

The Voice

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The Voice

FREE

South Western Ontario's ONLY LGBT Magazine

Volume Four

July 2002

Issue Nine

PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

The 'Action' Man Test:
Weed Out Those Nasty Men!

The Advisability of Invisibility
in the Marketing of Gay Films

Stonewall! What Stonewall?



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The Voice Magazine is a monthly publication presenting an inclusive approach to all segments of the LGBT community. We educate and promote further acceptance, tolerance, and understanding of LGBT and alternative lifestyles and culture. We also address the need to improve communication and understanding between each part of our own sub-cultural mosaic.

The Voice Magazine is an all-inclusive alternative vehicle providing thought-provoking information as an independent media source.

We welcome feature article contributions and encourage writers to contact the editor for submission guidelines.

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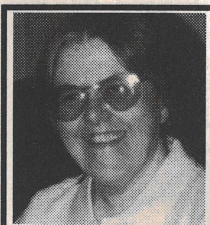
This month we welcome readers in St. Catharines, Chatham-Kent, Windsor, Port Huron and Sarnia.

Last month we introduced a new-look. We increased our circulation. We are now read in cities from and including Toronto to Port Huron. In order to facilitate this change in a cost-effective way we had to leave a printer that we had worked with very well for four years. That printer just didn't have the capability that we now require.

So, part of our big change involved the rather difficult process of getting quotes and finding a new printer. We did this and we thought we were all set. Not so. Only days after our first job was run at this new printer, Richter Web Printing, I was informed that the owner of that company did not want to print us anymore. The reasons cited were content issues (which were not specified) with four pages out of forty from our last issue. I heard absolutely nothing about this in our proofing process and there was no opportunity to address whatever Richter objected to. It turns out that the pages cited contained content that very much goes to the heart of the expression of gay lifestyle and culture. When I responded to the sales representative (who was delivering the owner of the company's message) that I wasn't so sure that their refusal to print us was legal, she quickly did a verbal song and dance that stressed, over-stressed, if you ask me, why Richter Web Printing does not want to print *The Voice* anymore. She ended by describing the owner of the company this way, "He does not want to be associated with your magazine." Strong words. What do they mean?

We have a fairly good idea what we believe those words mean. We have consulted with a lawyer, David Corbett, in Toronto. He contacted Richter Web Printing to ask about their position. They were asked to (at minimum) print us at least

once more in consideration of a lack of reasonable notice. They refused. They claimed, through their lawyer, that their refusal to print us has nothing to do with the



Ms. A.J. Mahari

fact that this is an LGBT publication. They claim that they have printed other lesbian and gay material. So, we are awaiting proof of this. Whether or not they can prove that we may still have a reason to legally question their refusal to print *The Voice Magazine*.

We strongly believe there is a very important principle involved here and we are prepared to fight for it. There is a very good possibility that we will be laying a Human Rights Complaint.

This on the heels of the recent decision in another Human Rights Case, involving the Lesbian and Gay Archives, in Toronto, who took legal action against a printer who had refused to print their business cards. The Brillinger vs Brockie case, and won initially and very recently had that decision up-held on appeal.

We trust that standing up for what we believe in, like others before us have done, will bring about important and much needed change in the publishing industry.

We've come a long way and still have a long way to go in terms of the both the recognition of our rights and the application and delivery of those rights in accordance with the law.

Most printers have a much more responsible and liberal attitude that recognizes that we are, in fact, entitled to our freedom of expression like everyone else. We are entitled to have a publication printed without the censorship or undue pressure to censor from those printers who seek to impose their values or prejudices upon us.

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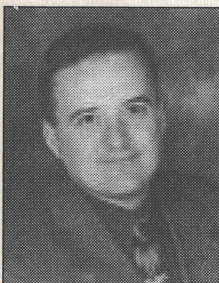
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In Waterloo at: Generation X, Wordsworth Books, Princess Cinema University of Waterloo, (Turn Key Desk-Student Life Centre), Adults Only Video, Wilfred Laurier University, The Stag Shop, Grabbajabba,

In Hamilton at: Gomorrah's Book Store, The Embassy Club, AIDS Network, The Unitarian Universalist Church, McMaster University, The WERX, Book Villa

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In Guelph at: The Bookshelf, University of Guelph, Black Mustard Bistro, Cafe Aquarius

In Brantford at: The PineTree Native Centre, "One"

In London at: The Pride Library at UWO, The AIDS Committee of London, City Lights Bookshop, Club 18, Our Place, Blackfriars Restaurant

In Stratford at: AIDS Action Committee of Perth County, Fanfare Books

In Toronto at: 519 Church Community Centre, Glad Day Books, Club Toronto, Good For Her, Woody's

In St. Catharines at: Club Rendezvous, Aids Niagara

In Windsor at: Life Nite Club, The Complex, Milk & Lift, Aids Committee of Windsor, CJAM Radio - University of Windsor

and other select locations in Toronto, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia, Port Huron and other areas of South Western Ontario.

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you have something that you would like to say about what you read in The Voice, send a letter to the editor. We'd like to hear from you! You can email us at haveyoursay@thevoice.on.ca or go to our web site at www.thevoice.on.ca and click on **HAVE YOUR SAY** and use our form mail. Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space.

Well, hello! It was just fabulous to see The Voice arrive in Windsor last month! What a fantastic magazine. We often feel like people believe that the world ends at London -- it sure doesn't! We're out here and thrilled to be able to read this magazine. Looking forward to reading about Windsor-related things now and again, in future, and all other cities in South Western Ontario!

-- Bill Anderson, Windsor

Congratulations A.J. and all who help you with The Voice! Fantastic changes. Wonderful look over-all and the content just keeps getting better. Amazing. We don't know how you do it. But, we are sure glad that you do. A great big thanks to The Voice for being there and for continuing to be a major vehicle in the bringing together of all of us who are LGBT in many communities.

-- Steven Broadbent, Waterloo

I just finished reading my first ever copy of The Voice Magazine. I just love it! Where have you been hiding all this time. I read that you have been doing this for four years. Sure wish I knew about this magazine before now. I am excited about reading it regularly and look forward to seeing much more.

-- David McNichol, Toronto

I reluctantly attended Pride in Kitchener this year. It was okay. I did notice that the energy level was low. It was hard to hear much of the entertainment. The beer garden was too far from the stage. I had a wonderful view of what must be the biggest damn tree in Victoria Park though.

Where was DREW? Where was CHRIS EDWARDS? I was extremely disappointed that they were not there. For a Pride that had the theme of "There's No Place Like Home", tell us will you, WWRP, with the exception of one or two performers, why was everyone else from anywhere but "home"?

-- Nancy Millard, Cambridge

I thought that Waterloo-Wellington Regional Pride did a very good job with this year's Pride. I still think, however, that we need to remember that not all was well in the process. More people need to be involved in the process. Regardless of the outcome our community really needs to see an end to the senseless bickering and constant working at cross-purposes. Let's get our acts together and build the kind of community so many keep talking about.

--Wayne Hewett, Kitchener

I am an avid and long-time reader of The Voice. I like much of what you are doing with the changes that you've made recently. BUT, I was appalled at last month's page 37. It was a disgusting example of commercialism, dare I say, "selling out" or "sleezy" and not something I ever expected to see in The Voice. I've heard many others who feel as I do. Sure hope you aren't going to go where all other gay publications have gone. That would be such a shame.

-- Hazel York, Guelph

I picked up a copy of your magazine for the first time at Glad Day Books. Wow! I like it. Very nice. Very interesting and so thought-provoking. It was such a breath of fresh air!

--Michael Miller, Toronto

What is with all this change? Are you going to forget about Kitchener-Waterloo now? What do you need Toronto for? Why are you interested in this magazine getting so big, and going to so many cities? Call me a stick in the mud, but, I just don't get it. Change may not be my favourite thing but I very much liked The Voice Magazine I've been reading for four years now. Sure it's still somewhat the same but I wasn't happy with what seemed to be too many 'gay' (meaning male) changes in content. Seemed 'gay-heavy' to me.

