

## *The Voice*

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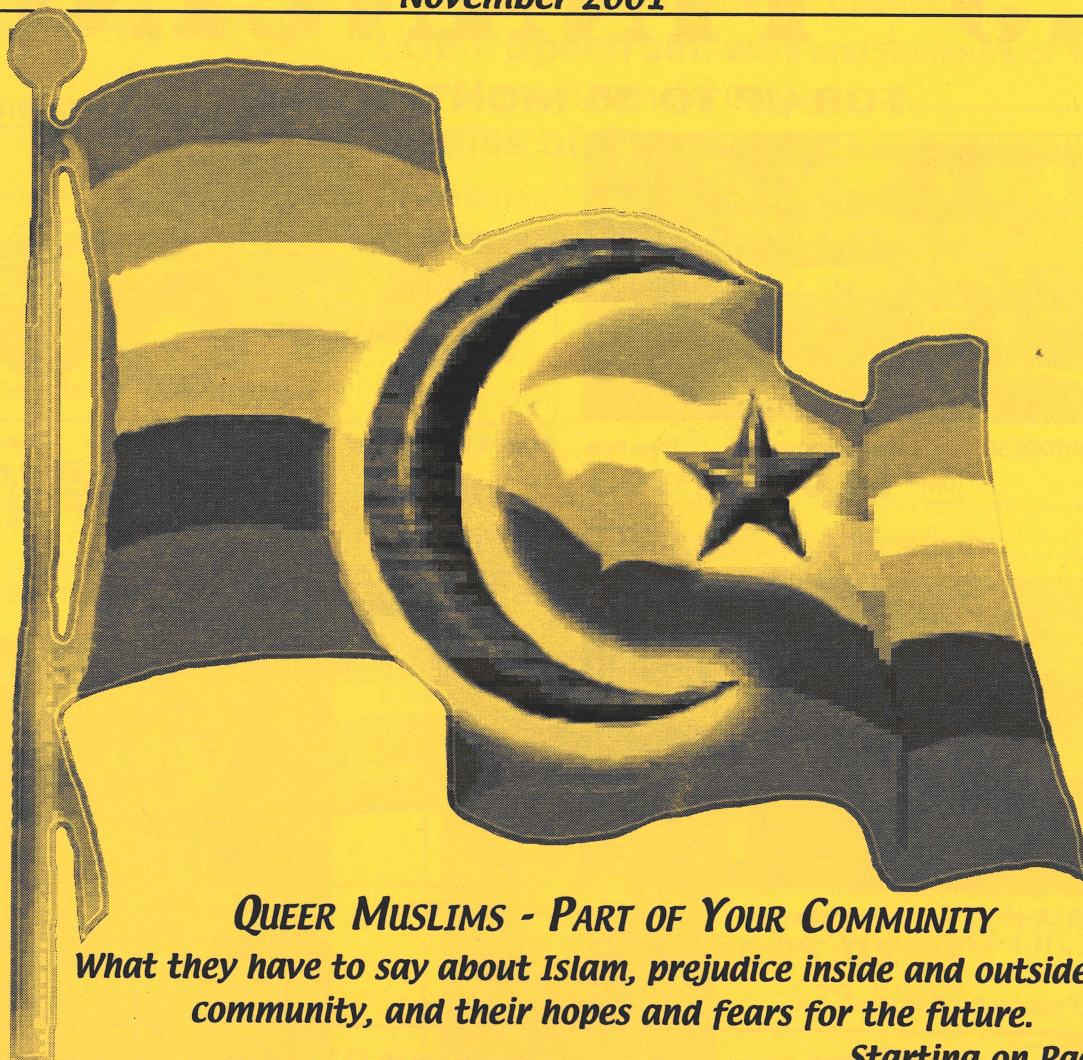
# The Voice

**LGBT/Alternative  
Lifestyles and Culture  
for South Central/Western Ontario**

*Volume Four*

*November 2001*

*Issue Two*



## **QUEER MUSLIMS - PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY**

*What they have to say about Islam, prejudice inside and outside our community, and their hopes and fears for the future.*

*Starting on Page 14.*



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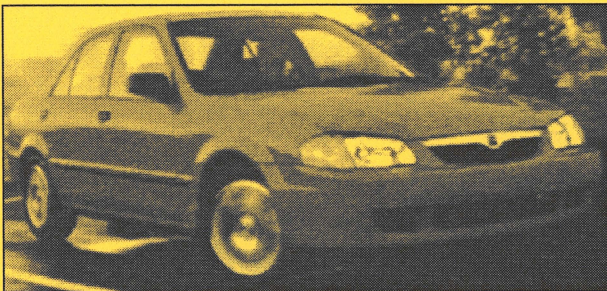
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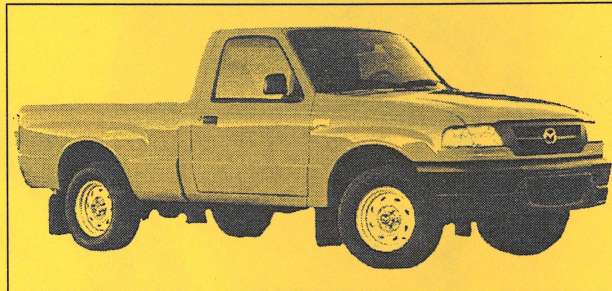
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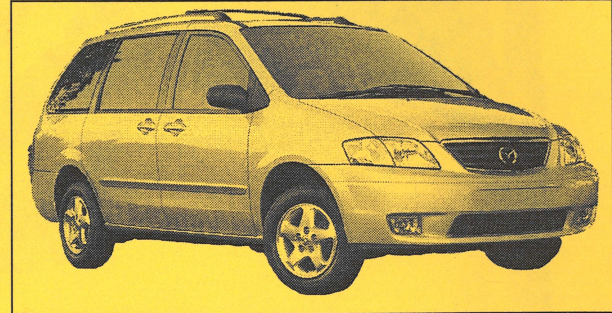
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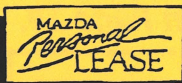
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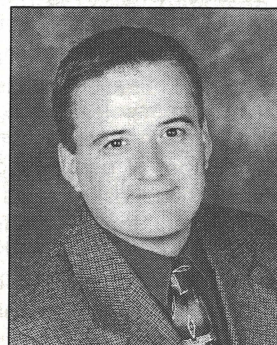
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# FIRST WORDS



## Working For Change

By A.J. Mahari

So many issues, and always so few voices actively speaking out. A minority of activists trying to make things better for the majority. Why do so few people really get involved in trying to create the kind of change that they often agree needs to take place?

Economic slow downs, protests and blocking people from going to work, are these the actions of desperate people? Or are these actions more a reflection of the seriousness of issues that all-too-often go unaddressed?

Do protests work? Or are they more alienating to the organizations and issues that are being protested?

Why do the expressed voices of those who care enough to protest often seem to many to be extremist? Is this just the rationalization that people use to deny the issues that such protesters bring to light?

Why are the number of protesters usually so low when the issues being addressed affect so many people?

I often wonder if many people are so uncomfortable with conflict that they will avoid it and paying attention to some very worthwhile messages in the name of what they consider to be peace. Conflict is necessary for growth and change. Conflict can be a viable tool for shedding light on the darker aspects of our society. This much needed light brings with it a chance to

enlighten people and to work for change.

Working for change means applying action to your thoughts and beliefs and being willing to deal with conflict. Nothing ventured, nothing gained otherwise.

It is so easy to sit idly by and complain about the injustices that you say you care about or that you are aware of at some level. It is much more difficult to lend your voice and support to the process of working to change those injustices.

In spite of all that is productive and positive about our corner of the world, there is still massive injustice. There is also an ever-widening gap between the have's and the have-not's.

If more people would stand up for what they believe in and take part in peaceful protests perhaps then the very act of protesting itself wouldn't appear so extreme to the otherwise apathetic who only pay attention long enough to criticize the chosen action of such a select few.

Change is never easy. The status quo is often doing dangerous disservice to a great number of people. I don't know how effective most protests are. I do know, however, that we are fortunate to have people, in our city, our country, and our world, who care enough to give voice to their convictions.

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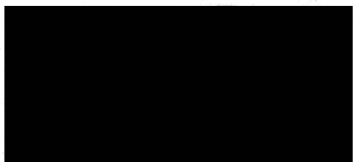
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Congratulations on your wider focus for The Voice. Great Idea! It makes for more interesting reading than we've already gotten accustomed to when reading The Voice. Keep up the great work!

Mark Weiler, Hamilton

I found the articles that dealt with the terrorist attacks of September 11th to be very interesting. I'm so glad that they were included in The Voice. And I agree that widening the focus of the magazine makes perfect sense. As you say, A.J., we are not living on some island just because we are LGBT.

Donna White, Kitchener

Congratulations to A.J. Mahari for expressing herself (The Voice, "On A Personal Note", October 2001) about her experience with the politics of our community. She has given her time to this community by volunteering on Pride and taking nothing but flack for it. I don't know where you get the time, the energy or the dedication to put up with so much. Our community is very fortunate to have you. I only wish more people would realize this. Endless criticism against anyone who works as hard as you do is so unfair. I certainly hope that you will continue to work for our community. As far as me and my friends are concerned you make things better around here.

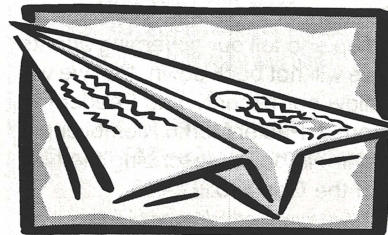
Sarah Smyth, Waterloo

I just had to write to take issue with all the space given to the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo (*The Voice: First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo Vote On LGBT Inclusiveness, October 2001*) What gives? I don't see The Voice giving the same space to other churches, or more specifically to the many Christian Churches out there doing their very best to include gays and lesbians. I was a bit offended as a Christian by all the space given this one pseudo-religion which is really just a catch-all grab-bag for those who do not want to do the work necessary to keep their faiths even in the face of the conflict and pain that it takes for someone like me to remain Christian in spite of those who say I don't belong there.

Marus McKay, London

I'm a 19 year old gay man and I'm not seeing much that I can relate to in The Voice. Is there some way that you can include more stuff that guys my age want to read about? Otherwise though I like The Voice.

Peter S., Waterloo



# Fear Complacency

By Randy Ulch



I was present on October 16, at the (Ontario coalition against poverty) OCAP / Ontario common front (ocf) economic disruption that took place in the financial core of downtown Toronto. I witnessed Citytv's attempt to cover the story. I was on the streets at five am, and witnessed the massive police presence and I viewed the independent video brought into our media center off the street. As a member of the Queer community and as an independent journalist, I have been radicalized by the Quebec city anti-ftaa protest and now even more by the police response to the Toronto economic disruption.

With the new anti-terrorist bill in its third reading before parliament I fear that it will only be a matter of time before they start rounding up anyone with any ties to any alternative group or organization. Just as we cannot afford to return to the closet, or to lose our freedom of expression, we also must be vigilant so that we do not lose any of our rights, including our right to criticize the government. When police have no fear of beating people even when being videotaped, there is a need for many more voices to question in resistance to the oppression we face whenever we stand our ground. One of the tenants of the new bill is revoking the right to silence. Now police can demand that you divulge information to them. Think on this for a moment, a police officer can already pull you off the street and detain you without charges for 24 hours before having to release you or come up with an excuse to keep you in jail. With this new bill they will be given the right to make you talk, all without any worries of recrimination.

These are the concerns that face the wave of political activists after the fall of September Eleventh. We need to stand up and tell our governing agents that we will not back down, that we will not allow our security and freedom to be eroded. Pastor Martin Niemöller put it best in his poem describing the horrors of the Gestapo:

*"First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out — because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out — because I was not a communist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out — because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for me —and by then there was no one left to speak out for me.*

*In Germany they first came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.*

*Then they came for me - and by that time no one was left to speak up."*

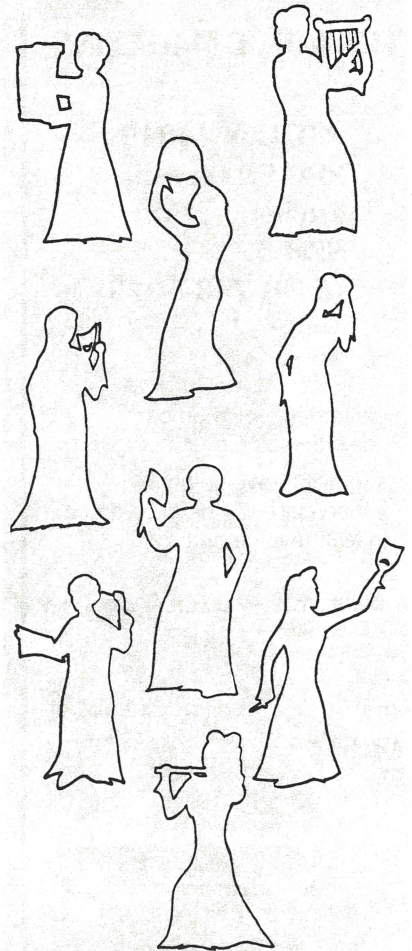
I feel that his words ring out as an eternal warning to everyone.

Kitchener/Waterloo's division of ocap will be participated in its own economic disruption on November 2nd, at Kitchener City Hall. The Guelph action network will be initiated its own economic disruption campaign on November 5th at Royal City Park.

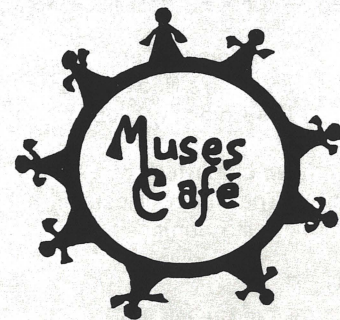
In Ottawa, November 16-18th the IMF/World Bank and G20 summit will take place in an effort to unite against the oppression, and to encourage citizens to stand up for their rights. Rights that can easily be lost to complacency. We mustn't be satisfied with oppression of any kind.

[www.ocap.ca](http://www.ocap.ca) outlines a complete list of the economic disruption campaign. [www.ontario.indymedia.org](http://www.ontario.indymedia.org) for more updates on the planning for the summit weekend in Ottawa.

**Randy Ulch is a resident of K-W and an active member of IMC. This article was submitted to The Voice by Randy Ulch.**



*A theory of life which dissolves  
in a memory of memory and  
bleeds like sand through her  
faintly clapping hands*



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## Gay Community No Longer Home for Gay Arabs

By Mubarak Dahir

I am sitting in a cavernous room on the second floor of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in New York City. It is the room assigned to the evening's meeting of the Gay and Lesbian Arab Society (GLAS).

