our perception of everyday events.

Other consequences include feeling an increase in toxic or negative emotions, a handicapped ability to form close, nurturing and supportive relationships with others, and blocking ourselves from spiritual growth and healing.

A common misunderstanding about forgiveness is the belief that it means you must simply deny your own emotional needs, forget or overlook someone’s inappropriate or unkind behaviour, and absolve the offender of all accountability for his or her actions. In the context of emotional well being, I believe it is more accurate to think of forgiveness as ceasing to feel resentment toward another person for a perceived offense. It involves making a shift in your own frame of reference and developing understanding, compassion, and acceptance of the innate goodness of others at a deep

spiritual level.

To see how this can play out, let’s look at two examples from my counselling practice. (Both clients have consented to share this information with you, and both names have been changed.)

When “Dan” came out to his family, his father’s reaction was especially harsh. He was completely inflexible and wasn’t open to learning anything about Dan’s perspective. He verbally abused and berated Dan every time they got together.

Dan worked with me to explore his options. He was soon able to understand that because his dad was the product of a very bigoted family and a very controlling church, he was unlikely to respond to any of Dan’s overtures to become more accepting of Dan’s sexual orientation. If the situation were to improve, Dan would have to change his own attitudes and perspectives. Dan worked through his anger, grief and sadness, and developed a sense of compassion for his father and his limited view of the world.

Dan wanted to maintain his relationship with his family, and explored a number of options. He ultimately decided that he would see his dad for who he is, and that he would enforce his own boundaries about acceptable behaviour. Dan soon realized that his father didn’t berate him in front of “company” and seized on the simple solution of bringing a friend along when he visited his dad. When that wasn’t possible, he made sure he reminded himself that in his view it wasn’t ok for his dad to berate him and that it was

important to tell his dad that he would immediately leave any family gathering if his dad verbally abused him. Dan only had to say, "Dad, you're entitled to your own opinions, and you're being abusive to me"—and leave—a few times before his dad learned to stop that behaviour. Because he could forgive his dad for being unforgiving, unlike his dad, Dan was able to avoid experiencing many of the unwanted consequences mentioned above.

"Laura" called me for an urgent appointment to deal with her rage and grief when she discovered on her own that her husband was gay and deeply closeted in the safety of their marriage. She was experiencing all of the classic straight spouse reactions to her discovery, and reported that she felt she could never forgive him for betraying her. A long-term client who had successfully dealt with depression and chronic fatigue by using energy psychotherapy, Laura asked to use these techniques to deal with her intense new feelings.

Cognitively, Laura 'knew' that her husband didn't choose to be gay, but her heart was devastated. We used Tapas Acupressure to help her to more deeply understand her husband's sexual orientation. Laura gently touched certain acupressure points on her own head while thinking about her

situation in different ways under guidance from me. In a single session she felt a tremendous energy shift, which she described as 'knowing with all of my body, heart and soul that he simply IS gay...It's not something he did to hurt me!' With her newfound sense of compassion, she was able to release all of her resentment toward him. The roller coaster of emotions she had been experiencing quickly leveled out. She decided that although she did not want to continue the charade of a happy marriage, she would emotionally support her husband if he chose to come out to his friends and family. Her husband ultimately rejected Laura's support and extruded her from his family. Although Laura is disappointed and is working her way through her grief at losing him and his family, she harbours no more resentment about the reality of his sexual orientation. She is also exploring the deeply buried reasons she brought this experience into her life, and the new options now available to her.

Dan and Laura both experienced incredible healing and personal growth through their work to forgive their family members for perceived mistreatment. Each of them has reaped the benefits: a significant lessening of psychological pain, clearer communication with others, a new understanding of their personal boundaries, and a sense of spiritual growth and development. They are both less likely to attract others who will devalue them, and more able to see others clearly. Their newfound self-respect and groundedness will also probably strengthen their immune systems and decrease the chance of activating either an opportunistic infection or any unconscious death or illness wish they may have.

Ultimately, forgiveness leads to unconditional love—of self and others, and toward healing and knowing whom we really are. That is very powerful medicine indeed.

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

Counselling & Psychotherapy

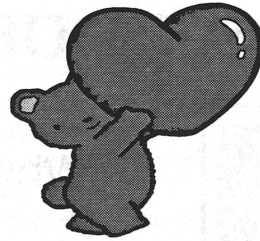
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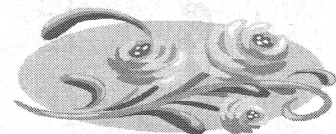
Valentine's Day as you and I know it probably originated from the ancient belief that birds (particularly lovebirds) began to mate on February 14th.

The 14th was also a designated feast day (until 1969, when it was dropped from the Roman Catholic calendar) to honor two Christian saints (at least one named Saint Valentine) martyred by the Roman Emperor Claudius II Gothicus. There is a little bit of love stuff in this part, though — the reason Saint Valentine was killed (beheaded, actually) was that he continued to marry young couples even though Claudius forbade it. Apparently Claudius thought that married soldiers weren't as good as single soldiers.

On top of all that, in ancient Rome, February the 15th was the fertility festival (Lupercalia) in honor of the pastoral god Lupercus.

Through the centuries it all kind of got merged together, and the modern Saint Valentine's Day is a day dedicated to lovers, a time to exchange sentimental greeting cards and mushy words of never-ending adoration.

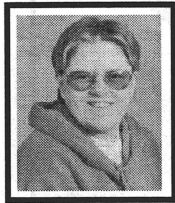
My Luve is Like A Red, Red Rose



O, my luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O, my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve the still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.
Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rock melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.
And fare the weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Robert Burns

SHADES OF GREY



Why Me, You Ask?

By Ms. A.J. Mahari



Why am I a woman? Why am I a lesbian? Why am I opinionated? Why am I an activist? Why do I write? Why do I speak out? Why do I continue to work in the service of community in the face of the pain and joy that doing so can bring? Why?

“Why me?” I could ask.

Life offers up its challenges and its burdens, its consequences and its rewards for each one of us in our own separate individual ways. How each one of us chooses to respond to those challenges is what will dictate the climate of our collective community.

If everyone waits for someone else to take the first step, heal the

wounds, do the work, make all the sacrifices, bear the entire weight of judged right or wrongness, what will get done? What will happen in community? Bruised egos and their nurture aside, how will this benefit anyone?

Why should we bear this pain and subject ourselves to the frustration? Because when the pain has been borne, then comes the joy, followed by the realization that welcoming change that has a reasonable degree of risk is often growth-producing. Choose to let the pain and frustration go. Start over and begin again and again because you can.

Have you ever asked yourself this question? Asking the question, “Why me?” can be motivating.

You may be quite surprised by the ways in which you could answer this question by taking action in your own life. Serving in whatever aspect of community that you want to give your time and efforts to could be your answer.

Community is about all of us coming together and learning to cooperate in spite of our differences. It is not necessarily a friendship thing. It is more of a working together in which personalities, gender biases and egos need to be set aside. We continue to have a great abyss where many needed services should be and could be. The reason for this is that there aren't enough people to put forward what it takes to build community -- conflict and all. Nothing in the making is ever created without effort.

We will remain as strong as the pool of committed individuals is large. Think about putting aside your own personal interests and joining a collective effort in co-operation with others, in spite of your differences.

What are you waiting for? The difference this community needs may just be you!

Why me, you ask? **Why me?** My question is why not me? How about asking yourself that same question?

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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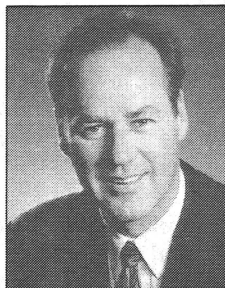
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REGRETS ALL ROUND BUT BISHOPS REMAIN FIRM ON MARRIAGE

OTTAWA, (LSN.ca) - In response to a letter from the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) protesting a letter of congratulations sent by the Governor General of Canada to a 'wedded' homosexual couple, the Governor General sent a letter of explanation to

the CCCB. A press release by the CCCB notes "the CCCB accepts the personal explanation of the Governor General that the message sent from her office "did not imply political intent." But the CCCB continues, "Nevertheless, the CCCB remains convinced that the political use that was made of the message both at the ceremony and in subsequent media reports and headlines could not go unanswered." The release concludes

that "the Roman and Eastern Catholic Bishops of Canada, together with millions of other Canadians, will continue to be concerned about efforts to change the definition and reality of marriage as the sacred union of a man and a woman."