--Mildred Christie, Woodstock

Continued on Page 16

A Visit To Fairieland

By Stephen Erastes

"We are...a growing circle of gay and queer men, friends and neighbours who are centred on the land aka AmberFox... we are nonmainstream and include a diverse range of ages, body types, ethnic backgrounds, occupations, and interests. We gather to explore gay spirit, ritual, sexuality, fellowship, and to party..."

Off the paved back roads of a hilly terrain in Lanark County (near Ottawa) and then down a narrow, steep hilled dirt road, I finally come upon the "gates" of this fairie place, and deep breathe, and I entered with the same excitement, and minimal anxiety that I had already entered other 'secret' under-worlds of Gaydom, e.g. bathhouses, porn 'theatres' and hidden gay campsites... the land of heightened testosterone.... male places! On one hand I was (sexually) excited that I might encounter new experiences, and on the other hand, I was scared/anxious that somehow or other might be rejected or not measure up to the expectations (oh the male emphasis upon performance). I was pleased that this 'sacred ground' was way off the beaten path, with a rutted pathway before me guiding my car tires in between quite old, rustic somewhat falling down buildings (of a former time that seemed so much simpler and purer). The 'parking lot' at the end of the pathway was dried, yellowed and warnings of hot mufflers starting fires seemed prudent and practical.

I was warmly greeted by a friendly man behind dark spacey glasses with a large scarf about his head (probably the person I'd been corresponding with) – the "owner" of the land, which at the same time seemed so communal. I was led back to the road to a small 'bridge' over a ditch leading up a grassy knoll, with majestic coolish trees to the one side. I took the suggested spot, despite the rocky terrain and the overarching skin-tearing apple tree, that would spell the end of my already threadbare tent fly. Hungry mosquitoes quickly acquired a taste for me, who has always been so tolerant of such pests (hmm, reflecting on other aspects of my life). Help was gratefully appreciated, as darkness fell.

Heading back across the dry grass, a canopy of stars drew me

upwards (are there that many stars), and the stillness and clarity of sounds reminded how noisy an environment I generally live in.



Ahead lay the "Erection" (the dining house), and therein stood men in a circle holding hands. Guys were of various body types and ages and bents, one dressed in black captains hat, black feathered earrings, a blank boa, black thong & black 4" black shiny stilettos (he later told me that the 8inchers are killers to wear for any period of time). The room was a wonderful 8 x10 with exposed studs, homemade wooden drying racks, a wood-fired heater, and the 'foreskin' extension with windows and couches for morning reading and relaxing. The soft warm light of kerosene lamps, the friendliness of the men about, the incredible aromas, and I knew I was safe and home (reminding me of my first Quaker gathering).

AFTER the incredible feast (supper too plain a word), there was a gentle reminder about cleaning up your own plate --- the expectation of participation that seemed more akin to women culture. I enthusiastically joined in -- cleaning pots and pans, and even some others plates and extra cups and glasses around, finishing it with one or two others. I just felt at home here.

Afterwards we went to "official opening" of the Departure Lounge. This small room lit by tea candles, a wall in aluminium shiny tin corrugated roofing material reflected the lights. The bar at one end had mirrored tiles behind it with bottles imitating (real) alcohol of red and blue colours. The other end was the 'stage' with a chair, an electronic piano and CD player, utilized by the resident clarinet player, complete with his own pre-recorded music. Guys sat around sitting on one of 3 sofas or the floors, enjoying the shots, the discussion, and in some cases, each other (one nude guy sat in between two bearish guys, who touched each other and him without embarrassment). Another guy sat on the floor beside me, decked out in a full body mosquito netting, which upon closer examination, revealed that he wore nothing else. We got to know each other, as I did also with the totally nude guy, whom at some point I ended up laying naked on the couch with,

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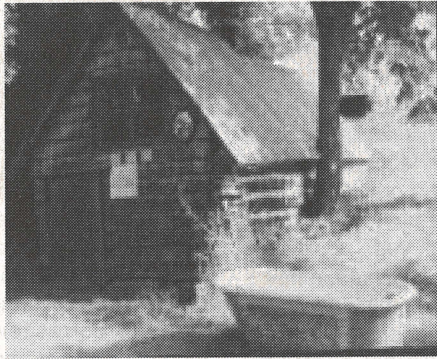
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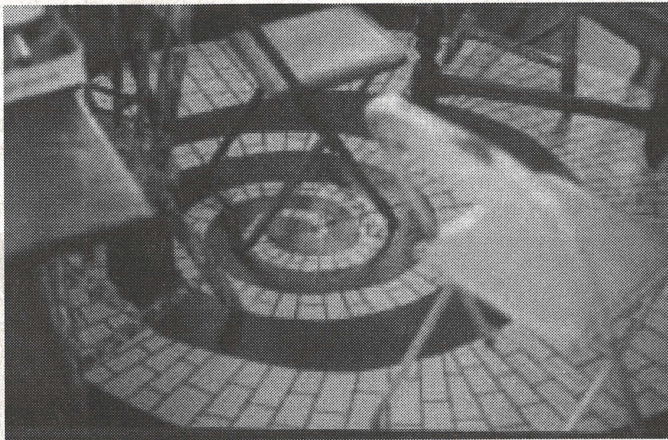
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with both of us quite obviously showing our fondness for one another. He later joined me in my tent for the night, and we continued our exploration. Later I was to learn that he was coupled, and this open friendliness was not indicative of wanting to establish an exclusive relationship, or also a threat to his own long term committed relationship. This sort of thing just happened at fairie gatherings: guys enjoyed one another.



In all, the days passed slowly at the site, being left to one's own initiatives or lack thereof, with the unspoken responsibilities also there. Midday we often gathered in a Circle, the major connection of the group. Each one spoke in turn passing around of a talisman (an old egg beater, a phallic piece of wood, whatever), uninterrupted, and with topic/comment of choice, from the deeply personal to the mundane to the business of the group. The circle often lasted 2 or 3 hours. Sometimes we snacked and drank well water. Sometimes we connected sexually while sitting in the circle. Not everyone attended and even some of those attending sat outside the circle, and some left. There was no consensus about its importance and function, especially the more personal 'heart circle'.



The Heart Circle of recent past revealed mixed reactions, especially with some discomfort about some sharing too much, being too needy, and over-burdening the group. The two days that circles weren't held left me feeling more 'removed' and less part of the 'collective'.

There were sometimes spontaneous "workshops" and some days we went swimming at the nearby creek, which seemed a bit strange having to now be cognisant of the community at large (eg wearing clothes). I managed to sneak in a few times au naturel – my usual way of swimming. We had fun with each other in the water, trying to stand on an underwater rock with a

fast current, forcing us to be very close and touchy with one another (surely raising the eyebrows of the locals).

The evenings were feasting times, and then clean-up/socializing, snoozing, and getting to know one another (so reminiscent of my childhood visits to the areas without electricity and where life seemed purer and simpler). Late in the night we'd fire up the sauna and crawl into the back (womb like) setting, naked with each other, not able to stand up, a roaring fire, wandering hands and enjoyment of one another. Later going outside, showering with cold water, and observing the heavens and then meandering back to our sites, possibly accompanied.

In reflection time seemed to slow down, without my usual electronic reminders and to-do lists, with simple tasks and not-much-to-do reminding me once again of a time-far-away. I caught up on sleep and put my ever-chattering thinking/analyzing on hold. There was less pagan ritual than I thought and it seemed more peripheral to this group (than other fairie groups). I was told that this was a 'drama' and arts focused crowd, with the talent show being the crowning event of the week. The creativity exhibited reminded me of the wonderful contributions that gay men have made to the arts.

The experiment offered a living in an intentional flat non-hierarchical collective gay space, albeit for only a brief period. Even during that time one could sense some conflict and unresolved issues and different ideologies driving the experiment. Much was unsaid, and the focus was upon the positive which you can do in

short periods of time. Communities which remove themselves create artificial environments, and in essence it becomes a retreat, a time for figuring out the real world. It is delicate too though, and the much craved increase in membership potentially threatens the ideal, eg young gays in some American fey gatherings are threatening havoc with the strong focus on party! Party! Party! Be careful you may get what you wish for.