The room is way too big for the unusually small number of members assembled here tonight. Our words bounce ominously off the ceiling and exposed brick walls like thunder, ricocheting back over us, almost swallowing us up. We are only six tonight. Up two from the last meeting, when we were merely four. The group is surprisingly small during this difficult time, I think to myself. Our numbers should swell from the standard core of attendees, not dwindle like this to near nothing.

And then someone in the group utters the obvious explanation, the one none of us really wants to admit or say out loud: Some people are too afraid to come to a meeting right now. Too nervous to come even here, to a gay community center, symbolic as it is of the safe harbor represented by the gay community to us as gay Arabs. But in these times, even our fellow gay and lesbian citizens see in us the Arab label first. Sometimes, that is all they see. The gay bond that I used to think was so strong - the one that can at times give me a sense of connection to a total stranger in a foreign city simply by making eye contact - feels broken in a way I never guessed imaginable.

I used to think of the gay community as a refuge, a place I could go and be at ease no matter what. In college, long before I was out, I used to slink away to a local gay bar as the only place where I could let down my guard, the only place I could take off that mask I wore in classes and in front of roommates and showed even to my best friends.

Later, the gay community was where I turned, too, when my father rejected me as his gay son. When my mother, who cherished her gay son and the community he lived in, died, it was all the gay men she had known and loved who came together and held me in their collective arms.

There were other times, too, of hardship at work or break-ups with lovers, and it was always the gay community that I turned to as my sanctuary.

But today, as an Arab, even as a gay one, there seems nowhere to turn, no shelter in America.

It is from gay men in my regular local bar that I overhear the most chilling conversation about rounding up Arabs in Brooklyn. It is in some of the gay and lesbian newspapers that I read the most ill-informed pieces on Islam. And it is some of our most prominent gay and lesbian leaders and thinkers who now tell us we should go along with the administration's measures to curb public information and trample civil liberties.

In our oversized room at the community center, GLAS members huddle our folding chairs into a circle and share our personal stories. At one meeting, a member who dresses in Muslim garb tells how he has been the target of constant harassment in his neighborhood, even a physical attack. He's called the police, but the last time an officer showed up, he polished the American flag lapel on his uniform instead of taking notes. Before he left, the policeman said, "You should expect this after what your people did to us."

Another GLAS member describes getting so many suspicious looks, he's almost wary of walking on the street. A newcomer to the group talks about narrowly escaping with his own life from the offices where he used to work in the World Trade Center. For the first weeks following the attacks, he dealt mostly with death and grief. Now, he says sadly, he, too, is facing what it means to be Arab and Muslim in America - regardless of the fact he was a direct victim of the attack itself.

Because of my American mother, you might not look at me and instantly know I am Arab. This ability to "pass" often gives me a different experience as an Arab in America, as I am about to be reminded.

I take a break from the GLAS discussion to head to the men's room. On the stairs, I run into a lesbian with a cane, her legs bandaged. I open the

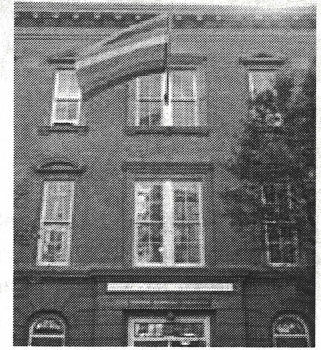


Photo: Robb Davis

door for her and ask about her apparent accident.

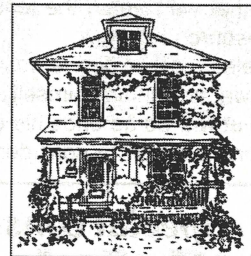
"Oh it was no accident," she retorts bitterly, unaware of the Arab blood coursing through my veins. "A fucking Arab cab driver ran into me. It was an act of terrorism!"

Dumbfounded, I say nothing as she blathers on about the cops promising her that the man who did this would get a particularly harsh sentence because he is Arab, how none of them can be trusted, how they are all out to "get us." She passes from the stairwell into the hall and disappears around the corner.

For a moment I stand there motionless, frozen. Still standing on the landing, I let go of the door, and it swings closed in front of me.

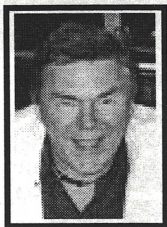
**This article was submitted to The Voice by Mubarak Dahir, an Arab-American living in New York City.**

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## Wars and Rumours of Wars

By Charles W. Westfall

### We are at war.

That is nothing new. Wars and rumours of wars have been part of the fabric, not only of the past century, but of the whole history of the world. We Queers have been at the centre or the target of much of the conflict. That dimension has suddenly expanded in the aftermath of the events of September 11 in New York City and Washington.

So, it is war. Something that we are not used to in the kind of organised retaliation that is unfolding. The fight for equal rights and understanding and acceptance has, for the most part, been fought on ideological grounds. There have been injuries and even fatalities; but, the main weapons have been rhetoric and people power.

My friend, Paul, reminded me, shortly after September 11, that we Queers are no strangers to the kind of hatred that sparked those tragedies. He went on to surmise that we would probably be well equipped to assist those troubled and intimidated by them. However, since there has been no great onrush of straights flocking to the Queer camp to seek consolation, I am tempted to conclude that we remain the least attractive resource for most.

Nevertheless, as someone born into a world of war and finding himself again in a world at war as he ends his days, I think there is much to consider and

remember.

I wasn't big enough to carry a gun at the outbreak of World War II. At the age of two, I wasn't old enough either. But, I was part of it. We all were: men, women, boys and girls. Like the current situation, there was no way out.

One of my earliest memories is of a favourite jigsaw puzzle. It pictured a Spitfire in combat, guns blazing, surrounded by other Spitfires and Messerschmitts. On the ground, the smoke from burning buildings mixed midway with the fire and smoke from the planes. I worked that puzzle so often that its image is firmly imbedded in my mind.

I also remember one of my favourite songs: one I used to sing regularly for visitors. The White Cliffs of Dover. "There'll be Bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover, tomorrow, just you wait and see. There'll be joy and laughter and peace ever after, tomorrow, when the world is free." The velvet voice of Dame Vera Lynn popularised that and a packet of other songs that captured the spirit of the time. They were beacons of hope in a time of darkness. I didn't know what they meant. I only knew that somehow I was affected and moved by them.



I remember blackouts, curfews, air raid wardens, air raid drills and a seemingly endless array of uniformed soldiers marching to the train station, marching to war. I was proud of my father who helped design and make the shoes they were wearing.

I remember food rationing. My family was not rich. We only ever redeemed a few of the coupons available for luxuries like butter, meat and eggs. For a child, that was a break. I would spend hours tearing the unused stamps out of the book and sorting them by colour and number and countless other ways. They were my own special treasure trove.

I remember buying victory stamps. I could never afford enough to fill a page and earn a certificate. I bought what I could.

I remember Saturday Movie Matinees. Movietone News presented pictures of exploding buildings, plummeting planes, flaming cities and smoking ruins. There were images of the wounded and maimed on stretchers. Often, one would muster a smile and make a thumbs-up gesture in a final display of bravado and hope. The images of heaps of emaciated corpses in the death camps will never go away or even fade.

The day the war ended there was dancing in the street and we all waited for the boys and girls to come marching home. Some never did. Of those who did, many returned broken in body, mind and spirit from the horrors they had lived through.

I understood none of this at the time. I'm not sure I understand much more now.

I do know, however, that the freedom, peace and basic well-being we now enjoy have not been bought cheaply. We are still at war because that price must still be paid. Oppression, despot-

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ism, genocide, hatred and imperialism have not disappeared. Poverty, hunger and disease are everywhere. Bigots thrive on waves of popularity churned by ignorance and fear. It is hard to believe that the likes of Jerry Falwell can blame the September 11 attacks on Feminists, Humanists and Gays.

In times like this, then, I remember my own mortality. I only hope that when my days are over, I will have made a difference. That's what generations of brave men and women have done on battlefields throughout the world and throughout time. It is all too easy to forget that the fight for the right does have a price and that that price is paid in lives.

I was too young to fight in World War II. Now, I'm too old to contribute much to the conflict in which we find ourselves.

I recall, however, the words of the Gladiators in the Roman Arena. They greeted the spectators with the words, "We, who are about to die, salute you."

Ironically, that cry is echoed in our times by terrorists who are prepared to inflict wanton and massive destruction in their dying. They offer only insult to true bravery and the very real and ongoing struggle for peace, justice and freedom.

So, let me offer that greeting now. I throw it in the face of the terrorists who have made a mockery of its meaning. I offer it in tribute to the Veterans and Victims of the many wars that have been fought, at home and abroad, in the name of liberty and justice. We Queers have not been aloof from or unaffected by these struggles. In many ways, we are well equipped to deal with them.

Wars and rumours of wars abound. As the bombs and rockets explode and the attack forces mobilise and as the insidious germ warfare proliferates, it is hard to escape the kind of anxiety and fear that leads to panic and chaos.

A quick study of our social evolution is, perhaps, the best way to draw some encouragement and strength for the challenging days ahead. It is a time to remember.

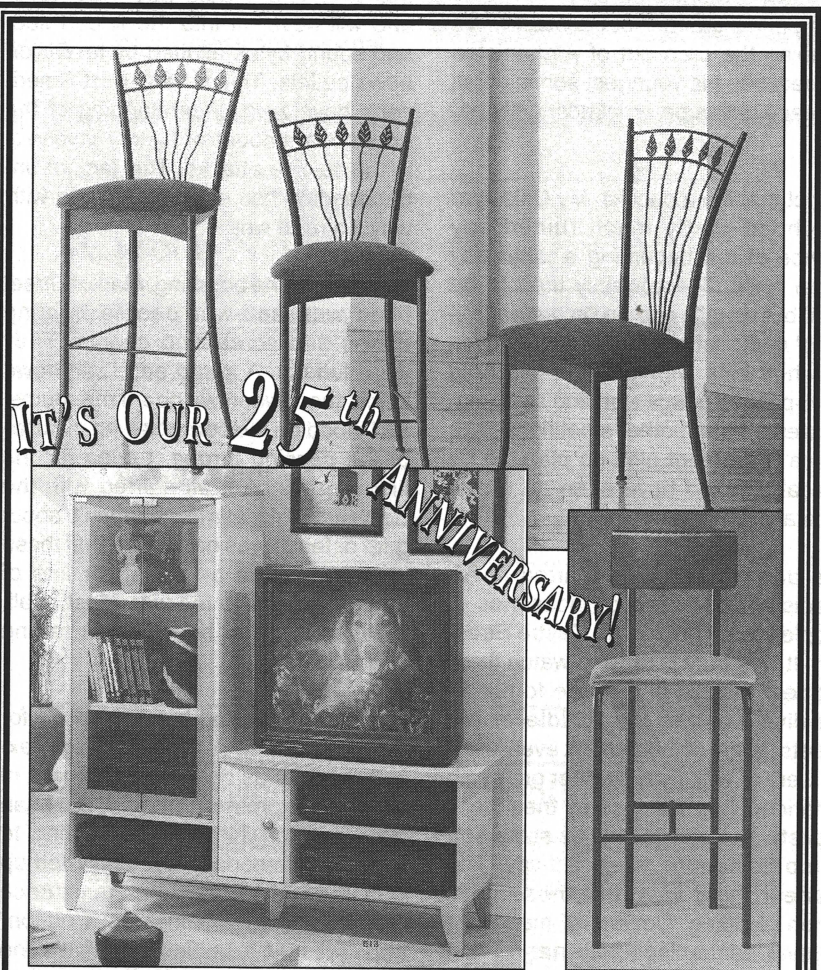
We must remember. Lest we forget.

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

**(Apology regarding a mistake from last month's LGBT Spectrum column)**

**OOOPS!**

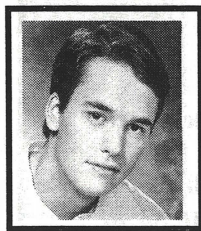
**I was upbraided royally by a Scottish friend for a terrible gaffe in last month's column. I attributed to Rudyard Kipling a line from a poem by Robert Burns. I regret this mix up and promise to drink a double measure of Single Malt Scotch Whiskey to help make up for it.**



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## Asking Hard Questions



### An American Perspective

By Kirk Read



My Army Colonel father is probably rolling in his grave. Not because we're bombing the crap out of Afghanistan but because his youngest son is going to peace rallies on an almost daily basis.

It's not that I'm a pacifist. My Cold War childhood pretty much ruined any chance of me becoming a latter day flower child. I've certainly tried to be floral but usually end up on the periphery of demonstrations, rolling my eyes as white kids with dread locks hold hand-painted peace sign and swap signatures on each other's petitions. The peace movement ain't no place to be cynical. I would have been an utterly substandard hippie.

The day the bombing started in Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands of people turned out for the Castro Street Fair. It was truly bizarre to watch them get beer buzzed and dance to numbing diva wails in the middle of the streets. Many of them didn't even know we were at war. I saw leather guys with American flag hankies in their back pockets, like patriotism was some sort of top or bottom fetish activity. The scariest thing was that these guys weren't kidding. Dozens of men were wearing camouflage with nary a hint of irony.

I've pretty much given up on queer folks having radical politics collectively, but it's been truly spooky to walk through the Castro and see American flags in nearly every business window. Gold's Gym went so far as to stencil a huge flag on its storefront with the words "United We Stand." Every time I walk by, I want to spray paint "Wake Up" on top of it.

There has been a palpable lack of deep discussion about the events that led to

this war. The Middle East has never and will never fit into the fifteen second sound bytes allotted by television news outlets. This is why most Americans have zero understanding of the enormous amount of history involved in the suicide attacks. This lack of understanding has everything to do with why we're at war.

The night of the bombing, Market Street filled with anti-war people beating drums and screaming chants. They were furious. A friend and I ran down to join them when we heard the drums. As I stood on the corner taking pictures of the passing throng, I cried for the first time since it all started with the September 11 attack. It wasn't about grief or fear. I was heartened that these rallies provided an outlet for lots of other reactions to the war. Most of all, I was relieved to hear people raising angry voices.