Meanwhile a press release from the Canadian Catholic Civil Rights League and subsequent phone calls and emails to a CBC television program which ridiculed the CCCB's stand on the issue has resulted in an apology. Dave Stephens, host of CBC's Ontario Today apologized for his remarks on air. He stated, "On yesterday's show, after we re-broadcast an interview Andy Barrie did with Monsignor Peter Schonenback about a letter the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops had written to the Governor-General, I made an off-the-cuff, and in retrospect, inappropriate comment. I would like to express my regret for having done so." Stephens ridiculed the CCCB concern over the Governor General's letter to the homosexual couple by making a ridiculous parallel, stating his concern that the Governor General's visit to the unfortunate glue sniffing Innu children of remote Labrador would somehow be seen as an endorsement of their glue sniffing.

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Spiritual Life: The Quest for Freedom

All Relationships are Relative

By Noel Springwood

There's nothing I would like better than another man in my life. Sometimes, I don't even care about his looks, temperament, tastes or capabilities. The simple fact that there is someone there, to hug, to kiss, to cuddle and to love would be enough. If that sounds like an offer you can't refuse, you're on target. At the same time, there are cautions that need to be considered.

Any relationship involves a rather complicated interconnection between diverse elements. The personality and expectations of each person involved, the capabilities of those parties and their ability to contribute to the ongoing success of the relationship are all important.

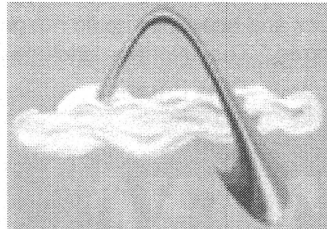
The kind of quick infatuation or convenient association that so often masquerades as a relationship is just a farce.

In many cases, one partner ends up carrying if not supporting the other. In many cases it is just a comfortable and available sexual release that goes no deeper and can become no more relevant.

The need for companionship is real. The need for physical and sexual release and satisfaction is real. The avenues being explored, all too often, are not. They are open, not only to detours and blockades, but to total washouts and landslides.

The guy or gal you meet tonight at the bar may seem to be the answer to a dream wish. In all likelihood, they're not. The greater probability is that they're an opportunist just waiting for someone like you to grab on to and get a free ride, at least for a while.

I believe that relationships are important. I applaud the efforts of the MCC to get same sex marriages recognized. At the same time, I have to caution against entering into any kind of rela-



tionship that is not well thought out, planned and stable.

Any other course of action will, undoubtedly, lead to that morning of disillusion when one partner looks at the other and says, finally, "Was it worth it, after all?" The rest will, unfortunately, not be silence but a kind of chaotic mix of rancour and respite. Both parties get hurt; but, one is usually more vulnerable than the other.

I would love to have a man in my life. I have to be very careful not to jump at the first opportunity or to latch on to what seems to be available. Here, if nowhere else, the axiom, "Look before you leap" is not just handy but necessary.

If that doesn't sound particularly like spirituality, let me remind you that it's the looking before leaping that counts. More than that, it's the quality of the looking and the values and expectations that go into it. More than that, any spirituality that can't encompass all of me, including my wishes and desires, just won't cut it.

So with all that in mind, I still would love to have another man in my life.

NOEL SPRINGWOOD (a pen-name - "Out of respect for his former associates") served most of his life as a Roman Catholic Priest. You can contact him through THE VOICE or email him at

A Voice exclusive.

HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE COURT CHALLENGES PAID FOR BY PUBLIC

Religious And Family Groups Allowed Intervenor Status

VANCOUVER (LSN.ca) - The court cases launched in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec by homosexual couples demanding marriage are being funded by taxpayers through the Federal Court Challenges Program (FCCP). Canada's foremost homosexual activist group Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE) orchestrated the cases by asking for homosexual couples interested in marriage to come forward, they screened the applicants and sent their selections off to commence the challenges by applying for marriage licences. Gwen Landolt, of Real Women Canada told LifeSite that the decision to publicly fund the challenges via the FCCP was facilitated by lesbian activist Shielagh Day who chairs the government's FCCP committee on equality issues. Day decided, surprise-surprise, to make the public to pick up the large tab for the "equality" cases.

Recent rulings have allowed intervenor status in the cases to be granted to two social groups and two faith based groups on either side of the debate. Intervening on behalf of the homosexual couples is EGALE and Brent Hawkes' Metropolitan Community Church. Intervening to protect marriage are the Association of Marriage and the Family as well as the Interfaith Coalition on Marriage and Family.

The Association of Marriage and the Family is comprised of Real Women of Canada, the Canadian Family Action Coalition and Focus on the Family Canada. The Interfaith Coalition on Marriage is comprised of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, The Catholic Civil Rights League, The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Archdiocese of Vancouver, The Islamic Society of North America, The B.C. Muslim Association and the Sikh Community.

LifeSite Daily News archived at:

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As Hard to Grow Old as It Was to Be Young

By DUDLEY CLENDINEN

When Ruth Ellis died in Michigan not long ago at the age of 101, a beloved character among the elderly and the gay community in Detroit, she should have been more famous. She was the oldest known lesbian in America. But it was not the fact that she was homosexual that made her special. It was the fact that she let it be known.

Of the estimated 70,000 centenarians now living in the United States, only one, Ms. Ellis, was so public about being gay. Of the million and a half nonagenarians, just a handful are widely known to be gay. There is a reason for that, and it isn't because so few old people are homosexual. It's because they grew up before the American gay rights movement began to free homosexuals to be honest about themselves.

That movement began just 52 years ago, and its founders are still alive. But they are aging, and mostly poor. Harry Hay, who got the idea that homosexuals should organize for civil rights at an election-year party of gay men in Los Angeles in 1948, is now 88. Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, who organized the first enduring organization for lesbians, are nearing 80, still in the little house in San Francisco where they held meetings 45 years ago. Dr. Franklin Kameny, the intellectual lion of the movement, the first to insist that homosexuals were not abnormal or mentally ill, the first to petition for employment rights in federal court and the first to make the legal claim that homosexuals were a minority like African-Americans, equally deserving of civil rights, is 75.

A Harvard-trained astronomer, Dr. Kameny was blackballed as homosexual in the 1950's in Washington, D.C., where he still lives and

works at the cause, alone and without a pension. Harry Hay, who has been ill, and his partner, John Burnside, are housed and supported with the help of a network of friends. They have a place in history, but no security. The leaders of the modern movement, which has given millions of dollars to favored politicians, should give some thought to their needs.

Something like two-thirds of people over 65 in the United States live with a spouse or relative, and the vast majority of those who need daily help are cared for by family. But studies in New York and Los Angeles have found that 65 to 75 percent of elderly gay people live alone. Because homosexuals don't get survivors' benefits from Social Security or most pension plans when their partners die, they may be poorer than their widowed heterosexual peers. Housing for the elderly is not an easy place to seem different - not if you want company and support. Attitudes are conservative, and for those in the geriatric towers and clusters where millions of old people now live - especially those dependent on subsidized low-income housing - the pressures to hide their identity can be strong.

In Atlanta late last year, at its Creating Change conference, the largest annual gathering on gay issues in the nation, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force held seminars on the needs of

aging homosexuals. The development of gay retirement colonies is also under way. A score or more, in places like Florida, New Mexico and California, are in search of financing. But only one is up and growing, and open to both men and women. Called Palms of Mannasota, it is on 35 acres of farmland above Bradenton, Fla., on the south side of Tampa Bay. There, among the grapefruit, orange and banana trees, between two country Baptist churches, are 21 villas filled with people who have come from New York, Ohio, Oregon and elsewhere to live in retirement with others like themselves.

The people who live there seem to love the place, but strikingly, few are 65 or older. Most residents are couples in their 50's, a gay reflection of the national surge of affluent boomers into resort or retirement housing. Places like Palms of Mannasota will be for those who can afford them, and who are comfortable in all-gay housing. For those who are old, alone and poor, the likelier end is elderly housing, and, later on, a nursing home.

The challenge in such environments is to keep an independent spirit, and that is why Ruth Ellis, who lived in a retirement center, earned such affection, and respect. She was old and black and poor and gay, and happily herself. By the time she died, last October, she had become the subject of a documentary, an example of both the difficulty and effectiveness of honesty at her age.