The experiment in Gaydom continues.... And yes I'll probably go again this year, maybe even with

a friend. If you're interested in more information visit the AmberFox site <http://aka.amberfox.ca> or email me at Erastes@gosympatico.ca

Stephen Erastes is the pen name of a resident of Waterloo who has come into the gay lifestyle "later in life"... and who is curious about his new found life. A Voice Exclusive.



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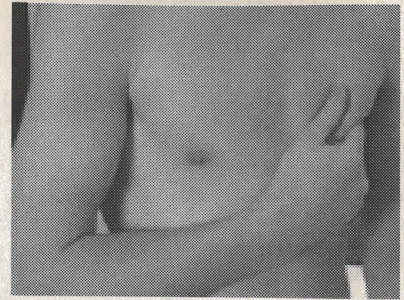
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LGBT SPECTRUM



SUGAR AND SPICE AND NIPPLES ARE NICE

By Charles W. Westfall



Those two sebaceous protrusions dominate our torsos. Male or female, they can't be missed. Unfortunately, they are often, too often, ignored, taken for granted or simply dismissed as something we could well do without, especially among males.

Well, first of all, they are not something that we could well do without. In both males and females, they have a very practical, albeit hidden function. The key to all this is in the word "sebaceous".

Aha! You didn't actually know that nipples as part of the mammary glands are also part of the body's self-lubricating system. Relax. I didn't know that either. The mammary system secretes a substance called "sebum" which helps keep the skin moist.

Hey! We're on a roll here. I hope that you're as surprised as I was to learn that the mammary system wasn't restricted to

the production and delivery of human milk. Now, don't get me wrong. I think that nipples as a direct producer/consumer connection happen to be most convenient, economical and, in most cases, attractive. I'm not even going to venture into a discussion about the storage vaults. Hooters, eat your heart out.

This column is about nipples. Nothing more. I'm not talking about bosoms, breasts, décolletage, big boobs, knockers or whatever is held up by a maidenform bra. I want to focus on nipples. I think it's about time someone took notice. Nipples have for too long been ignored, put down or, would you believe it, avoided.

It really is hard to deny the existence of nipples. They do tend to dominate the upper torso of most human beings. Generally provided in pairs, one pair per person, they have been known to appear in

multiple sets from time to time. In the so called "lower mammal", their number tends to correspond to the number of mouths in the expected litter. In humans, multiple nipples are a rarity.

Aside from being sebaceous, nipples are also erectile. This is because they are composed of very spongy tissue that is capable of absorbing an influx of blood and that kind of makes them, well, hard. This quality is probably most noticeable when it's cold. But, just wait. There's more to this story than meets the eye at this time. There is, actually, an erotic dimension.

Before we get to that, in this semi and often pseudo scientific exploration, it might be good to go back to basics and find out where those nifty nipples come from to begin with.

During gestation, the foetus undergoes many changes and a lot depends on a

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bunch of "x's" and "y's" that measure chromosomes and determine whether or not a boy or a girl will be born. It is no longer a secret that most of us start out as female. Along the way some things change and some things develop.

In males, the penis and testes are formed. In females, the breast structure is developed. The amazing thing about all this is that in males, nipples remain even though they don't develop the channels through which milk can ultimately flow. And so, after all is said and done, all humans are born with at least two, dark, fleshy protuberances on their upper torso. Nipples vary in size and sensitivity. Not necessarily in that order or in any kind of proportion. Some are "outies" and some are "innies". Some are dark in colouration and some are more pinkish. Some are big; some are small.

There are nipples that crave attention: tweaking, stroking, licking, sucking, pinching, flicking, rubbing and caressing. There's an art to knowing which to use and how much pressure is needed to generate a response.

Oh, yes! Nipples are a great venue for foreplay. In fact, as I understand it, even with heterosexual couples, nipple play is too often overlooked as an avenue for passion. But, the times, they are a-changing!

The advent of body jewelry and body piercing has helped focus, at least in the Western World, more on nipples than ever before.

Consequently, nipple rings and bars have become commonplace. Aside from some initial discomfort and a period of healing, they seem not only to satisfy but to increase the erotic potential of these peculiar bumps on the chest. On men, they are usually inserted closer to the areola, the dark area at the base of the nipple. On women, more into the fleshy area of the nipple itself.

It is doubly ironic that for a long time the exposing of female nipples was considered improper. Strippers like Gypsy Rose Lee and Sally Rand had to resort to "pasties" to stay legal. The amount of bosom exposed didn't seem to be in question so long as the nipple wasn't uncovered.

These days, enterprising jewellers have devised attractive nipple adornments that encase the areola and let the nipple protrude from the middle of an ornamental circlet.

However they are adorned or embellished, nipples are a source of erotic energy. I remember one acquaintance who told me, "There's a direct connection between my nipples and my genitals." He was right, of course.

At least part of this is because nipples are comprised of a concentration of nerve endings. This not only makes some of them super sensitive; it also gives them an erotic influence within the human body system. If they become erect, because of special attention, that influence can, and undoubtedly will, spread to other areas of the body, genitalia included.

I've read at least a couple of accounts of individuals who pierced their own nipples in an attempt to achieve greater erotic sensitivity. They kind of grossed me out. Actually, I'm not advocating or promoting anything like that. I just want to explore the varying ways in which nipples can be enjoyed in the context of intimacy, fashion and personal pride.

Nipples can and should be fun, nipple clamps notwithstanding. Whether simple alligator clamps or leather padded or weighted clamps, there are lots of styles and sizes, they obviously give pleasure to some nipple bearers: and that includes a lot of us.

You don't have to be a total sado masochist to know that, often, a little bit of the right kind of pain can lead to a generous pay out in pleasure. Discovering one's pain threshold would also seem to be an adventure in self-awareness.

So, the nipples are there. Recent legislative changes have allowed both male and female nipples to be exposed and seen in areas where no one is offended by the spectacle. I'm not sure whether this apparent advance in legislative tolerance will do much good. At the same time, I feel the urge to salute an era in which nipples seem, finally, to have come into their own.

I guess the bottom line here is not to take your nipples for granted. They are wonderful attributes and delicious sources for both pain and pleasure. Their erotic potential is very often overlooked.

I do understand that for women the whole nipple thing can become quite dicey in terms of the demands of breast feeding and other problems. I also find a well developed set of pectoral muscles a setting that, for me at least, is more attractive than even the most luscious set of breasts. Being gay has its own parameters and preferences, after all.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding, sugar and spice and nipples are nice. After careful consideration, though, I have to conclude that nipples are nicest.

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

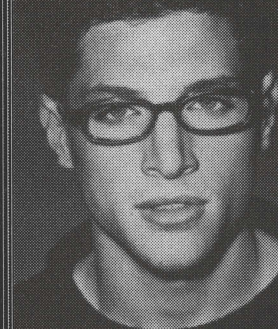
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LIVING OUT



Little Boxes

By Sally Sheklow

Single. Married. Two options, check one.

Here I sit, pen poised, W-4 form awaiting my answer. This official IRS document is as warm and fuzzy as a mammogram. It squeezes us into boxes that are too narrow, too flattening. The W-4 is insensitive to the subtle nuances of human relationships. It makes no allowances for those of us whose reality lies beyond their official categories. Raise your hand if you don't fit either end of the legally married hermetically sealed polarity. See? We're not alone. There are lots of us.

The IRS should give us more options. Offer a scale of one to ten. Give us a realistic continuum with choices like Seeing somebody interesting and Preferring some space right now. People could be more truthful about their status if they could check Reconnecting with my ex, but it's too soon to tell, or Sharing expenses but the spark is out, or Still looking, but stuck in a superficial fantasy that no one measures up to.

Having to choose between Married and Single is way too restrictive. Given the limited selection, I want to check the Married box. Seeing no box for long-term, mutually-supportive, loving relationship, I feel I should be entitled to check Married. That would be more honest. I'm married enough to stand in the produce section discussing our onion supply. That should qualify.

Any couple who counts Wednesday night grocery shopping as their "quality time" shouldn't have to check Single. Yet here I am, inking in the box that makes me a liar.