I've been clenched-jaw pissed off for the past month. A therapist might explain it away as denial or some sort of alternate expression of grief, but I can barely watch TV without wanting to strangle someone. I am totally fed up with network television's insistence that we "come together as a nation" and "present a unified front." It's the same thing parents tell you when guests are coming over and they don't want anyone to know how dysfunctional the family is: be quiet and fall in line. I've been getting dozens of emails from friends who should know better, asking me to send money to the Red Cross or donate blood. To top it off, people started saying that we needed to put aside our differences and get behind zealots like Bush the Second and John Ashcroft. Huh? For those of us who have tasted the bloody policy gloves of these men, this is an alarming concept.

No matter how we feel about the war, we can't just jettison our politics and jump onto the patriotic parade floats. Even though we are overwhelmed by the tragedies of the past month, we must avoid falling into the mainstream lockstep of jingoism and war-mongering. Our military is still rooting out and discharging queer folks, no matter what clumsy pieces of spin control the Pentagon cobbles together. Celebrities have fallen all over themselves to do public service announcements and benefits advertising their grief and their new projects. Gay celebrities have stepped forward to stump for the Red Cross, which still won't take blood from gay men. The Boy Scouts have raised a ton of money from the royalties of "God Bless America," which has been in relentless rotation. And Virginia's Grand Wizards Pat and Jerry have taken this opportunity to blame the entire thing on a laundry list of non-profit target markets: Feminists! Queers! Granted, they offered up a half-assed apology, but their ideas got enormous media play. The damage was done.

The bottom line is that yes, we're in a national crisis, but this is no time to go to sleep and trust Bush the Second to do our bidding. Disagreement is not treason. The most American thing any of us could do is ask questions - hard questions, questions that can't be answered inside of fifteen seconds.

**Kirk Read, of San Francisco, is the author of *How I Learned to Snap*, a memoir about being openly gay in a small southern high school. This article was submitted to *The Voice* by Kirk Read. He can be found at [www.temenos.net/kirkread](http://www.temenos.net/kirkread)**

# The Art of Feng Shui

By Carola Neumann

Western society is learning how to use this ancient Chinese art of placement to enhance relationships, health and prosperity. Using the earth's environment and energy lines, harmony is created through balance. Knowing that our environment directly affects our well-being, I say, why swim against the tide?

Feng shui is a fact of life, not a question of belief. You wouldn't ask someone if they believe in the weather. It exists, just like energy, all around us. Harnessing this energy so it benefits us is the key.

Auspicious spaces in the home or office environment can be created by energizing the five elements (wood, fire, water, metal and earth), balancing the yin and yang of a room, and deflecting or dissolving the inauspicious energy lines (shar chi).

This Eastern philosophy was developed about five thousand years ago. It is one of the eight branches of the Tao Healing Arts which include: meditation, tai chi, acupuncture, herbology, nutrition, and the I Ching. Feng Shui directly translated from the Chinese means 'wind water'.

There are two major schools of feng shui practice today. The Form and the Compass School.

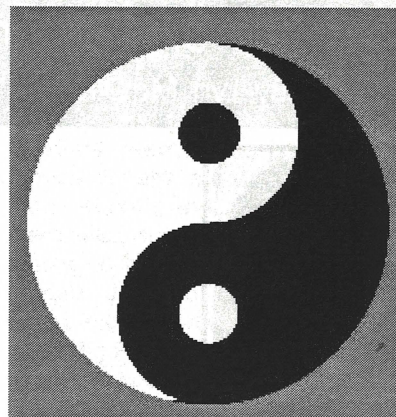
The Form School looks at the presence of mountains, hills, waterways and lakes as well as the quality of the soil and the wind. Animal symbolism is used to describe the different types of elevations ie: dragon or tiger hills, turtle mountains and phoenix footstools. The five elements are also used to describe elevations.

Compass Feng Shui uses very precise formulas for investigating auspicious or inauspicious directions for orienting doors and entrances and placing furniture such as an office desk or a bed. Formulas can be used to locate the best direction for an individual based on their personal Kua number. They also address both space and time dimensions of feng shui.

Feng shui seems to be one of the most recent practices to have entered the mainstream of Western thought. The exploding interest in this subject is reflected in bookstores under such

headings as: Art and Architecture, Photography, Home and Garden, Interior Design, Religion and Spirituality, Divination as well as New Age (which seems funny since it has been around for thousands of years).

Consultations are tailored to fit the needs of each individual. Readings are as beneficial for the homemaker as they are for the business professional.



**Carola Neumann is a K-W Resident and practices Feng Shui. A Voice Exclusive.**

## Carola Neumann

Feng Shui Practitioner

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health/family

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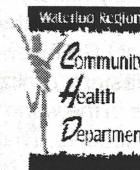
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# The Big Picture

By Lyn McGinnis



I want to thank Voice editor A.J. Mahari, for opening up our community publication to the larger, interconnected world we all live in.

This shift was in the works for some time, but given the events of September 11, 2001, it was the perfect time to broaden this community forum. In a culture exalting the individual, we have suffered from an infantile self-absorption about our issues. We have also shown a dangerous ignorance of the connection between all oppressions and the interconnected web of human experience.

I will deal with these ideas under four subheadings. "Between Ourselves," "Our Allies," "Our Common Enemy," and "The Big Picture."

## Part One - Between Ourselves

In my "First Words" column in September's issue of *The Voice*, I spoke about how our narrow sense of identity harms our community. A gay man not knowing about the pioneering work of feminism and joining forces with reactionary attackers of this legacy is completely ignorant. Without feminism there would have been no Gay Liberation!

A gay man who truly knows our history will be a feminist!

A lesbian knowing nothing about the extraordinary history of gay male culture is unaware of the foundations of our present LGBT world. Gay male history in Western civilization (let alone elsewhere in the world), includes many horrible tragedies. These include those in the Middle Ages (when they were persecuted at the same time as women

labeled "witches"), and during the Holocaust. More recently, this includes massive losses due to AIDS. To show contempt and dismissal of this culture dishonours the shoulders we stand on, enjoying the luxury of freedom from state-sponsored violence.

**"Every community shelters its own worst enemies — the purist and the specialist. The purist excludes any not fitting their narrow definition of membership. The specialist deals with their oppression while ignoring all others."**

A lesbian who truly knows our history will honour and celebrate the gay male experience as being integral of her own!

Lesbians and gay men knowing nothing about the invisible (bisexual)

and highly visible (transgender) minorities and their roles in all of our liberation is beyond a shame. The famous Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1968 were largely carried out by Transgender persons, paving the way to our annual Pride Days. For lesbians and gay men to pour contempt on bisexuals, who were always in their ranks fighting the good fight, and transgender persons, who by their very visibility, are truly the first to take all the homophobic abuse, is disgraceful! Lesbians and gay men are acting like bullied children in the school yard, who despite knowing how painful the experience is, will given the opportunity become bullies themselves.

Lesbians and gay men truly knowing our history will honour bisexuals and transgender persons as integral parts of our community.

While we have different experiences, we will never be whole until we listen and learn from each other. Only when we see everyone as part of the same queer family, will we be ONE community.

## Part Two - Our Allies

In last month's *Voice* there was an

article about the vote at First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo welcoming and including LGBT persons in its community. This vote also signaled the Unitarians as publicly standing up for social justice for us in Waterloo Region and beyond. Unlike the MCC, this congregation is mostly heterosexual and very liberal when it comes to any member's "spiritual orientation." Only a very small minority would identify themselves as Christian. Since this vote, a new committee has formed called "Unitarians of Waterloo Interweave Network," ("Interweave" is a continental Unitarian organization dedicated to LGBT issues) or U-WIN. You will occasionally see contributions from U-WIN in future editions of *The Voice*. Like many progressive organizations, this congregation has a statement in its Bylaws that it will not discriminate against a host of groups.

"This congregation affirms and promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person. In granting Membership, in its programming, its hiring practices and the calling of religious professionals the Congregation will not discriminate against any person because of their race, ancestry, place of origin, gender identification, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, marital status or disability."

It is high time the Queer Community had a similar statement! Not only must we get over ourselves and our petty, ignorant attitudes to other members of our very small family, we need to grow up and see we have common cause with all other marginalized groups. As can be seen by other articles in this edition relating to Queer Muslims, we have a long way to go in showing real understanding and maturity towards those we should feel a common bond with.

"Each oppressed group often wears its oppression like a badge of honor.

Black-power enthusiasts are just as capable of proving how black people are more oppressed than anyone else as lesbians are of proving they are more oppressed. Some of us get caught in the middle of this competition for the title of 'more oppressed than thou,' and it is easy to resent those merely paying lip service to anyone else's cause."

American author Dajenya, a black-lesbian activist, wrote this in the article, "Sisterhood Crosses Gender Preference Lines" in the Winter, 1990 issue of *Lesbian Contradictions*. It points to troubling prejudices existing within and between different communities struggling for social justice.

Every community shelters its own worst enemies — the purist and the specialist. The purist excludes any not fitting their narrow definition of membership in the community. The specialist deals with their oppression while ignoring all others. Both represent a small mindedness that never served us well and we can no longer afford.

While we have different experiences, we will never be whole until we listen and learn from each other. Only when we see everyone as part of the same human family struggling against structures meant to keep us separate and weak, will we be ONE community.

### Part Three - Our Common Enemy

Until we can see homophobia, sexism, racism and other oppressions as part of the same system, we will remain isolated and weak. We will continue to fight amongst ourselves and other marginalized groups while the elite's laugh at us all. They naturally prefer to deal with isolated, powerless persons than united coalitions - and we oblige them!

In continuing this mutual misunderstanding, we all perpetuate the myth the problem is simply disaffected individuals, instead of fundamental flaws in the entire social fabric. All forms of intolerance and oppression are interconnected. Each group could gain understanding of the larger picture if we could only build bridges to each other.

The status quo separates everything and everyone into either/or categories. Evidence of its continuing power appears when we, who are victims of bigotry turn into bigots ourselves!

Everyone, regardless of religious background, ethnic origin, gender identification, sexual orientation, economic or health status, has an internalized set of outdated cultural perceptions. This inherited ignorance and fear are a legacy we all have to overcome. We

**"It is time to dispense with our luxurious separateness and begin to build bridges between our sexual, gender, racial and other class solitudes. These islands of difference only perpetuate our isolation and ineffectual presence before the elite's power structure."**

have so much to learn from the emerging consciousness of the incredible diversity of humanity. This consciousness is the collective creation of previously silenced voices now rising from their various quarters. Their aim is to create an inclu-

sive society celebrating diversity.

While we have different experiences, we will never be whole until we listen and learn from each other. Only when we see everyone as part of the same human family struggling against structures meant to keep us separate and weak, will we be ONE community.

### Part Four - The Big Picture

To their great credit, many born with white, heterosexual privilege are now becoming more aware of the Big Picture. This furthers the eventual dream of not only coalition between minorities, but also an alliance with the majority. Laura Johnson is a freelance writer from New York who wrote an article titled "Making My Own Way," in it she said:

"I used to say, 'We're all people.' Now I see serious differences in power and consciousness exist. We cannot be 'all people' as long as racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and other such bigotry's thrive. And yes, this means me too. As a member of the white middle class, I need to raise my own consciousness and confront my own ignorance about the realities of other people's lives. 'We're all people,' is my hope for the future, not a present reality."

I can say I am a Transgender, Bisexual person who has the honour of having First Nation blood in my veins.

I also say I am Black, Jewish and Female, because these and millions more tiny gradations on the rainbow spectrum add up to one thing - HUMAN.

Given the terrible stories about Queer Muslims seen in this issue, I also proudly declare I am Muslim, Arab, Iranian, Afgani, and all other racially marginalized persons who have lived among us for years and are now afraid to walk among us. Treat me as you would them and them as me!

The Big Picture is while we have different life experience, on the large scale there is nothing meaningful separating us except our labels. It is time to dispense with our luxurious separateness and begin to build bridges between our sexual, gender, racial and other class solitudes. These islands of difference do us no good and only perpetuate our isolation and ineffectual presence before the elite's power structure.

We have so much to learn and so much to teach each other. Reaching out and forming coalitions with those the mainstream labels "the other" and finding common cause and shared resources will reveal how interconnected we all are. It is the only way we will bring about meaningful, progressive social change and live together in a global village.

**Lyn McGinnis, of Waterloo, is a writer, web and graphic designer. His company is BlueStarWeb Design. He also does ad graphics for The Voice. A Voice exclusive.**

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## Planned Giving

by Bonnie J. Babin,  
Investment Planning Counsel of Canada

With recent budget cuts and less government support, Canadian charities are relying more and more on the goodwill of private supporters. The Canadian government has recognized this by increasing the non-refundable tax credit for charitable donations.

The use of life insurance to make charitable donations provides you with the opportunity to make a more substantial bequest to a favorite charity than you might otherwise be able to make. It also provides you with a tax credit that can be used to offset income taxes.

In order to accrue tax benefits, it is necessary that Canada Customs and Revenue Agency recognize the charitable organization as a registered charity.

### The Tax Advantages

The tax credit can be used each year as you pay the premiums or it can be used to offset taxes that may be payable by your estate in the year of your death. These taxes to your estate can include capital gains tax and tax owing on money that has been registered as an RRSP.

The difference in whether you claim the tax credit annually or in your year of death is determined by who the

owner and beneficiary of the insurance policy are.

	Owner	Beneficiary	Tax Benefit
1	Donor	Charity	None
2	Donor	Estate	Estate
3	Charity	Charity	Donor

In example 1, there is no tax benefit available. Upon the life insured (Donor's) death, the charity, as the beneficiary, would receive the proceeds of the life insurance policy. If you already have a life insurance policy set up in this fashion, it can be changed to provide you with a tax credit as shown in examples 2 and 3. Any cash values on existing life insurance policies are also eligible for the tax credit, however, changing ownership of an existing policy could also trigger a taxable gain for the previous owner. Please contact your Financial Advisor for assistance in making this change.

In example 2, the Donor must designate the charitable donation through his/her will. Upon death, the life insurance would be paid to the Donor's estate and the estate would make the appropriate donation to the charity. The charity will issue a tax receipt to the estate for the amount of the donation. The tax credit is available

to the estate to offset taxes due at death.

In example 3, the Charity is both the owner and the beneficiary of the life insurance policy. The Donor is the life insured and pays the premium. Upon receiving confirmation that the premium has been paid, the charity will issue a tax receipt to the Donor for the amount of the premium paid. Another option is for the Donor to make a donation on the amount of the premium to the charity and the charity will pay the premium. The Donor can use the tax receipt to create a tax credit. As well, naming the charity as the beneficiary provides a tax free benefit that bypasses your estate, thus eliminating probate fees and any delays that may occur in processing and distribution of the assets in your estate.