No one knows how large a market there is for gay retirement colonies, but this much is certain. Centenarians are the fastest-growing age group in America. At some point, there are going to be a lot of people over 100 who are gay.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

It is no small issue. For homosexuals, the twilight years can be especially daunting.

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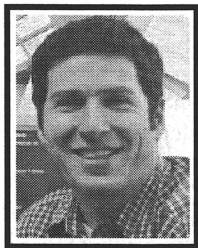
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Q Health

Reflection on the Meanings of Love

By Dr. Jeffrey Chernin



Valentine's Day can be a difficult time. If you are single, you are made to feel like a homebound Cinderella while every one else is at the Ball. For couples, there's pressure to have a perfectly romantic evening or give the perfect gift. How can you enjoy the day if you're one of the people who struggle with it?

Before turning my attention on how to make the day more enjoyable, I'd like to offer some notions on love. While contemplating Valentine's Day, I thought about our culture's idea of Love. In this culture, we are taught that love is purely romantic. Indelibly etched into our minds is the idea that we should meet the right person, fall in love, and live happily ever after.

This idea has made fools of every one of us, and we seem to have forgotten that there are many kinds of love. Just as we as LGBT individuals want the

general culture to accept same-gender love, we need to expand the definition of love to include its various forms of expression.

Not only is there romantic love, there's platonic love. Even within those categories, there are still different ways of feeling and expressing love. The love for your current partner may be different from the way you felt toward your prior partners, for example.

Also, love for your spouse is distinct from the love you have for your families of origin, which is different from the way you feel toward friends, your pet, and yourself.

The reason for expanding the defi-

inition of love is not only to enjoy Valentines' Day, but to make love more real—to take it out of the abstract and bring it to everyday reality. Sometimes, expressing love takes a word, a gesture, or a token of affection. One of the greatest forms of love is giving time, thoughtfulness, and attention to another person. Giving love—and not attaching strings or expecting anything in return—can do wonders.

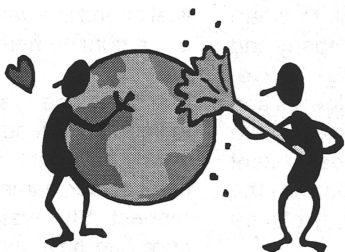
Another way to expand the definition of love is to include forgiveness. Often, people think that if you forgive someone else, you are letting them off the hook. Rather, it's important to forgive others because ultimately, forgiveness is for you and you only. Not only can it take give you peace of mind, but it can make you a more loving individual.

I've come to the conclusion that, like most other qualities in our personalities, love is not a thing—it is a process. As we grow, we are capable of more love. And we can learn to express it in ways that others receive it. Like happiness, love must come from the inside.

In this article, I have attempted to expand the meaning of Valentine's Day—to give you the big picture, so the actual day doesn't have to be a burden. This February 14th, remember that romantic love for a partner is only one kind of love, that passionate love must fade, and that you have to build love for yourself, your partner, and your community.

Jeffrey Chernin, Ph.D. resides in Los Angeles. He can be reached at

[REDACTED] This article was submitted to The Voice by Dr. Chernin.



GAY ACCEPTANCE GROWS IN CHINA

There is a growing acceptance of homosexuality among younger well-educated heterosexuals in urban China, Agence France-Presse reported Jan. 15.

"Shanghai's gay bars are humming ... and many in the eastern China metropolis insist the country's homosexuals are becoming more liberated," the wire service reported.

A gay bar owner in the city's French Quarter told AFP: "Sexual freedom is the mark of a developed society. When society is prosperous and at peace, gays are more obvious because there is less pressure to get married and reproduce.

"My father found me surfing some gay Internet sites and told me to be careful because China's public security bureau tags Internet usage, but he didn't make a big deal about it," the owner, who goes by the name of Andy, said.

PLAY CANCELED DUE TO ANTI-GAY PROTESTS

The opening night of American playwright Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* was canceled in Melbourne, Australia, in January, following threats of violence. The play's central character is a gay Christ figure.

The production has been denounced by local leaders of the Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Islamic religions, some of whom protested outside the theater.

"Every year it's getting worse," said Yasser Soliman, president of the Islamic Council of Victoria. "It will soon become the norm for people to blaspheme and put down whatever beliefs they like."

Islamic Information and Service Network of Australasia President Samir Mohtadi added: "We ask God to curse these people who have taken part in this play and those sponsors ... all those who assist in this filthy and dirty play of allegations."

First Legal Gay Marriages?

The "banns" of marriage were read, the ceremony performed, the licenses forwarded to the Ontario government — but will they stand up in court?

A double wedding at the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of Toronto on January 14 may have been the world's first legal marriages in modern times for a gay couple and a lesbian couple — but the couples and their gay-affirming church will have to go to court to find out, since Ontario's provincial government has already announced it will not register the licenses that were mailed in January 16. [Ed. note: The Netherlands Parliament has voted to expand its marriage laws to include gay and lesbian couples, but while that amendment has been approved by the Queen and published, the first legal gay and lesbian marriages there won't take place until later in the year.] MCC-Toronto and its attorney Douglas Elliot are convinced that since three times before the wedding the church read the "banns" of marriage (announcements of the couples' intention to marry), the marriages are legal, since the relevant Ontario law refers only to "persons" and not to men or women. Contributions to MCC-Toronto's legal fund were requested instead of wedding presents.

To Grow and Live With You in Love

MCC-Toronto senior pastor the Reverend Brent Hawkes called the wedding an historic act that would "open floodgates around the world," and many others took it just as seriously. People were lined up around the block to enter the church for the occasion, and the crowd that packed the hall was variously estimated from 600 to 1,000. Sixty to eighty news outlets were represented from as far away as Japan and Europe.

Hearty applause greeted the two couples as they entered the church, and there were several standing ovations in the course of the ceremony. Kevin Bourassa, a 42-year-old bank manager, and his partner of more than three years Joe Varnell, a 31-year-old corporate Web site coordinator, wore black suits. Elaine Vautour, a 43-year-

old counselor and theology student, and her partner of nearly three years Anne Vautour, a 38-year-old day care worker who had previously taken Elaine's name, wore white shirts and dark pants. Both couples wore red roses honoring Canada's late former Premier Pierre Trudeau, who engineered the repeal of the sodomy law and the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms — and who famously remarked that the state has no place in the bedroom. Both had previously celebrated commitment ceremonies at MCC-Toronto, and the men once again exchanged the gold and sapphire rings they'd used on that occasion. The four are all close friends.

The women vowed, "I take you to be my spouse to grow with you in love ... serving humanity in peace and hope throughout our lives." The men vowed, "I give you this ring as a symbol of my promise to live with you in love, faithfulness, honor and trust throughout our lives." Hawkes, wearing white vestments with a purple cross on the front and back, closed the hour-long ceremony saying, "By virtue of the power vested in me by the Ontario Marriage Act, I hereby declare them to be lawfully married, joined together spouse to spouse, partners in life, in the name of the Creator and the Christ and the Holy Spirit." As the crowd roared appreciatively in a standing ovation, the choir sang, *Let a Joyful Song Arise*.

At a news conference afterwards, Hawkes declared, "Today is a witness to politicians to do what is right and register these weddings. In Canada we want full equality ... we will not rest until there is full equality that gay and lesbian couples are treated exactly the same."

Bible-Quoting Devils Protest

There was a strong police presence both inside and outside the church and Hawkes reportedly wore a bulletproof vest. Protester Erika Kubassek, the well-known founder of the Cambridge Moral Support Movement, was arrested and will be going to court in Toronto February 16 on a charge of assaulting Hawkes. According to one re-

port, at the morning worship service (before the marriages were performed) she leaped up from a front pew, declared herself a messenger from Jesus, and pushed the pastor in an apparent attempt to mount the pulpit. Toronto Police Sergeant David Butt described the incident slightly differently, saying Kubassek had arisen during the service to recite Bible passages against homosexuality, refused to sit when asked, and apparently raised her arm and pushed Hawkes when he approached her.