And my marital status isn't the only aspect of my life that doesn't fit into tidy IRS dichotomies. Next comes a box that wants to know my Gender. What happened to the old W-4 that simply asked sex? I guess the IRS got tired of plowing through all our forms that we so cleverly answered "Yes," "Not Tonight, Dear" and "Very Satisfied."

But Gender - Male or Female? How can there be only two choices? Anyone who's ever spent one evening at a city league women's softball game knows there are

more than two genders. Couldn't the W-4 at least give us a box for Other? Or a fill-in-the-blank? Either/or is so confining. Where's the middle ground between Schwarzenegger and Brandy? At least give us RuPaul and Martina.

What is it with the IRS? Is there some boy-girl-boy-girl pattern for processing W-4s? Do they figure our taxes based on our gender? And is that biological gender assignment or manifest gender expression? This year's or last's? Is somebody inspecting and comparing our answers to make sure we check the same gender box every time our job changes? You'd think they could at least base it on something not as malleable and fluctuating as gender. That way they could just have boxes listing all possible chromosomal configurations. Then the XXYs and XYYs wouldn't be so left out. What's the big deal, anyway? Are they going to increase my wages if I check Male? Will I start getting better credit card offers?

And what does any of this have to do with how much I want withheld from my paycheck? Dependents? None of the people or animals who depend on me qualify. Don't get me started.

By the time I get to the part that asks for my address I am totally steamed. After I fill in my street number they understandably want to know my City, State, Zip, and okay, I'll tell them my County (can't they look this stuff up?) But I'm seriously tweaked to see the next blank demanding to know my Nation. Nation? I doubt this question is a concession to displaced and ripped-off indigenous people. How many W-4 fillers do you suppose answer that one "Sioux?" Or "TV?"

What does the IRS hope to learn about me? Who I see as my people? Nation clearly calls for a creative answer. I'm writing in LESBIAN.

Sally Sheklow lives and writes in the Pacific Northwest, USA. Her column appears in several newspapers and magazines around the US, in New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. Email comments to: sally@rio.com. This article was submitted to The Voice by Sally Sheklow.

RAINBOW BUSINESS NETWORK

The Rainbow Business Network was formed in February of 2002. It is a forum for LGBT businesses to discuss business issues, networking and community-building. Meetings are structured in such a way as to provide each member with the maximum opportunity to enhance their own business. Members also share referrals, experience, and knowledge.

Current Members Include: Creative Resolutions, Dog-Gone-It Pet Services, Alan Goetz, Remax Twin City Realty Inc., The Voice Magazine, Economical Tax Services and BlueStarweb Design.

Meetings are held bi-weekly, usually over breakfast and at Muses Cafe, and will resume again in September.

For more information or to apply to become a member email:

rbnetwork@golden.net

Submitted by the Rainbow Business Network.

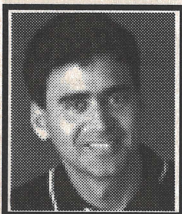


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The Advisability of Invisibility in the Marketing of Gay Films



A Must-See Film with a Must-Ask Ad:

By Michael Alvear

I walked out of the best documentary film of the year and straight into a quandary about how they're marketing it.

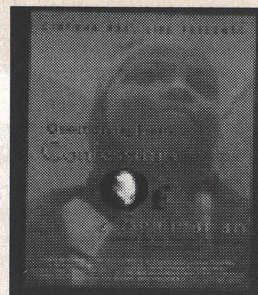
The film, *QUESTIONING FAITH: CONFESSIONS OF A SEMINARIAN*, is about a gay seminarian who questions the religion he's supposed to preach after a fellow gay seminarian dies of AIDS.

The film isn't *gay* in the ordinary sense of the word. It's the journey of how a seminarian's crumbling spirituality got restored by looking at how people of other faiths dealt with loss and suffering. From Muslims to Buddhists to Jews to Christian fundamentalists, the film explores how different religions approach a fundamental spiritual question: Where is God when people suffer?

This film is a must-see but the way they're marketing it is a must-ask. The ad doesn't have a single mention, not even a hint that the film is suffused with gay people or the issues we deal with. The central character is gay, the story line centers on the death of a gay man, and the most moving parts of the film are interviews with the deceased gay man's mother and lover.

In some ways I feel cheated by the ad. It's dominated not by the major character--a white, Christian gay male, but by a minor, secondary one a heterosexual, Black Muslim woman.

It feels like a bait-and-switch; it has a *let's not tell anyone the*



two central characters are gay or straight people won't watch feel to it.

It's as if some Hollywood executive, faced with the dilemma of getting male adolescents to a mushy love story, used a brief car crash in the movie as the central focus of their advertising.

Of course, that happens all the time. But it's one thing to do it over a fictional, inconsequential film; it's another thing to do it with an important, real-life documentary.

Is this what *Post-Gay* means? That you don't mention that a film's central characters are gay, that the motivation for the documentary was based on the death of a gay man?

In a way this is the old dilemma of the end justifying the means. If leaving out the *gay angle* gets straight people to watch a film they might not otherwise watch, then is it worth the sleight-of-hand?

It's a complicated question because in the end, *QUESTIONING FAITH* is not about *gay suffering*, it's about suffering, period. In the end, the film is not about *gay spirituality* but about spirituality, period. Really, what's the difference between losing a straight friend to cancer or a gay friend to AIDS? Loss is loss and it often leads to a questioning of faith no matter whether you're gay or straight, Christian or Buddhist, Muslim or Jewish. In many ways, the creator of the film, Macky Alston, pulled off a masterful trick: He made a gay film that has nothing to do with being gay.

Depending on your point of view, the marketing of *QUESTIONING FAITH* is either a cynically manipulative move, a sad but necessary strategy in a homophobic world, or simply, the most accurate, honest way of positioning the film.

We're entering a new, odd phase of our civil rights movement. We want being gay not to matter but then some of us, like me, get upset when the cloak of invisibility gets draped over us.

I'm torn, because on the one hand we *need* to move past our sectarian sexual identity and into our full humanity. But on the other hand, the only way we can move past it is to be visible, to state our presence in our lives, in our films, and yes, even in the marketing of our films.

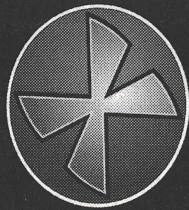
Every day some hateful person calls us a fag or a dyke, every day the church ex-communicates us, every day the military banishes us for loving the wrong person, every day some family throws their gay kid out the door. Why? Because nothing causes blindness as those who are too scared to be seen. And that's why, if you're gay or lesbian, *invisibility* is another word for *immorality*.

Who knows? Maybe the marketers are doing exactly what we need to trick people into watching a film that shows our souls. How bad can a bait-and-switch marketing tactic be if a general in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or a Cardinal in the archdiocese, or some conservative parent watches the movie by accident and realizes that the *trash* they're continually throwing out turns out to be as human as they are?

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at: [REDACTED]
This article was submitted to The Voice by Michael Alvear.

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VOICE SPOTLIGHT: Interview With WWRP President Craig Hunter

By Ms. A.J. Mahari

With the theme, "There's No Place Like Home," Waterloo-Wellington Regional Pride (WWRP) was celebrated from June 7-9, 2002. The first ever art show, which was uncurated, held in conjunction with Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph, Stratford and area Pride was held from June 1-June 9th.

Other new aspects to this year's Pride Celebrations included Workshops, which were held at Kitchener's City Hall on Saturday June 9, 2002 and a dance held at the Bridgeport Community Centre later that night.

Pride Celebrations in this area wound up with a very successful day on Roos Island in Kitchener's Victoria Park on Sunday June 9, 2002. It was the seventh year for Pride in the Park, but, the first time the festivities were held on a Sunday.

I asked WWRP President Craig Hunter for his comments on the various individual events. "We had 50 people for the opening of the art show, which I thought was just great."

Hunter added, "We feel very positive about the workshops and we are definitely looking at doing them again next year. The thrust behind including the workshops was to provide some direct education to the public. To provide them with a safe and secure environment for discourse. It accomplished what we wanted it to. Like so many things you start small in the beginning. We'll have to see if there's a better way to promote it."