The allowable tax credit is determined by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and is different depending on whether it is claimed while the Donor is living or if it is claimed in the year of death. Please contact your Financial Advisor or Accountant for further details on the amount of tax credit that you are eligible for.

### Benefits

There are many benefits to both you

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of Canada*

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BONNIE J. BABIN - Financial Planning & Tax Consultant - Phone [REDACTED]

and your favorite charity upon setting up a Planned Gift.

**The benefits to you include:**

- allows for larger endowments
- making a larger contribution than you would otherwise be able to make.
- tax savings for you or your estate
- discretion/confidentiality (this is assured through a beneficiary designation as in example 3. A will is public record)

**The benefits to the charity includes:**

- life insurance contracts are guaranteed as long as the premium payments are made
- if the donor becomes unable to pay future premiums, the charity can assume payments (if they own the policy as in example 3)
- future proceeds are guaranteed (whereas a designation in a will subject to the continued goodwill of the Donor, again this applies if the charity is the owner as in example 3)

**Types of Insurance**

Any type of life insurance can be used for planned giving. However, term insurance is not really appropriate as the coverage could end before the charity is able to benefit. A charity may, therefore, reject a term policy. The best type of policy to use, to ensure that the charity benefits, is a permanent plan such as Term to 100 or Universal Life.

**Conclusion**

Life insurance provides a unique way to ensure that your wishes for a charitable gift are carried out upon your death. No matter the size of your gift, it is guaranteed.

Your Financial Advisor can help you set up a planned gift that will benefit both you and your favourite charity in the best way possible.

*Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please respond to e-mail address: [redacted] Phone: (519) [redacted] Fax: (519) [redacted]*  
*A Voice Exclusive.*

## Jean-Paul Pilon

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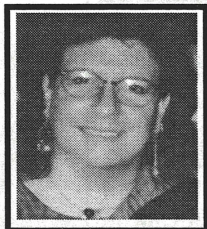
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## Queer Islam



By Lyn McGinnis

*The following article is based on interviews with three Queer Muslims found through web searches and e-mails. A large number of organizations were contacted and requests were made for many more to be involved in this story. Please note that many Lesbians, including one with a web site based in Iran, were contacted and urged to respond, but didn't by the deadline for completing this article.*

"In my mid-twenties I rejected 'god' as a concept that had no relevance to my life. Having been raised Catholic, I was infused with Catholic guilt over my supposed 'sins'. Being gay as well, I was also filled with self-rejection and self-hatred — most of it courtesy of Catholic doctrine which taught that I was evil, intrinsically disordered, immoral and so on and so forth. I was certainly not taught that it was okay — or even remotely desirable — to be who I was."

Excerpt from "Confessions of Sulayman X" from the "Queer Jihad" web site.

It is likely this quote will ring true for many. The author was born and grew up in the United States. He converted to Islam and changed his name and now works as a journalist in the Middle East.

In the course of interviewing Queer Muslims for this article it became clear whether they were born Muslim or converted later in life their stories are similar to our own. Some had supportive and accepting families and others did not. Some met with sympathetic and welcoming religious associates and others did not. What they share is a sense of growing through apparent condemnations within their tradition to acceptance of themselves while helping others.

As with us, the Internet has been a great help in crossing the traditional barriers and connecting with each

other.

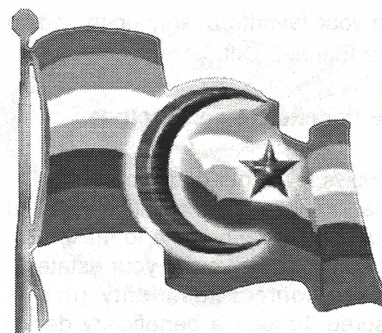
Sulayman told me, "I think, for many Muslims, my web site (Queer Jihad) has been the only introduction to an alternative point of view on homosexuality they have ever been exposed to. I also receive a lot of mail from the curious, from young gay people, from parents worried about their gay kids, even from women married to gay men. There really isn't, in the Muslim community, that many voices offering an alternative point of view."

One other such voice on the Internet is the Al-Fatiha Foundation, based in the United States with chapters around the world including one in Toronto. They describe themselves as "An international organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered, those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, and their friends. Al-Fatiha's goal is to provide a safe space and a forum for LGBTQ Muslims to address issues of common concern, share individual experiences, and institutional resources. The Al-Fatiha Foundation aims to support LGBTQ Muslims in reconciling their sexual orientation or gender identity with Islam."

Given the above statement about the need to reconcile Queer Muslims with Islam, it is clear there exist religious road blocks similar to those encountered by LGBT in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. In fact, they could all be summarized under one name - Sodom.

Kamil Walji is a junior at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. He grew up in the Ismaili community in Texas just outside of Houston.

"Many Muslims cite the story of Sodom as 'proof' homosexuality is not acceptable within the tenets of Islam. Many will continue to cite other passages throughout the Quran as well as 'proof.' For me, much of the Quranic



interpretation must be considered in the proper context. For example, in the story of Sodom, some other elements included theft, suggestions of rape, inhospitable hosts and the like. To simply isolate homosexuality as the overarching and supreme reason for Sodom's destruction is to be ignorant of the context of the story. Similar interpretations of quoting Quranic passages as proof appear to me as grossly simplistic and ignorant of other aspects of Islamic life that are far more important," he said.

Sulayman X agrees, saying "The story of the Prophet Lut (or Lot) in the Quran, which is repeated numerous times, is used to condemn queer folks. The people of Sodom, the Quran informs us, were highway robbers or bandits, possibly rapists of men and young boys, practiced 'lewdness in their public councils' (whatever that means). Like Christians before them, Muslims zero in on what they believe to be an anti-gay message in this story, while ignoring the other reprehensible behaviours of the people of Sodom, presenting this story as simply a condemnation of homosexuality and ignoring all its other aspects," he said.

Like most at peace with themselves, Sulayman X has a simple answer to those quoting this story. "My response to those who throw this story in my face is to ask what it has to do with me? I'm not a rapist, of either men or young boys. I'm not inhospitable (in a desert society, hospitality has an importance that we can only begin to guess at). I'm not a highway robber or a thief, and neither do I practice public indecencies."

Abdullah lives in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. He has been involved with Al-Fatiha and Muslim Gay Men organizations for the past four years. Like Sulayman, he converted to Islam in adulthood. He has lived as a

Muslim for 15 years and is now training to become an Imam (religious leader/counselor).

In his studies, he has concentrated on the topic of homosexuality in Islam from a historical and legislative perspective, and said "the Quran forbids certain types of homosexual sexual behaviors as it forbids certain types of heterosexual sexual behaviors, but it does not condemn homosexuality outright.

It condemns certain behaviors such as (1) having sex with married men; (2) turning another into a sexual object, e.g. having anonymous sexual encounters or using another just for sex; (3) homosexual rape; and (4) public sex, e.g., having sex in public places such as parks, rest rooms, and places where there is a possibility of being seen by others."

Sulayman X also related a very interesting suggestion within the Quran about the accepted existence of LGBT in early Muslim society and how traditionalists now try to deal with it.

"There is a particular verse that discusses who may be in the (intimate) presence of a woman — her husband, her sons, her servants, etc. One of the categories of people is 'males who have no desire for women,' and translators of the Quran go to great pains to put some sort of spin on this particular category. In one translation of the Quran, the translator, in a footnote, says quite plainly that the verse means "men who have no desire for women" — and yet he refuses to see this being a gay person and offers a convoluted alternative.

*Surah 24, Verse 31. In my translation, titled, "The Meaning of the Glorious Quran, an explanatory translation by Mohammed Pickthall," it is translated as "male attendants who lack vigour," Sulayman said this is the common way English translators gloss over this "troubling" reference, but his translation of the Arabic is more accurate.*

There are also stories from the life of the Prophet about such desire-less men who kept company with women, or who served women as personal attendants. So gay people were not unknown to Arabian society, and there is no indication, from what I understand, that the story of Lut was used to condemn such people," he said.

So where does this fundamentalist tendency we see expressed in so many ways within Islam come from? Kamil has a theory.

"The notion of fundamentalism has a strong relation to Islam. Many of the contemporary Islamic fundamentalists have presented an image of Islam that has been inflated into the representative concept of Islam in the West. This idea of fundamentalism, in my understanding, has been an effort to delve into the history of a faith in order to retrieve and rediscover the 'fundamentals' of that faith in order to re-evaluate the way one goes about his or her life in the present day.

However, I feel that too often, many have turned to the past and have ignored the fact today's world is far more complex. Thus, it becomes all the more crucial to take into consideration the context of the faith. To me, an important modifier for my concept of fundamentalism is progressivism.

He said such "progressive fundamentalism" would involve delving into the roots of the faith, rediscovering and reconceiving the ideas and ethics underlying it and then factoring in the context of the contemporary world. In doing so contemporary Muslims could, "discover how to incorporate those tenets, those ethics, those beliefs into our complex, modern world."

So how do Queer Muslims deal with religious homophobia? I asked Abdullah how his sexual orientation has affected his perspective on Islam and how this differs from his straight friends.

He said his perspective has helped him, "to see traditional misinterpretations on the subject have no factual basis." He went on to say straight Muslims cannot clearly differentiate what is forbidden and not forbidden as it relates to a homosexual relationship. "It is incumbent upon homosexual Muslims to help them better understand the differences and then they can make up their minds as to how they as heterosexuals view homosexuality. It has been my experience once they learn they may not accept it but they are less likely to try and shame another Muslims because of their sexual orientation," he said.

While he has seen many examples of the good his words have been for closeted Muslims, Sulayman X also has been the brunt of a great deal of

hostility. This along with the events of September 11, 2001, has made him both sad and philosophical.

"How do I feel about Islam? To be honest, rather sad. As more than one person has said in recent weeks, Islam has been hijacked by people who don't seem to know what it stands for, which is peace and submission to God. To put it in more Western terms, we are rather like Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses on the door of a cathedral, crying out to the higher-ups that things have gone desperately wrong somewhere, that our religion has become something it wasn't meant to be. But the problem is that there is no priestly class in Islam, no central authority, no higher-up who can make things right. So, as far as the situation of homosexuality is concerned, it's a matter of education on the ground, of putting out an alternative point of view," he said.

He went on to say he is seeing signs that Islam is changing. "Islam today is going through what the Catholic Church went through not so very long ago. There was a time when the average Catholic was not well educated. When vast numbers of adherents began to go to university, to think for themselves, to study the scriptures on their own, to really start taking responsibility for their own salvation, debating the issues, writing books, disagreeing with Church authorities — well, the Church changed. It had to. A lot of the superstitious foolishness went right out the window. Islam is going to reach that point too. It's a process. There is a lot of ignorance and superstition within Islam right now, manifested in all sorts of ways. But that will change," he said. Kamil said the foundations of Islam can stand such new social developments. "Islam preaches tenets that are the same as many faiths: the importance of peace, love, community, generosity and the like. All Muslims, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, are capable of loving one another, educating oneself, giving back to one's community, and striving for peace within that community. Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful, is the ultimate judge and for me, living a life of peace and love, education and generosity are tenets that I hold dearly — tenets that I believe bring me closer to God.

Continued on page 27

# SHADES OF GREY



## In Search of Self: Identity and Orientation

By Ms. A.J. Mahari

Life is, among other things, a quest, a journey, a search for so much. Central upon that search is the search for *self*. Whether we know it or not, we are constantly adapting to events that unfold around us the way that we perceive them based usually upon our past experience. Often our choices are subconscious and very patterned. If one truly does not have a strong sense of his/her *self*, identity, and personhood much of who one actually is will not be evident to him/her or to the world. A life lived dissociated from *self* is a painful and unhealthy life.

So much is lost when one lives life without this inner personal knowledge on a conscious level. To live life without a strong sense of your *true self*, which is the foundation of your identity, may mean that you are living with toxic shame. This can be the case with any individual but there is a strong sense

that this toxic shame effect is often multiplied when one is lesbian, gay, bi, or transgendered.

Toxic shame will keep you bound to the negative attitudes of others.

Any other "minority" must face daily life adjusting constantly to the whims of the dominate culture. It is the dominate culture that defines and ascribes the cultural (or group) norms that become the accepted basis for communication, understanding, behaviour and socialization. If, for any reason, one operates to one degree or another outside of these ascribed norms without a strong sense of *self* life can be very painful and much about it can be or seem alienating.

Each of us has an essential character housed within his/her *true self*. Character refers to the pattern of behaviour

or personality found in an individual.

The *self* is defined as the character and essential qualities of any person that are integral to his/her identity.

Identity speaks to the specific individuality of each person. For many people *self* is not well known. Equally foreign to many are their own identities. Part of the search involves working through an identity crisis. An identity crisis occurs when one is uncertain of one's feelings about oneself in terms of character, goals, and origins and orientation in the case of those who are LBGT. This identity crisis can also involve being unsure of other wants and needs and beliefs.

Orientation is often referred to as being something of a sexual nature. For most it is much more than sexual and is often described as a lifestyle orientation or an emotional orientation. The differentiation being made when one's sexual orientation is not merely described as it relates to sexual preference has to do with a broader understanding of one's identity and *self*.

In a predominantly straight culture it is seen as different and is often resultingly misunderstood when one is gay. Some of this misunderstanding occurs from a simple lack of knowledge or experience with those who are gay and with what that really means. For others, however, their condemnation of this difference in orientation and identity is derived from a systemic discrimination still quite prevalent in society. Witness the attitudes of key societal institutions such as the Church and schools.

This type of systemic discrimination often leads those who don't "fit the mold of the majority" to question and doubt themselves. It also can lead to self-hate, toxic shame, and an over-all fear






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of being who one really is. No one wants to be rejected at a core level. This is painful for everyone whether it's acknowledged as such or not. It often results in people trying to live their lives in a way that they can be accepted where they otherwise wouldn't be. This alienation from *self* in terms of one's orientation, which is a key core part of one's over-all identity, leads to internalized homophobia and self-alienation that can manifest in a variety of ways.

This denial of *self* can have both emotional and physical ill-effects.

It is valid to say that to fully experience oneself in the context of identity and orientation requires, at some point or other in life, conscious hard work and honesty with *self* to come to terms with the losses and gains that being gay often entail. Each of us has to make a choice to accept him/herself as he/she is and to validate and esteem that personhood. I have often wondered why deciding to come to terms with one's identity and orientation is such a difficult choice for some people that it is put off at great over-all cost to their own peace of mind and sense of *self*. This attempt to placate or please others is putting others ahead of yourself. It is not altruistic either. It is very damaging and unhealthy.