Another woman was removed quietly while the licenses were being signed. Outside the church, a half-dozen people wearing devil masks and identifying themselves as "concerned Canadian parents" proclaimed that gay and lesbian marriages threaten society. There was also a bomb threat which apparently proved baseless. Ken Campbell of the Civilized Majority was not present for the weddings although he had stood to protest on the second Sunday that the banns were read.

Governor General's "Best Wishes" Slammed

Bourassa had sent a wedding invitation to Adrienne Clarkson, the Governor General of Canada (today a largely ceremonial office, but symbolically Queen Elizabeth's representative). Clarkson, who gets some 150 invitations a week, was unable to attend, but her staff sent a form letter by e-mail, declining the invitation with "best wishes." For that she was immediately slammed by the right-wing Opposition Canadian Alliance Party, whose Saskatoon-Wanuskewin Member of Parliament Maurice Vallcott said he would introduce a measure to censure her for misusing her office. MP Grant Hill, Alliance spokesperson on family issues, expressed disbelief in the form letter explanation and accused Clarkson of social activism.

Clarkson's office insisted that no political statement was intended and the Governor General does not wish to become involved in the debate; even when reading the brief note during the ceremony, Hawkes noted that, "This is not a political position. We would not ask that of her."

Continues on page 22

Father's sex change does not alter custody, court says

Girl, 6, calls parent Mommy and Daddy; cautious in public

By Anne Marie Owens
National Post

A father's decision to change his gender from male to female does not constitute a material change in circumstances sufficient to warrant altering a child custody arrangement, an Ontario court has ruled.

The recent ruling sets out the premise in family law that a person's transsexuality is irrelevant on its own as a factor in his or her ability to be a good parent.

The custody dispute was launched by Margaret Saliba after learning Howard Forrester, with whom she had lived for three years and had one child, wanted to live his life as a woman and declared himself to be a lesbian.

The child's father has officially changed his first name from Howard to Leslie, and altered his appearance to appear as a woman. He lives his life as a woman, although there have been no surgical changes so far to accompany this transition from male to female.

Prior to the revelation about

transsexuality, the couple had agreed to an equal-time custody arrangement. In custody disputes, any parent seeking a material change in the terms of his or her custody agreement must demonstrate to the court there has been a material change in the circumstances affecting the child.

In this case, Justice Theo Wolder, of the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton, ruled "the applicant's transsexuality, in itself, without further evidence, would not constitute a material change in circumstances, nor would it be considered a negative factor in custody determination."

Joanna Radbord, the Toronto lawyer who defended the father, said the decision could inspire other transsexuals, who often give up fighting for custody because they assume the justice system will be biased against them.

"We live in a transphobic culture ... but it's clear that the test for custody and access is always the best interests

of the child," said Ms. Radbord, who described the relationship between father and child in this case as amazing.

"The best thing for a child in any custody dispute is for both parents to have equal access," the father said in an interview. "If you actually love your child, that should be the issue. You're supposed to want what's best for your child."

In his ruling, Judge Wolder said the evidence showed a happy child who has positive relationships with both parents.

"Frankly, it is remarkable how little impact all this storm swirling about the parties has had upon this little girl," he said. "It appears from the evidence that [she] is a very well-adjusted, happy, healthy little girl, who in her own way has been able to accept the changes in her father and continues to enjoy a healthy relationship with her father, now a woman psychologically."

The child, who is six, uses both Mommy and Daddy to refer to her father, although she is cautious about using Daddy in public when people might overhear.

The father says most people do not know she is genetically a man and believe she is a single mother: "I think right now it's easier for kids and society

Continued on page 25

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Quimper, in Northern France, has been a centre of faience (tin glazed earthenware) manufacture since the 17th century. It is best known, however, for the popular wares produced in the 19th and 20th centuries. Typical painted decoration includes milkmaids and country folk in traditional rural and Breton-style costumes portrayed in a naive style and surrounded by a border of simply-painted flowers. The decoration is in a traditional high fired palette, with colours including blue, orange, yellow and green on a white or creamy ground

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TAX CHANGES FOR THE YEAR 2001

by Darren Kregar
Economical Tax Services

Following is a summary of tax changes that you may (or may not) want to know. Unfortunately, you cannot claim common-law partner status for the current tax return that is due before April 30, 2001.

Basic Personal Amounts & Tax Rates

The basic personal amount has been increased to \$7,231 in 2000. If you made less than this amount you will not have to pay any tax. This increase is a result of the federal government change to full indexation. Prior to the 2000 federal budget, tax brackets, rates and credits were indexed to changes in inflation only when the price index changed by three or more percentage points in a year. As of January 1, 2000 all amounts that were partially indexed are now fully indexed. The lowest tax bracket now includes income up to \$30,004, the middle tax bracket is for income between \$30,004 and \$60,009, and the highest tax bracket is for income in excess of \$60,009. The middle tax rate has been reduced to 25% (from 26%) and will eventually drop to 23% over the next 5 years.

The 2000 federal budget reduced surtaxes by increasing the level at which the 5% surtax kicks in. The amount for the year 2000 is \$15,500 (from \$12,500). This means that you will likely not pay any surtax unless your income is over \$75,000.

Capital Gains

Capital gains inclusion rates have changed from three quarters to two-thirds to half of the amount. You will need to know exactly when you sold your capital assets to be able to calculate at which rate you must use. If you disposed of any capital assets before February 28, 2000, the inclusion rate is three-quarters. Any dispositions after February 27 and before October 18 (my birth-

day) are included at two-thirds. And finally any asset that you sold after October 17 is included in income at fifty percent.

Provincial Tax Calculations

Until now, provincial tax has been calculated as a percentage of basic federal tax (Except for Quebec). Starting this year, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick will move to a new system called: Tax-on-income (TONI). The change will allow each province to calculate its own tax brackets, rates, deductions and credits. If you prepare your return by hand, this means you have more calculations to make. If you use a computer program, be sure to keep up to date on any new provincial deductions and credits to which you may be entitled.

Family Care

The disability credit has been extended to include individuals who must undergo therapy several times each week to sustain their vital functions. The therapy sessions must total at least 14 hours per week. In prior years, any unused portion of the disability credit could be transferred only to a child, spouse, parent or grandparent. New rules now allow the credit to be transferred to a brother, sister, uncle, niece or nephew as well.

A new credit has been introduced for families caring for children with severe disabilities. The base for the credit

equals \$2,941, and is reduced by the amount of child care expenses and attendant care expenses claimed for the child in excess of \$2,000. The full credit will mean tax savings of \$500.

The rules for the attendant care deduction previously allowed a deduction only if an attendant was required to enable an individual to be employed, carry on a business, or carry on funded research. Under recent changes, the deduction may be claimed if an attendant is required to enable an individual to attend school.

The Canada Child Tax Benefit has been increased by \$70.00 for each child to \$1,090 annually, plus an additional \$76.00 for the third and subsequent children. An additional \$216 per child under the age of seven when no child care expenses are claimed. Once you reach family income of \$30,004, these benefits are phased out.

Students

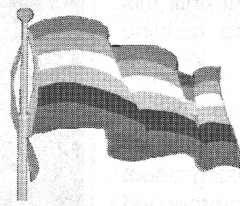
For the last few years the first \$500 of scholarships, bursaries and fellowships have been tax-free. This tax free portion has been increased to \$3,000.

Part-time students are still eligible to claim an education credit of \$60.00 per month while in school and full-time students are allowed to claim \$200 per month. Note: Students must claim their tuition and education credits first before transferring any amounts to parents, spouses, or grand-parents.

New Name

Even though Revenue Canada has changed their name effective November 1999, many of still call Revenue Canada - Revenue Canada. Their new name is Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

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Darren Kregar is the owner/operator of Economical Tax Services (ETS). ETS will be offering all 'VOICE' readers a 20% discount on the completion of their personal tax return. Economical Tax Services is located at 22 King St. S. on the lower level in Uptown Waterloo. ETS will also be opening a second location in Highland Hills Mall in Kitchener.

A Perspective on Family Relationships

By Melissa M. Smith



I don't like coffee. I never have, and at the age of 40 it doesn't appear that I ever will. I've even tried forcing myself to like coffee. I've tried it every imaginable way. Unfortunately, there is no amount of cream, sugar, or Star Bucks syrup that can make it palatable enough for me to choke down. I don't even like coffee flavored ice cream. What's entirely bizarre about my dislike for coffee is that I love the smell of coffee brewing. There's something uniquely comforting about that smell combined with that of toast crisping in the toaster. It's just the taste I can't get past.