When asked about the dance Hunter said, "The dance was fabulous. We had approximately 150 people attend and it was the first-ever dance held as part of Pride and run by the WWRP."

Hunter was very pleased with Pride in the park. He said, "I could guarantee there were more than 2,000 people in attendance. There was a two hour period there where we actually went around the crowd giving out the Breasts of Canada Calendars. We gave out over 800 in about an hour and a half, almost exclusively, to women. So that says to me we definitely had more than 2,000 people there."

When asked how he felt the over-all entertainment was received, Hunter replied, "The comments I've heard were that the entertainment was better than its ever been. We were thanked several times for keeping it clean, so for both the quality and type of entertainment that we had."

I asked Hunter about the scaled-down Drag show, if it was an effort to keep the entertainment clean or if it was just the way things had turned out. Hunter replied, "There was an effort made to keep the entertainment appropriate to the venue." Hunter pointed out that there was "45 minutes slotted for it in the early afternoon and 45 minutes in the late afternoon for drag entertain-

ment, because, there's a lot more out there than that too. We wanted to show that there is more to the community [than drag] as well."

When I asked Hunter why he thought Pride was important locally he replied, "I think it's important in two ways. It's important for the local LGBT communities, that they actually get together and celebrate their culture. It's also important for the public to be aware that we have a local gay community here and that we are a part of this community's everyday life whether the general public knows it or not. And that we are an incredibly diverse group that put into the larger community." Hunter also mentioned the importance of our visibility along with the educational aspects of Pride.

Hunter extends an invitation to anyone who would like to come out and get involved in organizing Pride 2003.

The WWRP is still determined to finalize a constitutional proposal to bring to the community for ratification at their next Annual General Meeting which will be

held this coming October. Hunter said, "There will be four seats up for election at that time."

The current status of the whole process of formalizing the constitutional structure of the WWRP was set aside to plan Pride but will be revisited as a main focus in meetings, open to the public, in mid-to-late summer.

I commented that I believe we have a tremendous amount of potential here and Hunter responded, "I definitely want to see more community happening here. We have a great environment politically, financially. There's no reason why we shouldn't be doing a lot more great things. I think we can if we all work together instead of working at cross-purposes."

When asked if he had any comment in response to Letters to the Editor in recent issues of The Voice Magazine, Hunter said, "Pride pages is another new thing which we are lock-stock and hundred percent behind still. We are very happy at how they've been received. Our circulation with it right now is still 750."

"The WWRP is dedicated to working with all groups within our geographical boundaries both community and business."

Hunter added that he'd like to thank the community because WWRP has felt tremendous support all year long and he also wanted to extend his thanks beyond the LGBT community to our larger community for making Pride an amazing success this year.

"We'll be back next year and it will be bigger, brighter and bolder and we'll see what happens."



Craig Hunter

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Spiritual Life: The Quest for Freedom

FEAR AS A WEAPON

By Noel Springwood

Franklin D. Roosevelt said it first, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

He was referring to the threat of Nazi world domination and was trying to encourage the American people to join in the effort to prevent it.

I doubt that he had in mind the kind of fear we live with today. Oh, there were saboteurs and suicide missions and a tremendous loss of lives on all sides. Most of that, however, was confined to military objectives and operations. I don't want to diminish the effects of the Blitzkrieg or Holocaust by saying that. Undoubtedly, they were horrible examples of how cheap life becomes at the hands of fanatics and power hungry factions. At the same time, because those atrocities, like many throughout history, were relatively limited in scope, most of the world escaped the fear experienced by those victims.

Today, that kind of fear has become a part of life worldwide. The prevalence of suicide bombers and the spectacular devastation already wrought by their extreme and wanton acts is spreading fear in ever widening circles.

This is simply because the final goal of terrorists is not physical destruction but social destruction. It is hard to imagine a better weapon than fear, along with the distrust it engenders. As that fear and distrust grow, the very fabric of a healthy so-

ciety is eroded.

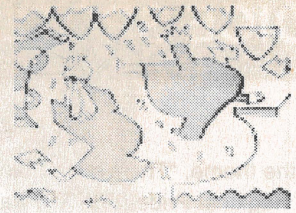
A free society must be based on a high level of trust. Take away that factor and the social structure quickly crumbles. Unfortunately, that trust has come under attack in many of society's most hallowed and cherished institutions. This creates a kind of vicious circle in which as the trust erodes the level of fear increases. This, in time, requires an outlet and anger erupts. From this point, open violence is not far away.

It was recently discovered that terrorists had among their plans one that; even in speculation, hits hard at the social fabric. Apparently, they plan to rent apartments in highrises and then blow up the apartment, themselves and the whole building. They give, "There goes the neighbourhood", a whole new, and frightening, meaning. In effect, the world is at war. This time, however, the enemy is faceless, ruthless and ubiquitous. There is no real defense. There is no real escape. There is no real recourse. There is only fear and distrust and violence.

During WW II, a common saying was, "There are no atheists in foxholes." In a very real sense, we are all in foxholes today. We live our lives within a context of fear and distrust. Many of us seek some consolation in a Power outside ourselves. Many of us seek some peace from a Power within ourselves. We join together in groups of families and friends to encourage, support and comfort one another. We seek shelter in organized religion or social activism. We seek escape through substance abuse or sex. In many cases, these efforts are little more than whistling in the dark.

Compounding the problem are the scandals emerging from the very places many of us go to for reassurance. Churches that teach intolerance in the name of love. Churches that cover up for and protect those who have violated sacred trusts and abused those entrusted to their care. Governments who turn their backs on the homeless and the poor. Corporations who destroy the environment and whole societies for the sake of profit. Wholesale genocide as a means to political power. Adding fuel to this fire, is the fact that many of these institutions have, themselves, used fear as a way of maintaining obedience and control.

Fear of punishment, in the here or here-



after, is a longstanding and effective instrument for maintaining social order. Ironically, in this context, we have learned to live with if not accept his fear. If it were not so, our prisons would not be bulging at the seams. It would also appear that for some people at some level that kind of fear is needed.

I'm talking more about unwanted and unwarranted fear. Fear that prevents intelligent response and exchange in the name of simple authority, status, tradition or absolutism. Fear that emanates from physical or psychological factors beyond our control and ability to comprehend. Fear that pushes us into questioning anything that is different or unusual. Fear that has turned into a phobia - and we all know what that is. Those phobias seem to multiply faster than rabbits.

I don't think that we can rid ourselves of the fear with which we live. I do think that we can arm ourselves with an awareness of how it can affect us and those around us. Ultimately, fear is fed by ignorance. We might not know when and how the next violent attack will occur. We can, however, do our best to make sure that until that happens, our lives are as peaceful, productive and purposeful as possible. We can take time to smell the roses, admire the sunsets, listen to the music and enjoy one another's company.

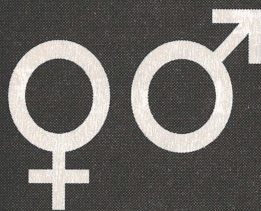
As a child, I loved the story of Chicken Little. In it, Chicken Little is hit on the head by a falling acorn or something and concludes that the sky is falling. He spreads his panicky conclusion to a whole series of animals, with wonderful names like Henny Penny, Turkey Lurkey, Piggy Wiggy and Ducky Lucky. They all, one by one, end up telling their story to Foxy Loxy who eats them up. I guess that for me, today, that story is symptomatic of the kind of world we live in.

Strange events, even disastrous events, are occurring; but, the sky is not falling. The world is not ending. Life can and will go on. I can find happiness if I don't let myself and my life be controlled by those events.

In fact, FDR's words have probably never been more meaningful, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

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

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Freedom and Remembrance

There's No Place Like Home

By Mary Ann Moore

The theme of Kitchener-Wellington's June 2002 Pride Day, "There's no place like home", has me thinking of home in all the various ways that phrase conjures up.

Last summer I had the chance to go home. My mother died in 1995 so I haven't had that home to go back to. The thing is though, my mother lived in a high rise apartment creating a home for herself in Toronto after a divorce from her third husband. It really wasn't home to me as I wasn't raised there.