There are many aspects of this search for *self* that meet with pain, loss and turmoil. One of the stickier wickets is the area of one's religion (spirituality) or lack thereof. Nowhere else in society is it made plainer (by many faiths, not all) that gays are not welcome and that "their" God and "their" afterlife will not tolerate the inclusion of those who are gay. This can be quite the brick wall as one begins to come to terms with who one is. For many it is the place at which they part from past faith. For others it is the place within the journey where they search even harder to find meaning and a way of holding on to beliefs that have come to be, at base, a large part of their identities. Just as we need to accept our orientations so too we must find ways to accept our faiths and belief systems and integrate them.

Orientation is a large part of identity. In a society that is taught, largely through fundamentalist religions, that

it is unacceptable to be anything other than heterosexual many are too afraid of the conflict and turmoil finding their real selves will entail. Instead they continue to struggle to validate their reality and lives living a painful and often hidden duality. This dual existence is detrimental to everyone. It cheats the intolerant ones out of learning opportunities. But, more importantly, it renders peace and true contentment unattainable when one continues to live in exile from the totality of one's *true self* and *entire identity*.

Education is so important if we are going to grow. Opening ourselves up to the pain that houses our joy is essential. If there is a sense of wanting more or of wanting to know and understand more than we owe it to ourselves to re-claim our true selves in their entirety without concern about who is going to think or say this or that.

In search of *self*, identity, and orientation each one of us has his/her own road to walk. The journey cannot begin until a conscious choice is made. Many think that they are okay with their orientation and that this means they know who they are. The question is, does it? Is it enough to be okay with your orientation when you are in the company of others from "community" or with those in the straight world who understand? What happens then if you are challenged? What happens when you meet with intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and homophobia? Are you able to stand your ground feeling as worthwhile and okay then? Are you able to pursue the religion (or spiritual path) of your choice in spite of the small-mindedness of many?

When one journeys this search for and finds and understands one's *true self* it is at this point that one's orientation no longer stands separately from one's identity. This process of integration is a welcoming home, a coming home to oneself in a way that breaks the hold of the closet.

There is still a lot "wrong" in a world where so many have to hide who they really are in order to protect themselves from harm, loss of job, career, housing and further loss of *self*.

Being true to one's *self* involves this truth being lived in a way that is evident to others. Why? Because it is with those that we know and or associate that we see ourselves and our own images of ourselves mirrored back to us. If we have a strong sense of identity the image in the mirror will not be distorted by anything from outside of ourselves. If we waffle and aren't sure about how valid our true identity, is based upon our inability to accept ourselves even in the face of homophobia, then the mirrored images may well be distorted. Our own self-image will be a distorted one to begin with which then has the power to distort the way in which we experience how others view us and react to us.

Begin to search or continue to search for your true *self*. When you have established this identity it is then up to you to uphold it, respect it, treasure it and nurture it. The journey after the search is all about upholding the honour of who you know that you are, no matter what. Be proud of who you are. Be true to who you are. There is no need to ever be ashamed of who you are. Be gentle and kind to your *self*. Be gracious enough to understand that not everyone can value difference. To those who don't value difference refusing to allow them to trample on the turf of your identity not only sets a healthy limit and boundary but also gives them the gift of yet another opportunity to learn.

The search is the quest to find, define, understand and integrate your orientation and your identity.

**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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## B.C. COURT RELEASES DECISION IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CASE

In the first case of a landmark Canadian trilogy the BC Supreme Court held that to restrict marriage to heterosexuals is discriminatory, and contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, lesbians and gay men still cannot marry.

Two actions challenging the restriction of marriage to heterosexual partners were heard together in Vancouver last month. One was begun by the BC Partners, three couples denied marriage licences in the province; the other was begun by EGALE, and five couples whose applications for marriage licences had also been refused. Similar challenges will be heard next month, one in Ontario and one in Quebec.

"This is just the beginning," commented Robin Roberts, who, with her partner Diana Denny is one of the couples in the EGALE action. Added co-petitioner Tess Healy, "I am very encouraged. The court has made a groundbreaking decision in finding that it is contrary to the Charter to exclude us from marriage. That is a first for Canada. We believe that we are right, and we are in this case for the long haul."

The court relied on section 1 of the Charter to hold that even though it is discriminatory to exclude lesbians and gay men from marriage, to do so is legally acceptable. Section 1 of the Charter provides that if the government can show that a Charter breach is demonstrably justifiable, the discriminatory law can stand. In doing so, the court said that it was common sense that marriage is restricted to heterosexuals.

Two thirds of Canadians disagree. In a Leger poll released in June, that number agreed that lesbians and gays should have the right to marry. Though they are still unable to get a marriage licence, the parties were upbeat about the decision. "The important thing about the judgment to me is that the court recognized how unfair it is to deny lesbians and gay men this fundamental civil right," said Peter Cook, who with his partner Murray Warren is one

of the couples in the B.C. Partners case. "We have a deep faith that the courts and the Canadian people will see that there is no common sense in discriminating against one part of a community".

"How can it be wrong, in this time of fragile freedoms in the world, to celebrate the love and commitment of two people who promise to support each other for all of their lives?" asked Jane Hamilton, one of the B.C. partners. The judge considered the history of marriage, and concluded that marriage had the meaning assigned to it in a pre-confederation English case called *Hyde v Hyde*, as being between one man and one woman. *Hyde and Hyde* has been cited with approval by the BC Court of Appeal, but has not been relied on in Ontario and Quebec, so the parties are predicting a different result in those provinces.

It is expected that whatever the results at the lower court levels, the cases in all three provinces will be appealed and will ultimately be heard together by the Supreme Court of Canada.

**The judgment is available on EGALE's Website at [www.egale.ca](http://www.egale.ca)**

## ONTARIO COURT HEARS LANDMARK SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CHALLENGES

Ontario's Superior Court of Justice began hearing today two landmark challenges to Canada's marriage laws. One case involves a challenge to the refusal by the City Clerk of Toronto to issue a marriage licence to eight same-sex couples seeking the equal right to marry.

"This marriage case is of utmost importance to both of us because it speaks to equality, dignity and quality of life for us as individuals who belong to the mainstream," said Barbara McDowall and Gail Donnelly, one of the couples involved in the case.

Being heard simultaneously is a challenge by the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCCT).

"Denying same-sex couples the freedom to marry is an antiquated discriminatory rule that has no place in contemporary Canadian society," explained Ms. Petersen today. "We are confident that the Court will recognize the need to change the law to reflect modern social reality and values."



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## **STRONGER LAWS AGAINST HATE CRIMES AND PROPAGANDA**

Following the attack on September 11, Canadians have called for a renewed commitment to Canadian values of respect, equality, diversity and fairness and a strong condemnation of hate-motivated violence that has occurred in Canada and elsewhere against innocent people. This is a campaign against terrorists and not against any one community, group or faith. The Government of Canada is proposing changes to legislation that address the root causes of hatred, reaffirm Canadian values and ensure that Canada's renowned respect for justice and diversity is reinforced. Measures would include: amendments to the Criminal Code that would allow the courts to order the deletion of publicly available hate propaganda from computer systems such as an Internet site. Individuals who posted the material would be given the opportunity to convince the court that the material is not hate propaganda. The provision would apply to hate propaganda that is located on Canadian computer systems, regardless of where the owner of the material is located or whether he or she can be identified.

Criminal Code amendments that would create a new offence of mischief motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin, committed against a place of religious worship or associated religious property. This offence would be subject to a maximum penalty of 10 years when prosecuted on indictment, or to a maximum penalty of eighteen months on summary conviction.

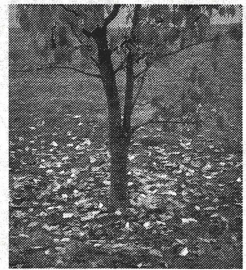
Amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act to make it clear that using telephone, Internet or other communications tools for hatred purposes or discrimination is prohibited.

[www.egale.ca](http://www.egale.ca)

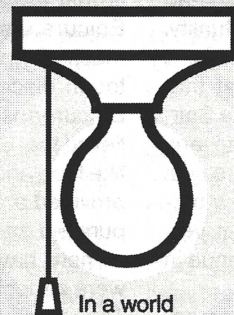
## **A Memorial Notice**

### **Alexia Zen: You Can Do It**

The Imperial Court of Hamilton Wentworth was saddened recently by the death of Alex Cheung, a.k.a. Empress III, Alexia Zen. THE VOICE Magazine joins the friends and family of Alex not only in mourning his loss but in celebrating his vibrant and talented life. He will be missed but his spirit lives on in happy memories and indelible images of stunning performances. Rest well, Alex; but do what you can to teach those frumpy angels how to move with grace, conviction and class.



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# Spiritual Life: The Quest for Freedom

Be Yourself. You Can't Be Anybody Else.

By Noel Springwood



Jiminy Cricket, in the Disney film *Pinocchio*, had it right. Knowingly or unknowingly, he was echoing a great Judeo-Christian concept. In fact, one of the earliest labels for God was simply, "I am who am." I think that this is an important notion in the search for a personal spirituality.

Currently, there is a fairly widespread search for a Gay or Queer Spirituality. Having thought about the matter for a few years, I honestly think that that search is futile. I don't think that a Spirituality can ever be attached to any given lifestyle or social structure. On the other hand, I do believe that a person's Spirituality will prompt that person to choose one or another venue in which to pursue or validate it.

Spirituality is, after all, simply an approach to the mystery of life, the meaning of human existence, the rationale that gives my being relevance. It can be as complicated or as simple as the person who espouses and practises it. It is both a microcosm and macrocosm reflecting a reality that is, in the last analysis, quite unfathomable: what it is that makes you, you and me, me.

In this whole process labels abound and often are assigned or assumed without proper understanding either of their implications or significance. In this

column, I'd like to examine just a few. I will prescind from consideration of mainstream, organised movements. At the same time, any one of the following leanings can and will, undoubtedly, find representation in the mainstream.

That being said, one of the most ancient and basic distinctions in lifestyle is that separating the Stoics and the Epicureans. The Stoics were pretty macho folk who believed in toughness: tough discipline and tough love. The Epicureans, on the other hand, believed that there were finer things in life, like food and drink and art and sex, that provided ample rewards for those who pursued and learned to enjoy them.

There have been those whose lives were almost completely other-centred. They were generous and self-sacrificing people who often gave their lives in the service of others. Such people exist today and are generally revered for their dedication and bravery. This quality is not one that is easily learned. Altruists, it seems to me, are provided with something very special that prompts them to give themselves so generously to others.

Then there are the Sophists. They are kind of a pie-in-the-sky group that revel in their ability to know all the right people, all the right moves, all the best places, all the trendy fads and fashions, all the posh eating places and entertainment centres and, especially, all the ways they can let others know how much they know. Sophists don't really accomplish much, they just like looking as though they have.

Closely associated with the Sophists are the Narcissists. In the Queer community, Narcissism runs rampant, mostly among the younger crowd. For the true Narcissist, one hair out of place is not a problem, it is a disaster. One hair missing is cause for disparate action, like auto-decapitation.

There is a steady stream of Humanism in the Queer community. People who just care for people in need. Those people in need frequently, if not usu-

ally, include those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. There is a soft underbelly here that reaches out readily and generously with funds and moral support. Fund raising efforts are almost unending and are usually quite effective. Unfortunately, all too often, the Humanist outreach is limited to financial contributions.

These are just a few of the mindsets that determine lifestyle choice and individual response to life's challenges and opportunities. They are not Spiritualities. They are, for the most part, Philosophies. They do, however, offer evidence of the Spirituality from which they have grown. That Spirituality, that hotbed of whatever kind of human growth and development, resides solely in the individual. It is as mysterious and unique as that individual. It is not something that can be fully defined or shared. It is as good or as evil as the individual giving it birth.

The ultimate Spirituality, then, prescinds all Philosophies and Lifestyles. It is something that resides deep within me and, ultimately, defines me as a human person. I can be helped in discovering what that might be. I might even beg, borrow or steal some notions from others as I struggle to shape it. It remains, however, something that is distinctively mine: something wonderful and life giving.

I am who I am. That's all I'll ever be. That's all I'll ever need to be.

My understanding of my own Spirituality will ensure that I can be myself and never need to try to be someone else.

**NOEL SPRINGWOOD served most of his life as a Roman Catholic Priest. A Voice exclusive.**

## Individual and Couple Counselling

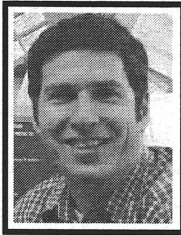
### Anger Management

*LGBT POSITIVE*

Susan A. Cox  
MAsc. (Psychology)

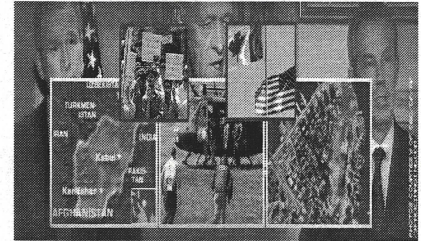
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## Emotional Toll of September 11th Taking Steps to Reduce Stress

By Dr. Jeffery Chernin



One of the most difficult situations for of us to deal with is uncertainty about the future. In the post 9-11 world, we are uncertain about when and where the terrorists will strike, and we naturally worry if we or our loved ones will be harmed.

This situation also causes us to feel helpless, because on an individual basis, there is nothing we can do. Collectively, we are trying to stop terrorism, but being unable to stop them so far gives rise to feeling powerless.

We also live with confusion, which has been made worse by leaders who tell us to "get back to normal" while making drastic changes in their lives. The sad reality is that we will never get back to normal. And while we can no longer go through daily activities as we have been, we're still unsure of all of the precautions to take in order to remain safe.

When life is changing as it is, it can create many challenges. The purpose of this article is to discuss difficulties that can result from ongoing uncertainty so that you can identify the problems and take steps to correct them.

One way to look the current situation through the lens of a stress management model. Stress is created when demands exceed resources. Demands include needs, expectations, bodily demands and physical environment, and changes that affect home life, work, and community. Resources include abilities, and attitudes, as well as assistance from friends and family.

When demands exceed resources, we attempt to find ways to cope. Some ways to cope are helpful. Other ways

to cope are actually harmful and may cause you to fall back on or develop unhealthy activities. For example, one young woman mentioned that she intentionally went back to smoking after quitting several years ago. Other people are overeating and using drugs and alcohol.