I have never been close to my family. My sexuality is largely responsible for my familial alienation. I grew up in a deeply religious family. Known as the infamous "PK" or preachers kid. Went away to a religious college at the age of 16. Spent many of the years from the age of 12 to the age of 22 in conflict between coming to terms with my sexuality versus maintaining the religious beliefs my family still hold to this day. One day I finally decided that I could no longer live my life based on what someone else determined was right for me. So I began my own personal "soul" searching. I finally came to understand that I needed to believe what both my heart and my head knew to be right and true, not what someone else wanted.

Not having close family ties did not make my coming out to them any easier. In fact, it only served to increase the chasm between us. For the past 18 years my communication with my family has been limited to the essentials. An occasional birthday greeting. The perfunctory gift at Christmas. Everything nice and polite. Lot's of talk about the weather and how the job's coming along. No visits, no details about anything that matters. Even as my mother lay on her deathbed my presence was not welcome. She died without us ever

having the opportunity to come to some sort of terms with each other.

For years it all bothered me. How dare they, those self-righteous hypocrites? They never got to know ME, the real me. Their loss, I thought. But the truth of the matter is that it was a loss for all of us.

This past Christmas I received from my brother the obligatory Christmas gift in the mail. Not very imaginative, my brother. Every year the same gift. Finally I thought, enough is enough. I sent him an email. I said that I didn't understand his gift. Why would he send me a gift when the rest of the year he ignored my existence? I told him that we had reached a point where we either needed to start getting to know one another and build a relationship, or where we should stop with the niceties and go our separate ways in life. I waited. I figured his silence was his response.

Finally, after three weeks, a response.

"Dear Sister" it began. "Obviously we are miles apart in more ways than geography. But I am willing to try if you are."

WOW!

What will the future hold for my brother and me? Only time will tell. Family relationships are, at best, difficult. But at least we are both in a place where we are willing to listen. Listening is the foundation for beginning the process of healing. It is not until this happens, that any chance for building a relationship can occur. What a powerful lesson!

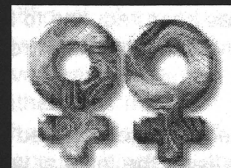
This morning, as I sat down to send him an email, I began thinking about the similarities between my brother and coffee. Although there are many things about coffee that I don't like, there are some aspects of coffee that I

do like. Perhaps, just perhaps, this is a good place to start. To focus on what I do know I like about my brother, and not try to force the issues that I know we will never agree on. Rather, to focus on learning things about each other that we have never known before.

My response to his email begins "Dear Brother. Let's try. Thank you for the Kona coffee you sent at Christmas time. I think there's something about coffee that I would like to share with you..."

Melissa M. Smith is a freelance writer who lives with her partner and their family, both 2 legged and four-legged, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. You can contact her via email at sbtrain@islandnet.com

LESBIAN DISCUSSION GROUP



Returns Monday March 5 2001

7pm - 9pm

A discussion group for lesbian and bi women who want to discuss issues and interests relevant to women.

This group will meet at The Wholistic Health Shop and Juice Bar, 119 King St. W., 7-9 pm.

For more information please call A.J. at [redacted] or email:

[redacted]
<http://www.thevoice.on.ca>
Click on Lesbian Discussion

Tomlin Comes Right Out With It

Never wanting to be "exploited or tabloidized," the beloved comic's discretion has frustrated many, but there's no mistaking her "Yep" this time.

It's really not news to anyone who's been paying the least bit of attention that protean comic actress Lily Tomlin is a lesbian — she's been with her partner and writer Jane Wagner for three decades now. But she's made clearer, more direct and less qualified public statements about it recently that ever before in the January 22 issue of *Us Weekly* now on the newsstands and in an interview with Ann Northrop broadcast on the New York City cable TV show *Gay USA*. She explained to *Us Weekly* that, "I don't like to talk about my private life in any detail, but I don't disavow my private life. I also don't want to become someone's poster girl, either. And you know, that's been somewhat difficult in terms of the movement. I've tried to be as simple and direct as I can without being exploited or tabloidized." She told Northrop that, "I know politically why, and I know socially why, but, in my real heart, I don't feel anybody needs to be identified in any limited way, narrow, you know, some specific way," and went on to explain that, "I related as a woman and a feminist long before I related as a gay person."



She's not a politician, she's a performer, and at 61 she's quite a busy performer. The *Hollywood Reporter* says she just signed up to play a ditz high school guidance counselor in Paramount's *Orange County*, scripted by Mike Chuck & Buck White (son of gay Soulforce leader the Reverend Mel White). She's currently very successfully reviving on Broadway *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, the stunning one-woman tour de force Wagner wrote for her. She has fond fantasies of getting away from the hustle of the Big Apple that truly reflect how urban her real life has been: she told *Us Weekly*, "I wish I lived on a farm. Too bad we can't have our apartment in New York but [also] have a henhouse and go collect eggs. I'd just pick the eggs in the morning and then lie in the hammock the rest of the day."

<http://www.planetout.com>

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Saturday February 17

Chairs For Charity & Art Auction at the Kitchener City Hall Rotunda (see page 5 ad and details)

February 28

"Improving the Access and Quality of Public Health Services for Lesbians and Gay Men." is the topic for this month's Hot Topics in Health, presented by the Waterloo Region Community Health Department. All are welcome. 11am - noon
Community Health & Social Services Building
Room 508
99 Regina St S
Waterloo
(The Ontario Public Health Association position paper by the same name can be found at www.opha.on.ca/publications/index.html)
For more information call Dianne Roedding - [REDACTED]



Coming in March

Monday March 5

Lesbian Discussion Group (see page 18)

March 8

International Women's Day (see page 20)

Glow 30th Anniversary Celebration will take place with events from March 10 - 16. For more information call 884-GLOW or email gllow@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca
Details to follow in our March issue.

Do you have an event that you'd like to publicize? Get the word out by letting us know about it so we can include your event in our events section.
[REDACTED]

TOWN DRIVES OUT GAY FESTIVAL ORGANIZERS

Residents of Swan Hill, Victoria, Australia, pop. 10,000, have driven Scott Wheatland out of town because he was organizing a festival celebrating gay survival in rural areas.

Wheatland also had to shut down the restaurant he had run for a year after anti-gay residents boycotted it.

"I am moving to Melbourne because I don't feel comfortable here," Wheatland told a local newspaper. "I can't get work any more. It's very sad. I was born in Swan Hill and thought I would be here a long time."



One vocal opponent of the festival, Presbyterian preacher Martin de Pyle, said the event "would have been nothing less than a [homosexual] recruiting drive."

"Homosexuals live in this town in peace and we don't mean them any harm," de Pyle said. "It was only when they wanted to drive an agenda in the town that the town said we don't want it."

HERSTORY

Women and Anger

By Becky and Angela



When a relationship of many years ends, you are thrown into a whirlwind of emotions.

There is grieving for what was and what could have been. If you were deeply in love there is heartache. You may feel guilt for things you wish you would have done differently and you will probably go through a stage of anger.

Anger can be a silent killer to women. Some of us have been taught that is not acceptable for a woman to show her anger. Throughout our lives it has been our fathers, brothers, and uncles that have shown anger. Our mothers, aunts and sisters were the ones crying in the shadows. This is what we learned and this is what we will teach our children. Is this acceptable?

Anger is an in-your-face emotion. Anger is an emotion that is always looking for someone to blame. Anger is also a mask. It is covering up something. Something that we do not want to look at. Many parents dump their fury on their teenagers when they come home late a night. Their anger comes up quickly to protect them from their fear of losing someone so precious. This initial burst of anger lays the groundwork for a parent-child relationship filled with mistrust, shame and more anger. Instead, if the parent had been honest and owned the anger as a cover for fear, the child would have developed more respect for his/her parent and learned something more valuable.

Have you ever noticed the wonderful dance of anger? You get mad and you yell at someone. What do you feel next? Shame? Most people do. You feel ashamed for acting in such a way. So, in order to protect ourselves from feeling this shame, we stifle our anger. We convince ourselves that we are not really angry and thus our capacity for emotional expression is thwarted. If you stifle one emotion, you end up stifling them all. You are no longer passionate in anything. Having anger is part of being a whole person. Being emotionally fit means

being able to express the whole range of emotions, including anger.