I wasn't raised by my Dad so going to see him in British Columbia wasn't going to be like going home either. As it turned out, the time we spent together last summer was very much about home. We had two weeks together, just the two of us, which is something that hasn't happened in my whole life unless you count the couple of years my parents were together after I was born. This was a rare treat that probably won't happen again as he has a new partner and I'd like him to meet mine.

We started the holiday in Saskatchewan, Dad meeting me at the airport in Saskatoon, and we went to see Oris, one of his sisters. Because I didn't live with my father as I was growing up and because Oris had moved west and I lived in Ontario, we had never met.

Oris lives with her second husband in a small community east of Saskatoon. The home she shares with her husband, two dogs and a cat, reminded me of the small house I grew up in Eganville, Ontario where I lived with my grandparents until I was nine. I had rarely seen hollyhocks since my childhood and there they were against the side of Oris's house. Pink and magenta blooms near the hummingbird feeder.

Oris knew about my childhood: only child, divorced parents, raised by my mother's parents and then moving to Toronto with my mother and her second husband when I was nine. Somehow, she knew I was a lesbian too. It could be my father told her but he really didn't know for sure.

The bedroom Oris prepared for me had been my cousin Arthur's room when he was growing up and still at home and years before that, the birthing room in the old house. It was small and ideal for sleep as there were no distractions - just a few photographs, some essential oils, a bouquet of wild bluebells, some wild sage and a note from Oris that said, "welcome to our lives".

I had never really come out to my Dad - he just knew I lived with one woman at a time since I left my marriage. When I did come



out on the porch at Oris's, soon after my arrival, she told me about her two sons: one gay and one a transsexual. I couldn't believe that I had lived for over 50 years defining my own path and had finally come home to a queer family, acceptance, love, open arms.

Family members may still love you when you come out to them but they may not want you to tell their children. They may not ask you anything about your life or your partner or care about what turns you on. Oris though wonders how I spend my days. She reads and listens to my poetry. She asks about my partner. Oris is a Catholic but rather than religious, I'll call her spiritual, who finds the divine in nature and talks with me about ancient goddess worship. She leads people in spiritual retreats, one on one, and inspires me to do the same. We have a lot to share but it will be a slowly unfolding story that will be told on the phone, via letter and the occasional visit.

Knowing about her has me thinking more now about a parent of queer children whereas until now, I've only thought about the children. I know it wasn't easy to be a mother to "different" children as a single parent in a small town. But she has been an amazing support to her two children and their differences and now to her niece.

I loved my time at that house on the prairies - the little bedroom, the hollyhocks outside and the kitchen where we sat around the table talking for hours about our lives. I want to go back to that house but when it comes down to it, home isn't about the house. It's about who we can be when we're there.

That's what makes it so portable. Wherever we are, we can be home because of the memories of other homes that are with us in our present home. I leave you with the words of writer and activist Starhawk: "somewhere there is a place where you are welcome..."

Mary Ann Moore is a Guelph writer and founder of Flying Mermaids writing circles and retreats, who also offers one on one writing coaching.

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The 'Action' Man Test:



Weed Out Those Nasty Men!

By Mark Weiser

Why bother to fill out those lengthy questionnaire kind of tests in an effort to weed out those nasty men? Why not just put those nasty men to the 'action test'?

You're at the club with a bunch of your friends. A cute guy keeps glancing at you all night. He sends you a drink. He makes his way over to you. He politely introduces himself. We'll pretend his name is Paul. Paul asks for your number. You comply. He calls you two days later and asks you out for dinner. He offers to pick you up but you decide to meet him there. Everything seems promising and delightful. You have dinner. By the end of dinner you no longer want to see Paul.

Why? God, all he did was talk about his ex, he smacked his lips when he ate with his elbows on the table, he was rude to the waitress and didn't tip her, he only flipped you twenty bucks when the bill was \$47.00, he has no education, career, money or goals. He has to go. You at this point realize that you are shallow, but hey, it's your life and therefore you have that right.

The hypothetical date with Paul is actually more successful than one might think. I say that simply because it isn't often that we have the opportunity to find out exactly what a person is like until we have engaged in some sort of dating situation with them. We all look for different qualities in a person and it is definitely tricky to find someone that meets your personal criteria. So why waste time? After talking to many people who are experts on the dating scene I have put together an Action Man Test.

Now you will be able to weed out people like Paul in one evening. And yes, I already know that I am shallow, and it's all in good fun so you don't have to write in to tell me about myself.

After you book a date, the first thing you want to do is make sure you are traveling together. Make sure he picks you up if you are interested in what kind of car he drives. Then, you suddenly announce that you have to stop by Tim Horton's for something to drink. At the drive thru, you get your first taste of what this guy is like. If he is rude to the drive thru attendant then

he is not only a jerk for being mean to someone who has to run their ass off for not a lot of money, he is also stupid: those people have the power to put whatever they want in your coffee! Other than calling your mother on Mother's Day, the most important rule in life is to be nice to the drive thru attendant. This also includes not making fun of them, because not only is it rude, it shows that your cute little date is childish and needs to grow up.

The next place you go is the mall. Cook up some excuse that you just want to take a quick breeze through. Once in the mall, watch his eyes and who they are on. If he checks out everything insight, then chances are you've got a slut on your hands. It's okay to look, and we all do, but keep track of how many people you catch him looking at and then take into consideration how many more asses he's stared at without you noticing. Also, you get a wonderful opportunity to see if he embarrasses you in public and is polite to people using the appropriate social skills.

Next, you head to a restaurant for dinner. Restaurants are always perfect because then you get to pick his brain while you await your meal. Pay attention to what he orders. Hopefully loverboy will order something that involves using his hands. That way you can see if he licks his fingers. If he has got his elbows on the table and he is smackin' away while he eats, you have just established that his all around manners need some sharpening. Once again, if he is rude to the server without just cause, then he's a dink. And he has to tip: not tipping or tipping poorly merely represents ignorance of the service industry, or that he's cheap, or even worse - has no money.

Plus, more important than anything, at dinner you get to engage in some sort of thought provoking conversation. See if he is interesting, intelligent, successful and fun. Someone confident with no baggage is a turn on for all of us, and if he is a fun guy who is happy with himself, then he will be that much more likely to appreciate you - he won't be self-absorbed with his own problems. Also, the dinner conversation is an excellent time to find out



what his hopes and dreams are and see if they are compatible with yours.

Naturally, after you have left the restaurant, you take him to a bar. Just like the mall, if he is checking out every piece of meat in there, than it's a bad sign. At the bar, you watch to see if he does any of the ordering the drink no-no's. Did he yell at the bartender or bud in front of someone else? Does he tip them?(if you can afford to drink, you afford to tip, damn it!, it's just the way the world works).

Did he flirt with other people up at the bar? Or complain that he wanted a lime rather than a lemon? Observing how people interact with others in public is usually a pretty good way of telling how intellectual a person is and if they are even remotely educated. And of course, did he offer to buy you a drink?

So after you have effectively picked apart all of his faults, you can make the decision. Should you kick him to the curb? Should you help him clean up his habits? Or should you just accept the poor guy, treat him like gold and hope for reciprocity? But at least now you know what he is like. In a perfect world, no man would put his elbows on the table, but sometimes you just have to deal with these things and not get devoured with illusions of a Utopia filled with perfect men. I have learned never to settle for anything less than what you want or are, and that doesn't make you judgmental: it makes you true to yourself. Now that you have read the Action Man Test (hopefully you yourself haven't failed and if so I'm sorry for being nasty to your lifestyle), you should be able to find the right guy with an education, career, goals and manners. Let him put you on a pedestal where you belong.

We're gay men: we've put up with enough shit already and therefore we do not need it or welcome it from our own boyfriends!

Mark Weiser resides in Kitchener and is a Mortgage Consultant and Activist. A Voice Exclusive.