**Stressful changes and helplessness can also give rise to depression.**

**Uncertainty breeds anxiety, which is another consequence of ongoing stress. Signs of anxiety include feeling restless, irritable, and muscle tension, as well as having difficulty falling and staying asleep, and panic attacks.**

find yourself in a vicious cycle, with the added stress creating physical and emotional problems. Physical problems resulting from stress include headaches and stomach/ gastric problems. Stress also leads to lowered resistance to viral and bacterial infections, including colds and the flu.

In regard to emotional problems, you can develop post-traumatic stress. Signs of post-traumatic stress include repeatedly reliving the events of September 11th, insomnia or nightmares, flashbacks, being easily agitated, and hypervigilance.

Stressful changes and helplessness can also give rise to depression. Symptoms of depression include withdrawing from formerly pleasant activities, feeling "blue," significant weight change, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating.

Uncertainty breeds anxiety, which is another consequence of ongoing

While these forms of coping help you get through the day, they are actually new demands. Also, the need to escape produces unhealthy coping strategies, and these demands lead to emotional instability, thus leading to more reasons to escape.

Eventually, you can find yourself in a vicious cycle, with the added stress creating physical and emotional problems. Physical problems resulting from stress include headaches and stomach/ gastric problems. Stress also leads to lowered resistance to viral and bacterial infections, including colds and the flu.

In regard to emotional problems, you can develop post-traumatic stress. Signs of post-traumatic stress include repeatedly reliving the events of September 11th, insomnia or nightmares, flashbacks, being easily agitated, and hypervigilance.

Stressful changes and helplessness can also give rise to depression. Symptoms of depression include withdrawing from formerly pleasant activities, feeling "blue," significant weight change, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating.

Uncertainty breeds anxiety, which is another consequence of ongoing

stress. Signs of anxiety include feeling restless, irritable, and muscle tension, as well as having difficulty falling and staying asleep, and panic attacks.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important to find ways to reduce stress by reducing demands and increasing your resources. For example, walking 15 minutes per day can contribute to emotional health. Adding yoga or meditation to your fitness schedule can also help.

Another way to increase resources is to keep a journal, which not only benefits people emotionally but also leads to better physical health. To further increase your resources, try to surround yourself with loving family and friends. In fact, it is helpful to look at your current relationships. Spending less time with people who are an emotional drain and more time with people who supportive can also reduce stress.

If friendship and family support is not enough, one option is to seek counseling. Individually or in a group setting, counseling can reduce stress as it provides critical social support. In addition to counseling, you may wish to find a facilitated support group, which is a group of people who want to discuss the situation in order to develop coping strategies and to increase other forms of support.

Whichever forms of support and coping strategies you employ, remember that you have choices as to how you react to uncertainty. With enough support, you will find it easier to choose ways that are constructive and beneficial.

**Jeffrey Chernin, PhD, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He can be reached at [REDACTED]**

**This article was submitted to The Voice by Dr. Chernin.**



# NOVEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS

## 2nd & 4th Tues in Nov

Tri-Youth Pride group meets 4-6pm. This group is for LBGT high-school students. For more information call Gail at [REDACTED]

## 2nd & 4th Wed in Nov

On the second Wednesday of July, Glow will hold its Heart to Heart Discussion Group. On the fourth Wednesday in July the Diversity Discussion Group takes place. For more information on either group or the Coming Out Discussion Group call GLOW at 884-4569

## Each Tuesday in Nov

The Rainbow Community Conversation Group meets every Tuesday at 7:30 in 373 of Hagey Hall (on the UW Campus) For more info call Glow at 884-glow

## Every Saturday

Lesbian Social (all women welcome) at Mostly Organic every Saturday beginning Saturday December 1 from noon to 6pm 119 King St. W. in downtown Kitchener. Musical jams, card and board games, and general discussion. Come on down and check things out - For more information call 745-4884 or see our classified ad on page 32

For a list of groups and activities that take place on a regular basis please see page 30. Or check them out on line at [www.thevoice.on.ca](http://www.thevoice.on.ca) by clicking on Community.

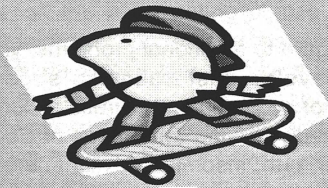
## Alternate Fridays -NEW

Gay Men's Group meets from 7 to 10:30pm is open to males of all ages and orientations, with the focus on gayness of course. We will also be socializing together: dances, and movies. For more information contact Gordon at (519) [REDACTED]

## Every Sunday

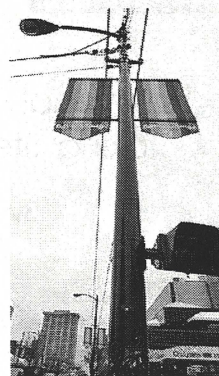
Friends of Dorothy is a GLBT League was started in 1999. They are back bowling after taking the summer off. They bowl each Sunday at 3:15 pm (see classified page for more info)

Would you like to see your event listed here? Be sure to let us know about upcoming events before our deadline of the 20th of each month!!



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.

## Gay Banner Flap in Vancouver



Some business owners on Davie Street are furious that the area's Business Improvement Association wants to replace the street's rainbow-coloured banners.

Noting the rainbow sign has become an international symbol of gay communities, Finn Mollerup, co-owner of Gay Mart, called the move by the Davie Village BIA "disgusting."

"This is known as the gay area of Vancouver. It's like everyone knows the yuppies hang out in Yaletown. The flags here let people know this is a gay-friendly area.

"It's like a beacon that rallies all the people living in the West End."

John Clerides, BIA president and owner of Marquis Wine Cellars, did not respond to the Courier's request for an interview Thursday, after insisting that questions be e-mailed to him. But he was quoted in the gay paper Xtra! West Oct. 18 as saying the gay community has no special claim to Davie Village. "You have to treat everyone equally," he is quoted as saying. "Why not put up the Italian flag? The Japanese? The Korean?"

Marino said he hopes the community will pressure the BIA to come up with a new design that reflects how the gay community "owns this street." A recent community survey on the banners, which included businesses and residents, was evenly split. "I'd like to see the new design be reflective of the entire community, but I'll take real issue to it if it doesn't have a gay component."

Not everyone is enamoured of the rainbow banners. A woman working at Sperles Valet Dry Cleaners, who would only identify herself as Mrs. Mel, said she would like to see new design options. "The banner isn't gay to me-it's just nice colour. I'd like to see other designs to include the whole community, but it also has to have colour to cheer up the street."

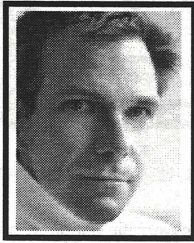
Outside a local coffee house down the street, Ron Watts had a more philosophical view of the issue. "The banners are just fine," he said.

"But you know, with everything that's going on in the world, it's really not a big deal."

Sandra Thomas

[www.vancourier.com](http://www.vancourier.com)

## HIS-STORY



### Confessions of a Late Bloomer Out In the Workplace

By Randy Siegel



For me, coming out was a time marked with fear, and no fear was greater than the thought of losing my job.

I knew the law would not protect me. Georgia is one of 37 states in which it is still legal to discriminate against gay and lesbians.

Despite my fears, I came out at work. While I wasn't fired, the balance sheet changed. My sexual epiphany both strengthened and weakened my value to the company.

On the positive side, I became a better manager. Some employees began referring to my coming out as "the great enlightenment." Free to be myself, I was more open, caring and flexible. I built closer relationships with my employees, clients and business partners.

On the negative side, I was a gay man fighting to make it in a "good old boy" world. The firm in which I worked was Midwestern, conservative, and male dominated. I was terrified of coming out to my straight boss.

At first, I fooled myself into thinking he already knew. Later I admitted that even if he did know, we needed to talk.

I asked my mentor for advice. He suggested that instead of a dramatic declaration I wait until a situation arose where a conversation could naturally evolve. Within several months that opportunity came.

When a gay political organization, the Human Rights Campaign, asked me to join their business advisory board, I asked my boss for the company's blessing. He thought it best I decline, suggesting I concentrate my efforts on the office instead.

While it wasn't the answer I wanted, it was an important step toward creating a dialog where none had existed before.

Coming out is not a one-time event; we come out almost every day of our lives. In the workplace, we must constantly decide whether or not to share

our lives with clients, coworkers, suppliers and other business associates.

Each circumstance requires examination and its own strategy. Each circumstance requires a choice, and in making that choice it is critical to weigh our interests against those of our companies.

For me it was a matter of definition: I was an executive who was gay, not a gay man who was an executive. When I represented my company, I represented my company's best interest.

At the same time, I did not compromise who I was. I did not lie about my sexuality, but there were times I didn't volunteer the information either.

One client immediately warmed when he learned I was going through a divorce. Like me, his divorce had been messy.

His idea of bonding was cruising strip clubs and chasing women. Telling him I was gay would have not only harmed the relationship it would have cost my company business. Instead I begged off, making lame excuses, then felt bad about myself for not being more honest.

Most business is built on relationships, and when we cannot share who we really are it is difficult, if not impossible, to build meaningful ones. In my opinion, this liability — above all others — puts gay and lesbian executives at a disadvantage.

"Do the assets outweigh the liabilities of having a gay or lesbian employee?" employers may ask. It depends on the employee, and it depends on the job. Gay or straight, each of us brings to our companies a unique set of strengths and weaknesses.

Employers will always have gay and lesbian employees. Instead of focusing on sexuality, management is better served studying how to make the workplace more productive. For most gay and lesbians, this means an open and accepting environment.

Management cannot accomplish this alone. As gay and lesbian employees, we can help management affect change by sharing our stories. By coming out, we best advocate our cause.

Looking back, my greatest fears were unfounded. The advantages of coming out at work far outweighed the disadvantages for me, my company and our cause.

#### Coming Out Is A Universal Experience

"Coming out" is not just for queers. Straight or gay, there are many closets in which we hide.

Coming out is allowing ourselves to be ourselves. It is the process of peeling back layers of tribal conditioning to discover the person we were born to be.

Coming out is remembering and celebrating who we are. We are a stained glass window that once cleaned allows glorious light to shine from within.

Several years ago, my sister-in-law called to say that she too was coming out. Instead of announcing her sexuality, she was denouncing the role of "preacher's daughter." At 53, she would no longer bear the burden of being the perfect child. I applauded her courage.

We play priestly roles in the lives of those we love when we encourage each other to be who we are.

Sometimes simply seeing us survive claiming our true selves gives others the courage to go within and begin the painful process of coming out.

**After more than 20 years in Atlanta public relations, Randy Siegel is now an Asheville (NC)-based communications trainer and coach specializing in presentation skills. He can be reached through this publication, or [redacted] This article was submitted to The Voice by Randy Siegel.**

# The Seeds Of Intolerance

By Edward C. Migdal



If we look closely and seriously at the social behavior of mankind, past and present, we must surely come to the unsavory conclusion that human beings are barbarians. We are barbarians because individually and in groups, small and large, we murder and maim, batter and abuse, lie, cheat, steal and defraud, ravage, rape, burn and loot, and, we often engage in these and other unspeakable atrocities under the pretext of upholding and protecting some uncompromising principle of race, culture or religion. We declare that our race or culture has been sullied by some group or other, that our religious beliefs and rituals have been ridiculed and denigrated. We clamor for revenge! We verbalize our moral indignation with an anger so great that our jugulars bulge from our reddened necks and then, carried away by the frenzy of our own rhetoric, we take up arms, and from a vantage point most suitable only for a sniper we blow the brains out of the innocent child who only yesterday was the delightful and friendly neighbour who brought us flowers.

We are barbarians not because we failed in the course of our social evolution from the Neanderthal to create guidelines for our social behavior, but, paradoxically, because of them.. Due most certainly to the scattered manner, in time and place, in which human evolution took place on the face of the earth, our world is replete with varied societies, each with its own guidelines, philosophies, conventions, customs, traditions, and institutions that protect this and foster that, or prescribe this and prohibit that. Each group, each society, each culture proclaims its individuality, its differences, its distinctiveness, and concocts devices, legal or otherwise, to insure they will last forever. Therein lie the seeds of intolerance. Mankind must come to realize that each individual is not a limited member of some isolated, myopic, and narrowly defined group but rather a member of the people of the planet earth.

When we compare the advances in our social behavior to the advances made in our physical and natural sciences we are (socially) extremely backward. We are extremely backward because, unlike in our technological and scientific thinking, we refuse to learn from experience and deny cumulative knowledge. The great tragedy is that some of the most basic and fundamental elements of our cultures and religions, those things we hold so dear to our hearts, prohibit us, usually under some threat or other, from learning and adapting our social behavior to today's realities, or perhaps more correctly, today's necessities.

The customs and traditions of our varied cultures, religions and so-called racial groups evolved millennia ago during times of great ignorance of

the universe, and they evolved in closed, isolated and distant geographic areas on the planet. Each isolated group responded in its own way to the mystical worldly wonders of their environment. The cognitive inventions that each group formulated to enable them to live in psychological harmony with the awesome phenomena of a universe they barely understood became their covenant with the unknown. These cognitive inventions became sacrosanct, inviolable, unalterable, and failure to abide by them was sure to bring down a most awful and terrifying response from an offended god or demon. If the unknown mystical powers that govern the universe did not punish you for your indiscretion then surely one of the earthly appointed (usually self-appointed) overseers would.

These various beliefs may have been deemed viable truths at the time of their conception but only because of the limited knowledge that both the conceivers and the followers of these beliefs had of the universe at that time. Today, we do know better. Our current knowledge of the universe and its workings is neither perfect nor complete but it is more than adequate to provide a willing mankind with an escape from the intolerance and barbarism that has poisoned and continues to poison our social behavior.

Race, as it is commonly understood, is a concept that falsely conveys the notion that human beings because of the several distinct physical characteristics that distinguishes them, means that they are in some way different human beings. Every human being, past and present, came to be on this earth by the self-same biological processes, regardless of where or when, and the physical characteristics that humans have developed in the course of their evolution was a natural consequence and the cumulative effect of the close-breeding caused by the group's isolation, the effects of diet, and the physical environment peculiar to their region. (Consider why the Inuits of the NWT did not build mud huts, or why the desert dwellers of the Kalahari did not build igloos.)

That each group, in the course of their evolution, developed the particular physiological traits by which academics categorize them into races does not disqualify them as humans. There are no truly different biological racial categories or species of the human genus - a human being is a human being, is a human being, no matter how hard our 'ologists' try to prove otherwise. No human individual is a greater or lesser being than another. No human individual need apologize to another for the physical characteristics that distinguish him - each differs from the other in the same degree. There is no true difference between humans, only a false formalized conceptual understanding that serves

no other purpose than to sow the seeds of intolerance.