Anger is not something to be afraid of. The only time anger is a problem is when we do not take responsibility for it, when we do not express it and when we express it inappropriately. If we do not own anger, we blame others and are not honest in our communication. This results in destroyed relationships, fearful children, and a lot of personal turmoil and pain. If we carry unresolved anger around, it awaits an opportunity to exit. It may be a little boom or a BIG BOOM, but it will come. And when it does come, we must own our overreaction. When we look at what is going on inside us and acknowledge where this anger is actually coming from, our anger in the present automatically becomes more appropriate.

Anger obstructed is like a wood stove when the chimney is blocked. If the smoke cannot escape by the direct route, it will seep out in some destructive, devious way. There is a difference between feeling anger and venting it. Venting is getting our anger out by ranting to someone else about it. This does not solve the problem because we are not connecting to it in any real way. We stay stuck, unable to feel what needs to be felt and to make the changes that need to be made.

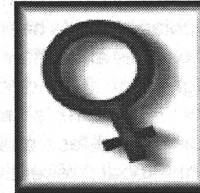
When we feel anger, we will break through to its source, our hurt and pain and then we will be able to grieve it fully. Each time we do this it gets easier. The anger will not get as 'loud' and we will move through the process much more quickly. We will begin to notice that things that once triggered us no longer have that power.

We are not talking about being perfect here, we are talking about being responsible. If we do dump, which we undoubtedly will, we can take it as an opportunity to feel, and then we need to apologize.

Becky and Angela, of Kitchener, are a mother and daughter team. A Voice Exclusive.

March 8, 2001

Canadian Women: Raising Our Diverse Voices for Positive Change!



Canada will celebrate *International Women's Week (IWW)* from March 4 to 10, 2001, with the highlight being *International Women's Day (IWD)* on March 8. The theme for *International Women's Day/Week 2001* is "Canadian Women: Raising Our Diverse Voices for Positive Change!". This theme was chosen to emphasize opportunities where women have raised their voices, have been heard and have made a visible impact. It acknowledges the influence of Canadian women to affect positive change for women in various aspects of life on the local, regional, national and/or international scenes - be it through paid or unpaid work - especially as the United Nations has declared 2001 the *International Year of Volunteers*.

March 8

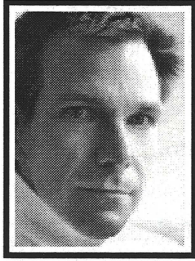
"Margaret Mead: Feminist or Sell-out?" presented by Dr Harriet Lyons. 7 - 8:30 pm at Kitchener Public Library auditorium, 85 Queen St S., Kitchener

FREE

Light refreshments. All welcome

Co-sponsored by the Waterloo Region IWD Committee and the Kitchener Public Library. For more information - KPL 743-0271 or IWD 576-8447 (evenings)

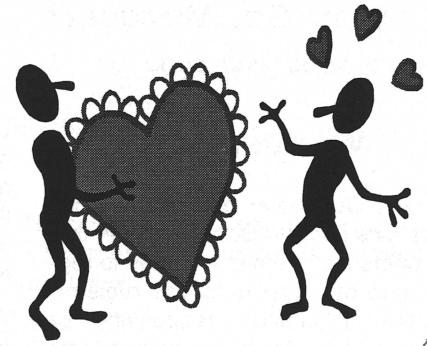
HIS-STORY



Confessions of a Late Bloomer

Rex Harrison, Valentine's Day and I

By Randy Siegel



I bet Rex Harrison's valentines box wouldn't have been nearly empty, but then Rex Harrison wasn't in the fifth grade at The Westminster Schools either.

Rex Harrison became my fifth grade role model after I saw him perform in the traveling show of *My Fair Lady* at Atlanta's "Theatre Under The Stars."

In "My Fair Lady," Harrison played the role of Professor Higgins, "a confirmed bachelor," who transformed a cockney flower girl into an elegant duchess by teaching her to talk, dressing her up and doing her hair.

I wanted to be Rex Harrison's Professor. While the writing may have been on the wall, I was too young at the time to read it. It would be years later before I realized that I was gay.

The following day, I made an entrance into Mrs. Whitehead's homeroom wearing a gray wool cardigan, red felt vest with brass buttons and bright blue polyester dickie, not unlike Rex Harrison's Professor Higgins. My fellow students were amused.

"What a sissy!" Jim Hudson whooped as the rest of the classed howled.

"Let them laugh," I thought, fighting not to cry. I had more class, grace and style than all of them put together.

"Professor Higgins was different, too," I rationalized. "And what's so bad about being different?" Little did I know my question would all too soon be answered.

Valentine's Day was less than a week away, and in preparation Mrs. Whitehead asked us to bring a shoebox to school. We would be making valentines boxes.

The following day, we decorated our boxes. Mine was wrapped red construction paper with two interlinked paper doily hearts. Simple, yet elegant, just like Rex Harrison would

have done. I proudly placed my valentines box on my desk.

That weekend, my mother and I went to Woolworth's and bought a giant bag of Peanuts valentines. Sunday was spent addressing cards to each of my classmates. I added extra flourishes to my "As", "Ls", "Rs" and "Ys." Mother agreed it created an elegant effect.

On Monday, I placed the individually-addressed cards into each of my classmate's boxes praying some of my classmates would reciprocate if nothing else than out of a sense of obligation.

On Tuesday afternoon, my box was empty except for one card from Marshall Simpson. Marshall was even less popular than I, for it was reported that Marshall had doo-dooed in his pants in the first grade. Kids don't forget these things.

On Wednesday, the day before "V Day," Lila Sue Jackson, the most popular girl in the class, began bragging that her box was crammed full of cards. I shook mine and it barely rattled. I acquired only a few more cards.

When Thursday morning arrived I didn't want to go to school. I dreaded opening my valentines box in front of my classmates. I knew, however, that as painful as the day would be, it couldn't be worse than admitting to Mother that I was a nerd. Bravely putting on my gray cardigan, red vest and blue dickie, I got dressed for school.

At breakfast, a bright red valentine was perched against my orange juice glass. It was from Mother. As usual, she had also signed Dad's name. I wondered why it was that Dad never signed his own name. He probably thought his son was a nerd, too.

It was Mrs. Cotton's turn to drive carpool. As I climbed into the wood paneled Buick station wagon she

gushed a cheery "Happy Valentine's Day!" I was silent.

At homeroom, Mrs. Whitehead told us we would have to wait until after lunch to open our valentines boxes. As my classmates groaned with impatience, my sense of doom deepened.

At the appointed time, Mrs. Whitehead gave the signal. The classroom exploded in excitement as my eager classmates tore open their boxes. Chuck Lee's shrill voice pierced through the commotion. "Look at all these cards!" he yelled as he poured what seemed like hundreds of cards onto the tiny wooden desk.

Looking from side to side to ensure no one was looking, I quietly slid the top to one side and peeked in. My heart stopped. One, two, three, four -only seven cards!

On the long ride home from school I was again silent. At ten, I was re-evaluating my life. That night before I went to bed, I retired the gray cardigan, red vest and blue dickie. Fitting in became more important than self-expression.

Some childhood lessons are harder to unlearn than others. It was not until I turned 39 that I learned being who you really are outweighs fitting in. At 39, I finally found the courage to come out, divorce my wife and begin living an authentic life.

Today, I am 45 and Valentines Day is less than a week away. My valentines box is overflowing. I am blessed with a group of friends who accept me as I am — gray cardigan, red vest, blue dickie and all.

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.

First Legal Gay Marriages?

Continued From page 15

Will It Be Legal?

Ontario Consumer and Commercial Relations Minister Bob Runciman told reporters that, "When it comes to registration of a marriage, the registrar general of Ontario is responsible for ensuring that the marriage conforms with the law of the land. In the case of a same-sex marriage we take the position that it does not conform with the [federal] definition of marriage and as such we cannot and will not register it."

Although the provinces are responsible for the licensing and registration of marriages, federal law determines who can and cannot wed. Based on common law rather than Canadian statute, "identity of sex" is one of eight federal grounds on which marriage is prohibited. A spokesperson for Canadian Justice Minister Anne McLellan, who added a "one man one woman" definition of marriage to the preamble to last year's Bill C-23 granting gay and lesbian couples equal status with unmarried heterosexuals, told reporters January 15 that the federal government would not view gay and lesbian marriages as legally valid. A lawsuit by eight gay and lesbian couples seeking marriage will be heard by the Ontario Divisional Court later this year, while other legal actions are in progress on the subject in British Columbia and Quebec.