WINDSOR: MY KIND OF TOWN



By Chris Cecile

I like Windsor, I really do. After reading the article about Brad Lister's love for London in the last issue of *The Voice*, I had to stop and think about why it is that I love Windsor. He spoke about London in a way I had never thought of before... a positive way. You see, I lived in London as well, however I don't have nearly as many good memories of it as Brad seems to have. However, I'm not here to start a Windsor vs London war of words. We get enough of that witless repartee on Speaker's Corner (co-produced by Windsor's New WI and London's New PL) Instead, I'd rather focus on the positive.

With a population of 200,000 Windsor may be a fraction of the size of Toronto but it's just as diverse. There is a large Middle-Eastern community, as well as Asian, South-Asian, Italian, East-European and of course, gay community. That is by no means a complete list. I'm just trying to illustrate a piece of the picture that is Windsor. There is another large piece of that puzzle worth mentioning... Americans. On any given weekend, tens of thousands of 19-21 year old Americans descend on Windsor.

Some people here have a problem with that. I don't at all. I think it gives Windsor a unique perspective on the United States. Sure some of them are rude, pushy and drive cars that seem to be perpetually out of turn signal fluid. But they also put millions of dollars into Windsor's economy and add excitement to the city (not to mention that Ohio 'bois' tend to be incredibly hot!) Windsor has a lot more to offer, however, than just Canadian beer and "Canadian style entertainment" (also known as the Windsor Ballet) The city has almost achieved it's vision of one big waterfront park stretching from one end of the city to the other. Just about every weekend through the summer has a different festival on the waterfront from the Carousel of Nations to the Bluesfest to the International Freedom Festival which includes the largest fireworks display in North America and usually draws over 500,000 people to Windsor's waterfront.

Of course lets not forget Windsor Pride! While it may not pull in the crowd that the Freedom Festival does, it's still a chance for our community to shine. It's been a

roller coaster ride for the local gay community, at least when it comes to the bars. In 2001-2002 we went from two gay bars, to four, and back to two again. After a lengthy battle with a local church group, Life Nite Club finally opened. A couple of months later, the longest surviving gay bar here, The Happy Tap closed for renovations and then we found out they were going to re-open as a straight stripper bar (apparently we need more "Canadian style entertainment") We also lost Club Paradox and through it all, The Complex has been there.

But the bars are (obviously) not the whole community. The groups that comprise the pride committee include the CAW LGBT caucus, Womyn Out, Planned parenthood, the ACW, MCC Windsor and more that I'm sure I'm forgetting. A lot of hard work has gone into our pride celebrations this year, and with good reason. It's our 10th year of Pride. It will, however, be the first year that Pride has been held right downtown. We'll be able to see the Pride flag flying at city hall from the venue. Sista Ottis & The Holy Rollers (from Detroit) and Random Order (from Toronto) will be performing and the local campus/community radio station CJAM 91.5FM will be featuring 'All Gay All Day' programming on Pride Day (July 28th)

There are lots of other events going on during Pride Week starting with the Pride Picnic on July 21st. Thursday, July 25th will be the Pride Cruise up the Detroit River on the aptly named 'Pride of Windsor'. There's too much other stuff going on to mention here so check out www.windsorpride.com for the complete pride week schedule. Also be sure to surf by www.gaywindsor.com for all the other info on gay stuff in and around Windsor.

I thought about apologizing for the fact that this might have sounded like it came right out of a Windsor tourist guide, but I won't. One thing I've learned is that it's not enough to proud of who you are. You have to be proud of where you are. If you're not, then why are you there?

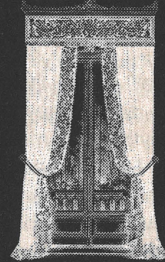
Chris Cecile, was born in Toronto but loves living in Windsor. He can be heard hosting Queer Radio every Monday night at 9pm on CJAM 91.5FM in Windsor or on the web at www.cjam.ca. A Voice Exclusive.

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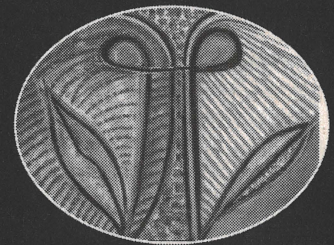
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HIS-STORY: My Feng Shui Life



Becoming Me

By Dan DesRosiers

"So...Did you ask him?"

"Hmmm...?"

"Remember what I was saying last time we talked?"

"Oh, right, that. Yeah, I've known for a long time, well, so did he, but he didn't want to say anything to me because he wasn't sure how I would react, and I wasn't sure how he would react, so..."

"You've known for a while? Why the hell didn't either of you tell me?"

This was the extent of the reaction I got out of my mother when I came out to her. And, to be perfectly honest, I wasn't surprised. I was eighteen and my roommate at the time and I used to joke all the time about how I would come out to my mom. We were both pretty sure that she knew, but I just wasn't 100%. Whenever I talked to my mom on the phone my roommate would sit there just waiting to here me say, in my rather blunt way, "You know I'm gay, right?" but it just didn't happen that way. It was like, it really wasn't a big deal, I hadn't shocked either my mother, or my brother (we'll leave my father out of this one). I felt cheated!

But, it was a big turning point in our relationship. It wasn't as though they started treating me different because I was gay, they didn't. It was more that I wasn't lying anymore and I could finally be honest about my life. Things that I would never have dreamed that I would be able to say became common topics of conversation. I was amazed at how much stress that I didn't know I had was reduced when I was able to be open. I hadn't really been

lying, but simply withholding parts of my life that it turns out were important to be able to share, no matter how trivial they may have been.

This event has shaped my life more than I would have imagined it would. This acceptance was what, subconsciously, I had been yearning for. There was always this level where I was striving for attention, for acceptance. And this made me realize that all I had to do was accept myself and anything else was just added stress. I didn't have to lie in an effort to be accepted by everyone, I just had to lay my cards on the table and sometimes they would win, sometimes they wouldn't, but at least it was me losing and not a façade winning. When you cheat, you spend too much time worrying that someone will find out and you'll end up losing a lot more than you bargained in the first place. Not only that but you end up wasting a lot of energy that could be spent on much more worthy pursuits.

Don't get me wrong, I still waste way too much time and energy on trying to impress people, and I don't know if I'll ever be completely happy with myself, but I have to say that it's a lot more fulfilling to know your faults and try to change them than it is to deny them and pretend to be someone else entirely.

Dan DesRosiers is a Kitchener resident and he owns and operates Muses Café in Downtown Kitchener, with his partner of two and a half years. A Voice exclusive.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Continued From Page 3

I think that a lot of Lesbian/Gay publications can learn a lot from THE VOICE. It confronts when confrontation is required and supports where support is needed. I'm glad to see that it's also found a way to titillate where titillation is needed, however gently and discreetly. -- Rick Hellier, Stratford

I think it's great that more and more people will get the opportunity to enjoy and participate in the wonderful forum provided by THE VOICE. A.J. and her trusty crew deserve a lot of credit for putting up with a lot of nonsense and overcoming a mountain of problems just to get the mag out to the distribution locations. That's service far beyond the call of duty. Way to go, gang. K.L. Hamilton

Well! The writing was up to the usual standard: clear, concise and just a bit controversial. The nudie pics were questionable but, *weee!!!*, to each his or her own, I guess. -- Chuck G, Guelph

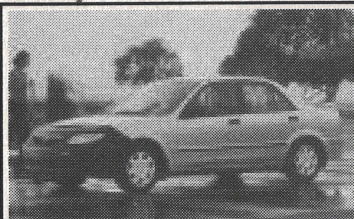
Wow! What a pleasant surprise. The New Voice is just amazing. More info, more writers and more stuff to talk about, wonder about and bitch about. Just what LGBT'S need. --Brian Wilkes, Brantford

THE VOICE is finally finding a scope and a lighter touch that makes it a model of what LGBT Mags should be. Keep up the good work. Can't wait to see the next issue. --Derrick Mercer, Cambridge

Congratulations on the New Look. There is hope for Lesbian/Gay Culture in Southwestern Ontario after all. Keep up the good work. Donna Livinsky, London

Where was the Drag Show at K-W Pride this year? I was so disappointed that Drew and Chris Edwards weren't there. It was some of the most boring "entertainment" I've ever had to endure at a Pride Day. -- Don Cruicks, Kitchener

Great Pride Day! Kudos to the WWRP. The entertainment was great, hard to hear, but great. Mind you I thought the groups were too scattered all over the island this year. -- Rene G, Waterloo



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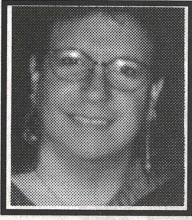
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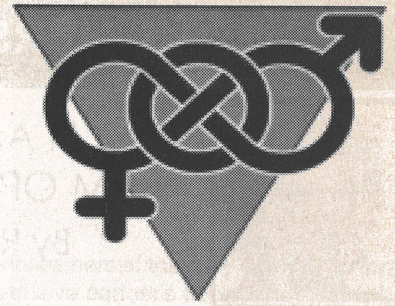
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Bi-Sexual Story



By Lyn McGinnis



So, what's it like finding half the human race potentially attractive and half not?