Culture is a group's idiosyncratic baggage, and the cause of much conflict when different groups come into each other's living space. The conflicts that arise out of cultural differences are a consequence of each group's erroneous belief about their culture and the nature of culture. Each group holds its customs and traditions as inviolable, and any request made on the adherence is deemed an affront and becomes an excuse for saber rattling. But if everyone recognized and understood that the customs to which they adhere so adamantly are nothing more than man-made conventions, concocted millennia ago by God knows who, and that they are not damning, life-threatening requirements enforced by some mystical demon or uncompromising god, then they can more easily arrive at a compromise and learn to live with other cultural groups. The ancient traditions and rites that make up a culture's baggage must be open to review and change in order to accommodate the reality of a modern world. (Any earthly overseer of a particular cultural who refuses to accede to any reasonable compromise should be given his walking papers. An intolerant leadership is a dangerous leadership.) It is much, much better to visit a cemetery where antiquated conventions are buried than a cemetery holding the human victims of racial, cultural or religious intolerance.

Religion is the most difficult issue to deal with openly and honestly, because it usually brings down the wrath and ire of its unyielding gatekeepers in a manner that is totally irreconcilable with the professed altruism of their teachings. Yet religion (and it is not a heresy to admit it), like mankind's cultural conventions, grew out of need and at a time when mankind's understanding of himself and the awesome universe that surrounded him was minimal to say the least. The cognitive inventions of the numerous religions mankind supports, however they were derived or professed to have been derived, are the products of ancient times and ancient minds. The beliefs they professed, the convictions they espoused, and the rituals they demanded may have served to fill the intellectual void of the times, but they may not be valid today. Like cultural conventions the tenets of the religions of the world have survived in their ancient forms only because they have been held to be sacrosanct and inviolable. But they are not, and they must

Continued on page 29

# Daily effects of straight privilege

This article is based on Peggy McIntosh's article on white privilege and was written by a number of straight-identified students at Earlham College who got together to look at some examples of straight privilege. These dynamics are but a few examples of the privilege which straight people have. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer (LGBTQ) people have a range of different experiences, but cannot count on most of these conditions in their lives.

## **On a daily basis as a straight person...**

I can be pretty sure that my roommate, hallmates and classmates will be comfortable with my sexual orientation.  
If I pick up a magazine, watch TV, or play music, I can be certain my sexual orientation will be represented.  
When I talk about my heterosexuality (such as in a joke or talking about my relationships), I will not be accused of pushing my sexual orientation onto others.  
I do not have to fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences.  
I did not grow up with games that attack my sexual orientation (IE fag tag or smear the queer).  
I am not accused of being abused, warped or psychologically confused because of my sexual orientation.  
I can go home from most meetings, classes, and conversations without feeling excluded, fearful, attacked, isolated, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, stereotyped or feared because of my sexual orientation.  
I am never asked to speak for all the people who are heterosexual.  
I can be sure that my classes will require curricular materials that testify to the existence of people with my sexual orientation.  
People don't ask why I made my choice of sexual orientation.  
People don't ask why I made my choice to be public about my sexual orientation.  
I do not have to fear revealing my sexual orientation to friends or family. It's assumed.  
My sexual orientation was never associated with a closet.  
People of my gender do not try to convince me to change my sexual orientation.  
I don't have to defend my heterosexuality.  
I can find a religion that will not condone my sexual orientation — much less support me.  
I can count on finding a therapist or doctor willing and able to talk about my sexuality.  
I am guaranteed to find sex education literature for couples with my sexual orientation.  
Because of my sexual orientation, I do not need to worry that people will harass me.  
I have no need to qualify my straight identity.  
My masculinity/femininity is not challenged because of my sexual orientation.  
I am not identified by my sexual orientation.  
I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my sexual orientation will not work against me.  
If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has sexual orientation overtones.  
Whether I rent or I go to a theater, Blockbuster, an EFS or TOFS movie, I can be sure I will not have trouble finding my sexual orientation represented.  
I am guaranteed to find people of my sexual orientation represented in the Earlham curriculum, faculty, and administration.  
I can walk in public with my significant other and not have people double-take or stare.  
I can choose to not think politically about my sexual orientation.  
I do not have to worry about telling my roommate about my sexuality. It is assumed I am a heterosexual.  
I can remain oblivious of the language and culture of LGBTQ folk without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.  
I can go for months without being called straight.  
I'm not grouped because of my sexual orientation.  
My individual behavior does not reflect on people who identify as heterosexual.  
In everyday conversation, the language used often assumes my sexual orientation. For example, sex inappropriately referring to heterosexual sex or family meaning heterosexual relationship.  
People do not assume I am experienced in sex (or that I even have it!) merely because of my sexual orientation.  
I can kiss a person of the opposite gender on the cheek or in the cafeteria without being watched and stared at.  
Nobody calls me straight with maliciousness.  
People can use terms that describe my sexual orientation and mean positive things (IE "straight as an arrow", "standing up straight" or "straightened out") instead of demeaning terms (IE "ewww, that's gay" or being "queer").  
I am not asked to think about why I am straight.  
I can be open about my sexual orientation without worrying about my job.

[http://www.cs.earlham.edu/~hyrax/personal/files/student\\_res/straightprivilege.htm](http://www.cs.earlham.edu/~hyrax/personal/files/student_res/straightprivilege.htm)

## Transsexual marriage is valid

A couple have won a legal battle to have their marriage declared valid after the husband, a female to male transsexual, was declared a man by the Family Court.

In a landmark judgment, the Family Court confirmed the marriage was valid and that the definition of "man" should be based on contemporary thinking and not on outdated ideologies. Justice Richard Chisholm's decision, considered to be significant in terms of the law regarding transsexuals, hinged on when a man is a man.

The Federal Attorney-General opposed the case, arguing the husband was not a man under marriage law. He submitted the meaning of the word "man" in the Marriage Act should be the meaning given when the Act was passed in 1961 - whether a person was a male at birth.

The latest decision is at odds with a 1971 English decision known as Corbett, which had been a guide on the subject. Justice Chisholm said "man" should be given its ordinary contemporary meaning. The husband, known as Kevin, was born a girl, with female genitalia and chromosomes.

But for as long as he could remember he had perceived himself to be male and had worn boy's clothes and played with boy's toys. From 1994 Kevin presented as a male, started hormone treatment in 1995 and in 1998 had sexual reassignment surgery, but has not had surgery to construct male genitalia. Kevin met Jennifer in 1996 and a year later they were living as a de facto couple, having been told they could not marry legally.

In 1998 Kevin was issued with a new birth certificate showing his sex as male. Then in 1999 the pair were issued with a Certificate of Marriage by a marriage celebrant. The Attorney-General disputed the validity of the marriage certificate. The couple have a child, conceived under the IVF program and have been successful in a second IVF application.

Justice Chisholm said the evidence of 39 witnesses who testified for Kevin was striking. "They see him and think of him as a man, doing what men do. "They do not see him as a woman pretending to be a man. They do not pretend that he is a man, while believing he is not . . . They are describing what

they see in Kevin. And what they see is a man," Justice Chisholm said.

In his conclusion the Judge said there was no persuasive reason to assume, for the purposes of marriage, that "if a person is a male or female at birth, the person must be a male or female at the date of the marriage".

(From Australia - by Cindy Wockner)

[www.dailytelegraph.news.com.au](http://www.dailytelegraph.news.com.au)

"Today was like a shadow. It lurked behind me. It's now gone forever. Why is it that time is such a difficult thing to befriend?" -- Mary Casey

"Tears are like rain. They loosen up our soil so we can grow in different directions." -- Virginia Casey

"No person is your enemy, no person is your friend, every person is your teacher" --Florence S Shinn

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## Queer Islam

Continued from page 15

It is here where I think the dialogue between Queer Muslims and non-Queer Muslims as well as the dialogue between Queer Muslims and the non-Muslim LGBT community becomes crucial. For non-queer Muslims, Queer Muslims have much to offer in the way of rediscovering the faith and progressing the continual evolution of the faith. By having to sit down and discuss the faith and LGBT issues, the dialogue can serve as a touchstone for other continuing dialogues concerning contemporary issues in Islam around the world, including very pertinent issues like terrorism and its justifications through Islam by terrorists. Also, in the most basic sense, understanding the Queer Muslim stories, all Muslims can better serve their communities and more importantly redefine the word "community" to truly include ALL of their Muslim brothers and sisters," he said.

How can the non-Muslim majority of our LGBT community become more aware and supportive of our LGBT-Muslim members? Like with any majority, our first job is to listen, listen, listen.

When I asked Abdullah if he felt welcomed by non-Muslim LGBT groups and organizations, he said, "Yes and no. Yes, as another homosexual in some ways, but in a number of ways my race (African-American) plays a more important part in how I am 'perceived' by people of non-color, e.g. Caucasians. When I walk through gay neighborhoods on the other side of town, I am perceived as that black man, and not as their gay brother. So the issues of race plays out more readily than my religious views. However, should I dress traditionally with more traditional Middle Eastern clothing, then I am perceived as one of those 'prejudiced' Muslims who don't like gay people.

Non-Muslim LBGTQs must learn they are not the center of the universe and "the other" will decide what is important for themselves in terms of their religious faith and how they live their lives as homosexuals. They (non-Muslim LGBT) have to learn individuals that have differing cultural backgrounds and

religious expressions are not monolithic in how they live their lives," he said.

According to Kamil, along with having something to learn, we have something to teach. "As for the non-Muslim LGBT community, their position in the world community is far more evolved and accepted than the Muslim LGBT community. So, first and most importantly, non-Muslim LGBT communities serve as models and resources of where the Muslim LGBT community would like to be within their respective communities. Education and awareness are always crucial and having far more established resources for LGBT persons, the LGBT community will serve an integral role in helping Muslim LGBT communities establish themselves in the future as well. Given the difficulties each have experienced in their lives around being LGBT and Muslim, I wanted to get a sense of where they are now and what their hopes for the future were.

Abdullah said he will continue to work towards educating Queer Muslims about the historical misinterpretations that have been taught to them, while making it clear Queer Muslims must overcome their own issues as homosexuals and their faith as Muslims.

"Heterosexual Muslims will never be able to provide us any answers, per se, because the majority is biased against homosexuality. So we must write about our research, speak out about our condition and situation within the larger Muslim community, and make sure future generations grow up in an atmosphere that more understanding and hopefully accepting of their sexual orientation and how one melds their religion and their sexuality," he said.

Kamil said "I would like to be put myself in a position where I can help the Muslim LGBT community grow and establish itself. Complete acceptance seems a lofty unattainable goal, but perseverance will shorten the distance between the present status and our goal. Sexuality, just like race, gender, socioeconomic class, and other diversities, should not define the value of a human being. And so naturally, my hopes are that one day in the near future, that vision, that ideal becomes a reality," he said.

The best anyone, Muslim or other, LGBT or other, can hope for is to be at peace with who they are. Sulayman X

painted a wonderful portrait of a person who has worked through all these issues and is coming out the other side. In his "Confessions of Sulayman X" from his "Queer Jihad" web site he writes:

"In recent years I have begun following the path of Sufism and mysticism, I have become increasingly tolerant and realize the importance and value of compassion and love for all beings. I do not care much about doctrines or externals — I will happily assent to whatever is at hand. They are not what's important, after all: only Allah is important. And anything that helps a soul approach closer to Allah has value and is of worth.

There was a time when I followed the debates religiously, reading endless material on the finer points of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and what the Prophet did and did not say about homosexuals, and so on and so forth — but these days, to be honest, I no longer care. The issue is really quite simple, and there is no need for endless talk: gay people are human beings with human feelings and needs, and spiritual needs too, and the love they feel for others is the same love anyone feels for anyone else. Rejecting or hating them serves no useful purpose. Just because some homophobic people get a buzz from hating gays and lesbians does not mean that Allah agrees with them.

We have been silent, until now, unaware of how many of us there really were; I suspect that silence is now coming to an end. We are here; we are what Allah has made us to be; it is time to stop apologizing and to start being ourselves the way we were meant to by the One who created us. Life will go on. Does Allah condemn homosexuals? If so, then why create them in the first place? The logic — if there is any — escapes me.

All I know for certain is what's here, now, my reality, and my life. I am a gay man. That has never changed. And there has been no end of gay men who have testified to the same truth: we cannot change. We are what we are. And nobody gets to choose their sexuality.

I am an intensely spiritual person and talk to Allah every day. I have only

Concludes on page 29

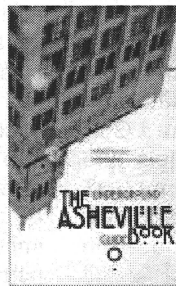
# BOOKS

## The Well of Loneliness by Radclyffe Hall



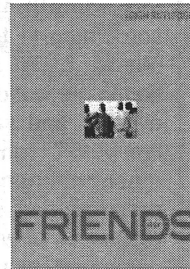
Hall (1880<sup>a</sup>-1943) was legendary in her own time—or infamous, some might say—for her fifth novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). The book was banned for obscenity because its main character is a lesbian, and it subsequently became a notorious best-seller, thrusting Hall into a literary rogues' gallery of fame. Cline uses previously unexplored material to create a biography of the now largely forgotten author that portrays the dense interrelationship of her writings, her childhood, and her friends and loves.

## The Underground Asheville Guidebook by Tom Kerr



The Underground Asheville Guidebook is the first travel guidebook to focus its attention exclusively and specifically upon the historic city of Asheville, North Carolina in humorous, far-reaching detail. Asheville's history, architecture, sites of interest, folklore, and funky personality are explored and uncovered in one convenient, pocket-sized edition complete with over 200 original photographs. A must-have for visitors to Asheville.

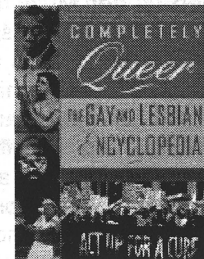
## Gay Friends by Leigh W. Rutledge



A friendship book that goes way beyond the clichés and gets to the heart of what makes gay friends the best friend a man (or woman) could ever have! "Gay friends don't just bring vanilla ice cream to the birthday party, they bring Tahitian French Vanilla from Balducci's." "Gay friends hold your hand when you're getting your nipple pierced." "Gay friends know your real age." "Gay friends try to redecorate your home—even though you don't want them to." "Gay friends make sure you're using condoms."