The Reverend Hawkes told the congregation that, "Whether or not the Ontario government deems it wise ... to register these marriages, it does not affect the legal status. Once I sign those documents, the marriage license is issued and the couples will be legally married." When the province returns the documents, expected by the end of the week, attorney Elliot will seek a writ of mandamus to require the province to register the marriages.

The leader of the province's minority left-wing New Democratic Party Howard Hampton was present at the ceremony and urged Ontario to register the marriages. A major national survey in 1999 found that 53 percent of Canadians believed that gays and lesbians should be allowed to legally

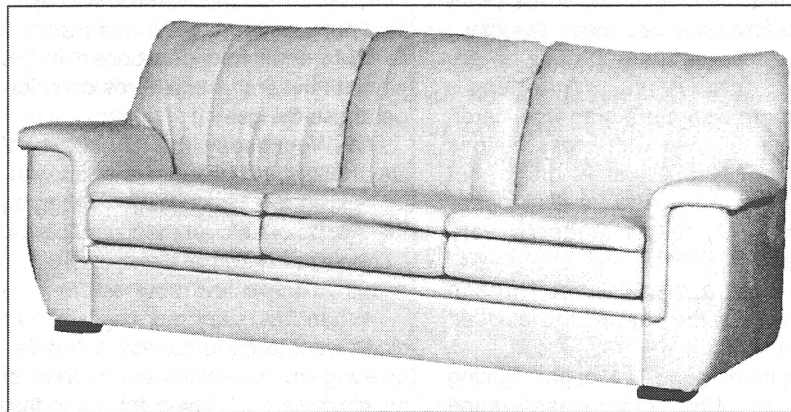
marry.

An Earlier Marriage by Banns

Chris Vogel and Richard North, a gay couple in Winnipeg, attempted legal marriage in 1974 by means of having the banns read at a Unitarian Church, only to have Manitoba refuse to register it and a provincial court nullify the

license. However, that case predated the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the legal rulings based on it which have expanded the civil rights of gays and lesbians.

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MIXED NUTS

By Philip Charbonneau

Hello to all you readers out there, I am your newest columnist. I will be writing to you monthly on a variety of issues that interest me and hopefully you as well. This one is about the debut of the American version of "Queer as Folk" on Showcase.

Well quite frankly I have mixed feelings about it. Having seen the original British version it irks me a little when they mess up the plot. Also the fact that this one seems almost Hollywood-esque is a bit disturbing. In areas it seems almost fake, perhaps even a little "Beverly Hills 90210ish". However, over all it was pretty good.

The casting was all right. They managed to get the character of Michael (played by Hal Sparks) pegged perfect, even Americanizing him from a "Dr. Who" fanatic to a comic book one. Justin is still that cute blond preppy kid in high school that I would have drooled over, although he's a little more suave than I think is appropriate. The token lesbians, Melanie and Lindsay (Michelle Clunie, and Thea Gill) are a vast improvement over the staunchy unrealistic lesbians in the British version. They are good looking (as chicks go), and even get a little make-out scene. Emmett, who in the British version is very much a background character, is quite delightful. He adds that little bit more to Michael's scenes that make them at least semi-interesting to watch. Finally there's Brian; I don't like what they did to this character. They took the age factor out of it by having a younger, or at least younger looking, actor playing the part. Also he is less of a dirt bag in this one. He almost borders on nice. They need to make him more of a jerk; however, he is much nicer to look at and I'm not complaining about his nude scenes either. They are both Fabulous and divine. They other characters, such as Justin's school mate and Michael's mom, haven't had much of a chance to flesh out yet so we'll have to wait and see what's to come.

I enjoyed the fact that it was filmed in Toronto, and even thought I saw a few people I knew. The scenery was well shot, extras well placed, and effects well choreographed. Unfortunately I think this film will give some people the idea that gay bars are filled with gorgeous, well toned, young men that like to have lots of sex and dance. If they ever go to a real one, they will be sorely disappointed. In fact, I would like to know at which club they were filming. I would be there, practically live there, if a place like that really existed.

I also would like to congratulate the producers for not shying away from doing a full blown sex scene, nudity and all. I do believe that they may have even gone farther than their British counterparts. Congratulations as well on having a condom show up in the scenes; it's always good to know that even in fantasy worlds full of hunky hunks they practice safe sex.

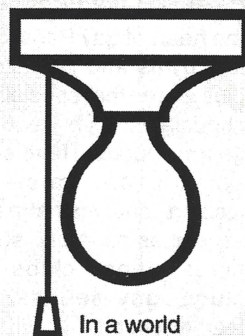
Like I said before, overall this was a good showing. They kept generally to the plot line and didn't hold

back too much. In my opinion I give it a 4 star rating.

Hope you enjoyed my review, and I always welcome your comments or suggestions. Just send them to [REDACTED] with attention to me.

Philip Charbonneau is a resident of Kitchener. This article is a Voice Exclusive.

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BOOKS

Frommer's Gay & Lesbian Europe
by David Andrusia
(Editor), Haas Mroue,
Olson, Donald, Todd
Savage



There's more to queer Europe than gay Paris. Until recently there was no good guide that catered to gay and lesbian tastes and needs. With Frommer's Gay & Lesbian Europe, gay and lesbian travelers can get the lowdown on transportation and lodging, sightseeing and shopping, food and nightlife. But there are also such issues as comfort levels and cultural expectations, finding gay-owned or gay-friendly establishments, meeting fellow gay travelers, and fraternizing with the locals.

If you're heading to Paris, you might want to know about the rustic gay restaurant that looks like a



French farmhouse (complete with dog napping in the corner). Frommer's includes the sightseeing standards, plus extras like the Erotic Museum, Proust's hometown of Illiers-Combray, and Le Marais—the heart of gay Paris. You'll find gyms and bookstores, plus stores that specialize in chocolates, club wear, and gourmet foods. There's a full section on bars—gay, lesbian, and mainstream—as well as cabarets, supper clubs, dance clubs, sex clubs, gay saunas, and leather shops.

There's a lot of tongue-in-cheek cleverness here, with chapter headings like "London: The Queen's at Home," "The Czech Republic: Coming Out of the Past," and "Greece: Where It All Began." There's also sensitive and useful information about what's accepted where, from hotel reservations to public displays of same-sex affection. For anyone who's here and queer but wants to be queer and there, this is the guide to take.

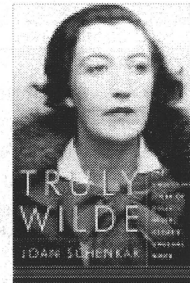
Out on Stage : Lesbian and Gay Theatre in the Twentieth Century
by Alan Sinfield



With the elegant sweep typical of his previous books (e.g., *The Wilde Century*, 1994), Alan Sinfield takes on an entire century of theater—gay theater seems almost redundant by the time he has finished—asserting not only that drama "has been a particular site for the formation of dissident sexual identities" but that, for over 100 years, theater and theatricality have been perceived and experienced as queer. Although scrupulously researched and shaped by a variety of post-structural approaches to literature and performance, *Out on Stage* avoids dryly academic prose, providing a lively and evocative exploration of a history rife with legends, eccentrics, and anecdotes. "It seems right to claim Maugham for gay drama," writes Sinfield, for example. "He embodies so much that is brave and despicable about the pre-Stonewall queer man." An excel-

lent introduction to gay theater and a distinguished contribution to cultural studies at large.

Truly Wilde: The Unsettling Story of Dolly Wilde, Oscar's Unusual Niece by Joan Schenkar



She was lovely, sophisticated, and famous for her witty conversation, even in a social circle that was known for its fabulous talkers. The only child of Oscar Wilde's dissipated older brother Willie, Dolly Wilde (1895-1941) led a life as scandalous and glittering as her uncle's: she, too, loved her own sex, and her longest romantic relationship was with American heiress Natalie Clifford Barney, who was host of the most important Parisian literary salon of the 20th century. Unfortunately for Dolly's posthumous reputation, she "was an artist of the spoken word" whose only written legacy was her marvelous correspondence. Quoting liberally and perceptively from those letters, American playwright Joan Schenkar brings Wilde to life in a modernist biography that is written in prose as sparkling as Dolly's fabled *bons mots*. This is essentially a tale of "squandered gifts and lost opportunities," Schenkar acknowledges, but she successfully provokes readers to share her admiration for Wilde's prodigal generosity with both her talent and her affections.