"Gay friends flirt with you because they know it makes you feel good." Hilarious, touching, and unflinching on target, this is a tribute to the moments in life when only a gay friend will do, and is a perfect way for anyone to say "thanks!" to that all important, irreplaceable, and irrefragable gay friend!

## Completely Queer : The Gay and Lesbian Encyclopedia by Steve Hogan, Lee Hudson



The invention of the "encyclopedia" in the early 18th century was an attempt to collect together, in one place, all practical and theoretical knowledge. As more and more knowledge was accumulated—science, politics, and arts just kept happening—the idea of the "encyclopedia" became a little antiquated. After a while, the form itself became a catch-all for interesting, quirky opinions and deposits of odd information, a development that finds its apotheosis in *Completely Queer: The Gay and Lesbian Encyclopedia*.

Editors Steve Hogan and Lee Hudson have pulled together more than 500 entries on everything from ACT UP to Seventh-Day Adventists, from Boston Marriages to Greg Louganis. The writing is breezy and smart, and almost all of the entries have bibliographic follow-ups. The book is beautifully designed, with a generous selection of photos. Filled with information ranging from the useful to the unique, from the facile to the fascinating, *Completely Queer* should be mined for conversational tidbits before attending any future cocktail parties, church socials, or two-for-one nights at the bar.

Book descriptions from  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



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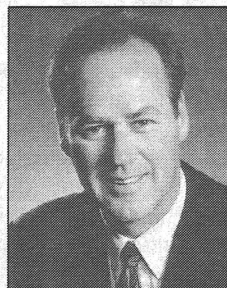
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# Queer Islam

Continued from page 27

felt acceptance, compassion and love from Allah. I have never felt condemnation or rejection. Indeed, it seems as though Allah has 'bent over backwards' to help me accept myself and get on with my life, assuring me that nothing He has created is worthy of hatred or rejection.

My conscience does not trouble me. My heart is at peace. I have begged to be made 'whole', to be 'normal' — such prayers were never answered. I have told Allah again and again that if He is displeased with who I am, then I will change, that nothing matters to me as much as pleasing Him and living my life honestly and decently. At any point in time He could have laid it upon my heart that homosexuality was wrong. He has not. Why? Should I continue begging Him to condemn and reject me, or should I arrive at the conclusion that I am what He made me to be and leave it at that?

If anything, I have been gently 'pushed' onto the path of love. The more I have loved in my life, the more I have healed, even when that love was expressed sexually with another man. It never seemed 'sin' to me: it seemed beautiful, healing.

Will Allah destroy me? It's hard to conceive such a thought. It would be a grave injustice since I have repeatedly surrendered to Him and begged Him to teach me the right way to go, the right path, the right attitude, the right mind. To wait until the time of my death and then inform me of His displeasure — no, I cannot conceive of such a thing."

**Lyn McGinnis, of Waterloo, is a writer, web and graphic designer. His company is BlueStarWeb Design. He also does ad graphics for The Voice. A Voice exclusive.**

## The Seeds Of Intolerance

Continued from page 24

accommodate the reality of our day if there is every to be hope for mankind to live in harmony. Throughout history misplaced religious zeal has shed much innocent blood, and continues to do so today.

There is no intrinsic harm in upholding and living in accordance with a particular set of religious beliefs however ancient and out of sync with today's reality they may be, providing these beliefs do not preach or foster malevolence towards others or lead its devotees harmfully astray from reality. Harm comes from the failure to recognize that one's religion, in spite of the fact that its tenets may proclaim it to be the one true religion, may turn out in the end not to be the one true religion. The harm comes in our failure to recognize that the concepts of God and all that is ascribed to Him in the particular religion we subscribe to just may not be totally correct. The harm comes in our failure to recognize that in spite of their good intentions our prophets could have been mistaken in what they claim to have seen, heard and understood. The harm comes in our failure to recognize that the scribes who over the centuries have recorded and translated the prophets' messages may have lost something in the translation or misinterpreted some tenet or other, or perhaps even used some poetic license here and there. In essence, the harm comes from our failure to understand that when it comes to the bottom line the religious beliefs we hold are strictly a matter of faith and not of incontrovertible fact. Odds are that if there is a true God somewhere He most certainly would deny much, if not all, of the things our various religions have deemed fit to ascribe to Him.

One need not fear offending God by thinking that way. I seriously doubt that God, whoever or whatever we conceive Him to be, would strike anyone with a lightning bolt for sincerely seeking out better ways to understand Him and His universe, or for trying to bring about peace and understanding among humans. Such thoughts are not sacrilegious, nor are they heretical. If anyone, while thinking such thoughts, imagines hearing a great rumbling in the heavens, they need not fear that an uncompromising God is preparing to pulverize them with a torrent of rushing rocks, but the sound they imagine may just be applause - applause for having the courage to shed the bigotry and ignorance of the ages. It is not God who is petty, intolerant and uncompromising - we are! And we do it ever so shamelessly in his name.

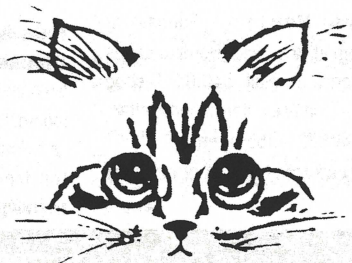
In terms of social behavior, we are still living in a world that is flat, and we lack the courage and the willingness to realign our ancient customs, traditions and religious teaching with today's reality because of some traditional belief that to do so would be an insult to some honoured ancestor, some god, or some demonic power. -- Bull!

It is time mankind awoke from his stupor! The

sum total of traditions, customs and rituals, be they racial, cultural or religious, that a particular group or society has inherited are only guidelines - nothing more, nothing less. They are not damning, inviolable edicts to be followed in perpetuity. Who has not in his lifetime failed at some time and in some way to follow precisely every edict of his religions strictures and yet lives! It is not God that is offended when a human fails to abide by a custom, tradition or a ritual, but some human or group of humans whose motives may not always be clear or even honourable. Diehard traditionalists and fundamentalists unfortunately suffer a misconception of the import and purpose of the customs, traditions and rituals to which they adhere (and who want everyone else to adhere to). They are afflicted with a dangerous zeal. They suffer a very narrow vision of the universe and humanity, and they are often the (unwitting?) sowers of the seeds of intolerance.

Until such time that humankind casts aside the institutionalized bigotry of the ages that permeates their concepts of race, culture and religion, they will remain barbarians - because each time they will perceive an affront to a custom or a ritual which they hold ever so dear to their heart they will individually and in groups, small and large, murder and maim, batter and abuse, lie, cheat, steal and defraud, ravage, rape, burn and loot, and commit these and other unspeakable atrocities. They will take up arms and from a vantage point most suitable only for a sniper they will blow the brains out of the innocent child, who only yesterday was the delightful and friendly neighbour who brought them flowers.

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/ecmigdal/inttol.htm>



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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.gpcamp.com/waterloounitarian/](http://www.gpcamp.com/waterloounitarian/)

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

**AWARE K-W:** Aware K-W. A discussion and support group for gay Christians, their parents and friends who have been disillusioned by the church's often negative approach to homosexuality. We meet the 3rd Sunday of every month. For more information call Gary at [REDACTED] or Ada at [REDACTED]

**Friends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling** - Sundays at 3:15 pm at Brunswick Bowling Lanes - Frederick St. Mall. \$10.00 + shoe rental, For more information contact Jason at [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]

## TUESDAYS

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

**The Rainbow Community Conversation Group** Now meets on Tuesdays on the U of W Campus at 7pm. For more information call 884-GLOW.

**The Rainbow Parenting Network** - A forum for GLBT parents, parents-to-be, and those considering parenting. For more information call 743-[REDACTED]

**Tri-Youth Pride** - meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at Planned Parenthood - 4-6pm. For more information call Gail at [REDACTED]

## WEDNESDAYS

**GLOW's Coming Out Discussion Groups** explore issues in sexual orientation; University of Waterloo, 7:30-9:00 pm. Information: 884-4569. **A social gathering follows the discussion group 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.ca](mailto:info@gomorrah.ca)

**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

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]

**Women For Sobriety** - Create a New Life, a drug & alcohol addiction support group for gay women, meets

## 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](mailto: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]

Want to add a resource? Contact The Voice today!

Do you have a group that is not listed here? Would you like to change that? Email us at [clistings@thevoice.on.ca](mailto:clistings@thevoice.on.ca) or call us at (519) 743-5015. Help us keep our community up-to-date!

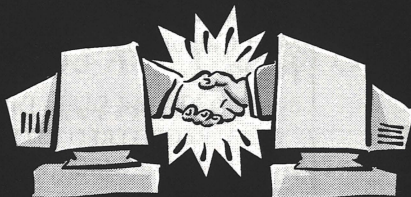
**The Voice Magazine is always interested in what you have to say. We encourage you to write and give us feedback in our "Have Your Say" section. We also are looking for submissions of poems, articles, essays or pictures. Would you like to write a monthly column about whatever interests you? If you have a group that has an up-coming event please let us know at [events@thevoice.on.ca](mailto:events@thevoice.on.ca)**

Email: [REDACTED]

Call: (519) [REDACTED]

Snail Mail Address: is on page 3

## The Voice Magazine On Line



<http://www.thevoice.on.ca>

# 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

**BMC (Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian & Gay Concerns):** A social group that provides support for Mennonite GLBT people, their friends and families. Various events throughout the year. For info write P.O. Box 43031, Eastwood Square, Kitchener, ON N2H 6S9, or call Colleen at [REDACTED]

**Coffee Club** - If you like to drink coffee and just chat. For more information call - Peter at [REDACTED]

**Gay Men's Group** - is a social group for males of all ages and orientations. For more information call Gordon at (519) [REDACTED]

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

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

**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:** is a social club for lesbians in K-W and area.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:outline@uoguelph.ca) [www.uoguelph.ca/~outline](http://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: [glbt@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:glbt@msu.mcmaster.ca) [www.msu.mcmaster.ca/services/glbt/glbt.htm](http://www.msu.mcmaster.ca/services/glbt/glbt.htm)

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

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

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

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

**Narcotics Anonymous** **Hamilton:** (905) 522-0332 **Brantford:** (519) 759-2558 **St. Catharines:** (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.

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

**GLBT 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

### Community Listings

If you have a group or event that you would like to have listed in our Community Listings please let us know! Likewise if you have any new information for your group or event contact us so we can keep things right up to date.

Or if you'd also like to be listed on our website:

### Transgender Issues

We are a transsexual support group, run for transsexuals, and any one else who are supporters or family or friends.

We try to get updated medical info. for our members, as well as useful tips for anything from daily living and coping skills all the way to makeup and tricks to enhance your breasts.

<http://communities.msn.ca/UKTransgenderIssuesUK&navtyd=261>

### LESBIAN SOCIAL

(all women welcome)

#### Mostly Organic Juice Bar Café

119 King St. W. in downtown  
Kitchener

#### Saturdays

From Noon to 6 pm

We are open for suggestions as to what type of social time we can share. Some suggestions and thoughts we've had include, musical jams, card and board games, and general discussion. Come on down and check things out and please feel free to make suggestions if there's some activity that you'd like to share with other lesbians in your community.

*The Voice Welcomes Your Submissions*

If you have something you'd like to submit, please write, email, or phone us today.

### The Voice Magazine

P.O. Box [REDACTED]

RPO Evergreen

Kitchener, Ontario

N2M [REDACTED]

Phone: (519) [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

The Voice Magazine is On Line at:

[www.thevoice.on.ca](http://www.thevoice.on.ca)

### Friends of Dorothy is a GLBT

League was established as another way to bring the GLBT community & friends together. The League was started in September 1999 with 8 Bowlers we had



grown to over 40 Bowlers.. The League also believes in supporting the GLBT community, each year we hold a Charity

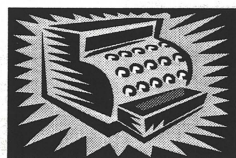
Bowling Tournament, where we raised over \$2,300 for Cancer Society-Breast Cancer & Hospital for Sick Kids-HIV Care.

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

Check back often as we keep adding new pages. We want to keep you informed!

The Voice Magazine online - community at a glance!

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Voice Classified Ads cost \$20.00 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.

(519) [REDACTED]

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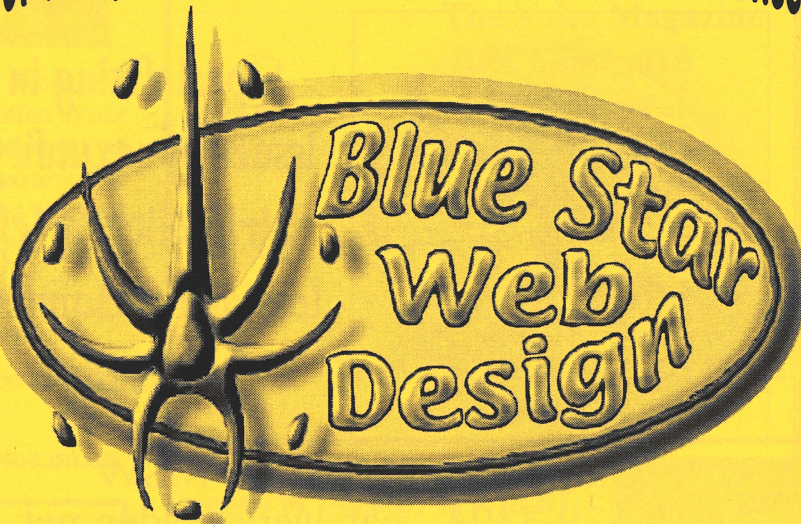
Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

### CASH REGISTERS

James Ritty of Dayton, Ohio, is credited with inventing the first cash register. In 1882, he sold the business to a Cincinnati salesman, Jacob H. Eckert, who subsequently invited others into the business by selling stock. One of the purchasers of an early cash register, John J. Patterson, was so impressed with the savings his model brought to his company, he bought 25 shares of stock and became a director of the company in 1884, eventually buying a controlling interest in the National Manufacturing Company. Patterson thoroughly organized the company, conducted sales classes, prepared sales manuals, and established salesman's territories. The success of the National Cash Register Company is due as much to these well organized origins as to the efficiency of the machines. Early "National" cash registers, as well as other models are deemed highly collectible today.

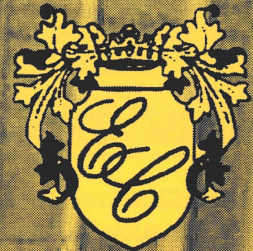
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