**Words
Worth
Books**



Author Event! Tuesday, February 20,
7:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian
Church, Waterloo. Featuring author
Catherine Gildiner

"Too close to the falls"

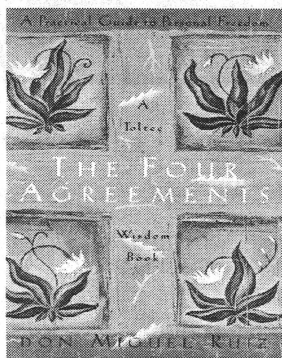
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INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES FOR INDEPENDENT MINDS

Book Review

The Four Agreements

By Melissa M. Smith



I sat down to read "The Four Agreements", by Don Miguel Ruiz, with a skeptical attitude. It looked like one of those touchy-feely "chicken soup" fluff pieces that my friend is always trying to get me to read. An hour and a half later I finished the book and was amazed at the powerful, yet simple, lessons it set forth.

The author uses the "four" agreements to reveal how we as individuals allow our own self-limiting beliefs to rob us of the happiness and contentment that we all seek in life.

The first agreement is to "Be impeccable with your word". This is the most difficult of the four agreements to follow. This means to always speak with integrity and truth, saying only what you truly mean. This also includes avoiding gossiping about others. Ruiz argues that you should always use the power of words in the direction of truth and love.

The second agreement is "Don't take anything personally." In this agreement Ruiz explains that nothing other people do is because of you. What other people say and do is a projection of their own reality, based on their experience and opinion only. By not taking anything personally, it is

a rejection of the emotional garbage that other people try to put on you.

The third agreement is "Don't make assumptions." Never making assumptions allows you to find the courage to ask the questions that need asking and to express the ideas that you really believe in. This requires effective communication in order to avoid misunderstandings. Mastering this agreement is life transforming, but requires practice and discipline.

The fourth agreement is "Always do your best." Your best is going to change from moment to moment, from situation to situation. Your best may be different when you are healthy as opposed to when you are sick. Whatever the circumstance, simply do your best and you will achieve success on a level that cannot be measured by dollars and cents.

If you are in a place in your life where you are ready to conduct some soul searching and self-discovery, "The Four Agreements" is a good place to start.

Father's sex change

Continued from page 16

to deal with two moms than it is to deal with the whole trans issue."

Ms. Saliba and Mr. Forrester began living together in March, 1994. Their child was born in November of that year. Ms. Saliba testified it was a "perfect situation every woman would want in a husband." She said she wanted to marry Mr. Forrester, a daycare worker who did most of the cooking, cleaning and ironing at home and was a major caregiver for his daughter.

"Leslie prepared food for [her], read to her, did the morning and bedtime routine, and shared playtime with [her]. Leslie stayed up nights with her, with the parties taking turns comforting [her] to sleep," court documents say. "Most nights, it would end up that Leslie would have [the baby] on her chest until [she] fell asleep."

The couple separated in 1996 and agreed to equal custody. In July, 1997, the transsexuality was revealed to Ms. Saliba.

"There is no doubt that the disclosure of her transsexuality and of her wish to undergo a change of sex from male to female had a devastating impact upon [Ms. Saliba]," the judge said.

The custody case was launched in the spring of 1999, when it was clear the child's father was intent on living life as a woman. An initial access order prohibited the father from taking the child to "neighbourhoods known to be frequented by transsexuals." The stress in the relationship over the father's move from male to female did not appear to have an impact on the child, who was three years old when the process began, the court heard.

A psychological test found the child was free from any gender identity problems.

"She was so young that they don't really have a sense of their own gender so they're very open," said Ms. Radbord. "She's always known her father as a woman. It's all she's understood."

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COMMUNITY GROUPS

SUNDAYS

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

First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo - Open and diverse congregation respecting a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. Christians, Post-Christians, non-Christians, mystics, pagans and humanists - all are welcome. 10:30 Sunday mornings. 96 Dunbar Road South, Waterloo
www.gpcomp.com/waterloounitarian/

Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCC) 115 Simpson Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4K 1A1. Phone (416) 466-6228
www.mcctoronto.com

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 - Sundays at 3:15 pm at Brunswick Bowling Lanes -

MONDAYS

Frederick St. Mall. For more information contact Katherine at [REDACTED] or Mark at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

The Lesbian Discussion Group returns in March. The group will meet on the first Monday of every month, at the Wholistic Health Shop, 119 King St. W. in Kitchener - 7pm to 9 pm For more information call [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]

www.thevoice.on.ca
Click on [Lesbian Groups](#)

Topic Monday March 5 Relationships

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.

The Rainbow Community Conversation Group

Now meets on Tuesdays in Hagey Hall (UofW) at 7pm. For more information call 884-GLOW.

WEDNESDAYS

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

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@gomorrah.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]

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

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

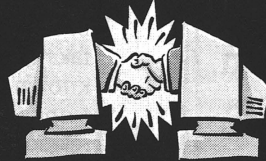
Hamilton Transsexual Peer Support Group (FTM - MTF) If you are post-op or pre-op transsexual or are dealing with gender dysphoria, come join this bi-weekly peer support group. 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Hamilton AIDS Network, 512 James St. N. For further details, please call (905) 528-0207 ext.43, or e-mail: htpspg@gto.net <http://home.golden.net/~kcr/htpspg/htpspg.html>

BI-MONTHLY

PFlag (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meets bi-monthly. PFLAG is a support group for those with an LGBT family member. Children or teens with a gay parent(s) may also seek support from our group. Call Evie at [REDACTED] (Kitchener) or Sue at (519) [REDACTED] (Cambridge) or email them at: [REDACTED]

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COMMUNITY LISTINGS

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

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.

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

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

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 Leslie at [REDACTED] In Guelph call Debbie at [REDACTED]

Want to add a resource?
Contact The Voice today!
[REDACTED]

GUELPH

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

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

HAMILTON

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

Alternatives for Youth- 126 James St. South, Hamilton - 527-[REDACTED]

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

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: gblt@msu.mcmaster.ca www.msu.mcmaster.ca/services/gblt/gblt.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. (905) 541-[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 Secretary - Ron at [REDACTED] or phone (905) [REDACTED]

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

BRANTFORD

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.

To find out more information about anything else happening in Brantford email:

[REDACTED]@yahoo.ca

CAMBRIDGE

Sexual Assault Center: Cambridge.....(519)658-0551

Classifieds

Personals

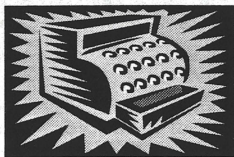
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The Voice Magazine is On Line at:
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On Line

Waterloo-Wellington Regional Pride sponsors two new email lists. One, WWRP is an announce list that will keep you up to date on the activities and plans of the WRRP. The other is an interactive list with the purpose of community-building and the discussion of issues relevant to the LGBT communities of Southern Ontario.

To join one of these lists email:
wrrp@rainbow.on.ca

For further information check out our web site at: www.rainbow.on.ca

The Voice Magazine online has news, articles, tons of links, our Pride Album, and much much more and all there for your convenience.

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The Voice Magazine online - community at a glance!

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Voice Classified Ads cost \$15.00 a month. Advertise your product or services to the LGBT community. Do you have something you'd like to sell? Are you looking for that someone special or want to make new friends or start a new group? Voice Classifieds are a great way to let others know about your product, service, merchandise for sale, or your new group.

If you'd like to place a classified ad our deadline is the 20th of each month.

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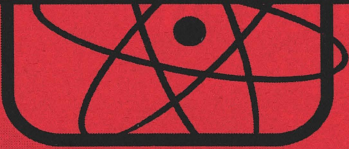
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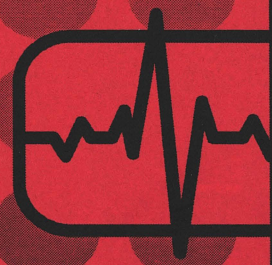

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