Desire has never been something lending itself to rationality or control, and most adults will admit, at least to a close friend, that at least one point in their lives they have felt attracted to a person with a different gender than they usually associate with. There are gay men who occasionally sleep with women and lesbians who occasionally sleep with men and happily continue to call themselves gay and lesbian. For the "purists" among us this is a sure way of getting crossed off the social calendar.

For bisexuals, this is just the normal state of our lives. Does this mean we are obsessed with sexuality and are constantly seized with uncontrollable craving? The best answer is probably not more often than you are - with whatever your choice of desirable gender is.

For a long time, bisexuals hid out among the gay and lesbian community. We have been there for all the battles and all the parties, but not unlike queer love a century ago, ours was a love that "dared not speak its name." This was because within the emerging gay and lesbian community there were significant feelings of ambivalence towards those who seemed to live in both worlds.

Both those defining themselves as strictly gay/lesbian or strictly straight, did not have room in their "either/or" universe for those who refused to be on one side or the other. As with many movements, there is an element of dogmatism displayed which reveals our insecurity. We as a community have a lot of baggage from our past and want our new lives and new relationships to be clear and up front.

What then to do with those "fence-sitting" queers who say they are one of us but as often as not end up in what looks like a straight relationship? How can they possibly know anything about what the true reality of queer life is like? How can we possibly trust them? Who wants to have a former lover start a new relationship with a straight person?

As a bisexual who at one time ran a bisexual community group, I can honestly say I understand and appreciate the chal-

lenge we present to you. I can tell you that most bisexuals I have known feel a very deep connection with lesbians, gay men and transgender persons. We are part of this queer family and just want the same level of respect and open mindedness queers want from straights. We know this can be a challenge for some and have always tried to reach out and bridge this divide.

Like gays, lesbians and/or transgender persons have unique aspects to their lives as well as much in common, bisexuals have a unique way of looking at life and relationships. By virtue of not having one exclusive gender preference, we are somewhat inclined to be adventurous and experimental. For the most part, like everyone else we tend to settle down, but often we are naturally less interested in pure monogamy than most.

I am now going to draw back the curtain a bit on one of the secrets of adult bisexuals that perhaps typifies the unique aspect of our lives.

Many bisexuals I know end up in either what appears to be a gay or straight relationship with another bisexual person. These two can then lead rich lives much as any other couple, but there are subtle differences. For a start, there is no inhibition in expressing our entire sexuality to each other. There are many ways this can happen within a monogamous setting. For some, the options extend further. Together they may seek out another couple who are also bi and have an extended relationship with them. It is not uncommon for informal arrangements beyond these two couples to develop as opportunities present themselves. Not surprisingly, there is an entire network out there to serve this population and it is expanding and diversifying. These same couples can at any time draw back from these other couples and live much as any other couple lives. By no means do all bisexual couples act out their complete sexuality, but this is mainly because of a variety of phobias and fears, based as much on cultural taboos as any health or religious considerations.

Given the hysteria about non-monogamy that exists in the straight world it is not surprising that these bisexual couples are

very careful about who knows about this aspect of our lives. It seems the greatest anger from non-bisexuals about this activity is not the sexuality itself, but the fact the couple openly enters into this arrangement together and there is no hidden aspect to their exploring their entire sexuality.

Bisexuality is probably far more common than we can imagine. In cultures untouched by our sex phobic mentality there is much evidence to suggest this. There is also much research and general observation about sexual orientation being far more fluid than anyone previously imagined. We all know the story of someone who began life thinking they were straight and then coming to realize they are lesbian, gay and/or transgender. What we hear less often are the stories about these same people who later in life shift into another orientation again. There are many examples out there of people who find themselves moving in new directions in mid life or in old age that reveals we are far less cut and dried sexually, or in any other way, than our precious theories would allow us.

I hope I will be forgiven, as a bisexual person, for saying my own perspective is that most, if not all, people are at least potentially bisexual, as we are all open to emotional and affectionate relationships with people of either gender. I certainly can attest that given the circumstances and the general compatibility of a person, gender becomes a flimsy wall that easily falls.

As members of our queer family, bisexuals have much in common with all of you. We want to be accepted for who we are and we want to reach out and connect with and learn from you. We ask that the prejudice you have known all too well from straights not become a weapon to use against us, who will always be members of your family. We need to break down these false barriers between us and embrace a much larger and more rich definition of what it is to be a queer human being.

Lyn McGinnis, of Waterloo, is a writer, web and graphic designer of BlueStarWeb Design, Voice Assistant Editor and ad graphics designer. A Voice Exclusive.

HERSTORY



"I AM BREATHING, I AM OPEN, I AM WILLING"

By Rev Mary Sander

I have just returned from a weekend of celebration and ritual honouring the Goddess. The weekend is an annual created community of 70 women, children and men who come together for the common goal of rejoicing in Her love. We danced, we sang, we celebrated ritual in large community, we spent time learning about and exploring our inner selves and we spent time, too, in private contemplation. And then we returned to the mundane world. We returned with something changed within us, something expanded and enriched. We returned knowing that we had been touched by the Goddess.

One of the new chants that I learned to be sung at ritual while there has been repeating itself in my head since I came home and strangely enough it is not "driving me crazy" as these things tend to do. Rather, of the many ways in which I experienced the Goddess this weekend, this song is what has become the essence of all of the teachings. It is the sum and substance. And so I feel it important enough to share with you. It is as follows:

*I am Breathing, I am Open, I am Willing/
To venture out into the Unknown/ I am
walking, though uncertain/ I am Willing/ To
listen to the yearnings of my Soul/ As my
soul says so, I do as my soul says/ As my
soul says so/ I do as my soul says./As my
soul says so, I do as my soul says/ As my
soul says so, I do as my soul says.*

---Author unknown

I have listened carefully to these words and I have listened carefully to my soul—to the voice of my inner Goddess. She doesn't always tell me what I want to hear, but I am learning to listen. And while this may be one of the most difficult things there is to do—it certainly is for me—I want to hear Her voice, I want to hear my soul's voice. However, as I said earlier, we must return to and live in, the mundane world. The world of jobs, children, spouses, deadlines, debt, family conflicts, illness...and the list can go on and on. The many things that clamour for our attention create a "noise" that makes it difficult to listen. We can, though, hear Her voice in the chants,



in ritual, in dreams and other forms of divination and simply by being still. And so what would happen in our lives—in the lives of everyone—if we do listen? How might our lives and the world around us change? What if, for just a moment, we "ventured out into the unknown"?

Perhaps an even better question to ask might be: What happens if we do not listen? What happens if we ignore the message that we must move away from a destructive relationship, an unfulfilling career? What happens when we deny our stewardship of the earth? What would life be like if we continuously ignore our inner voice—Her voice?

Each of us knows what our soul's yearnings are, each of us knows what is within our own souls, and each of us must find our own courage to look there. I can offer you one assurance; the Goddess already knows what is there, She is just waiting for you to recognize it.

Breathe, be Open and be Willing.

Rev. Mary Sander is an Ordained Priestess who is dedicated to honouring and celebrating the Goddess in all areas of her life. She is the founder and organizer of Guelph Celebrations—community Sabbat celebrations open to all women. She is also available to officiate at your Service of

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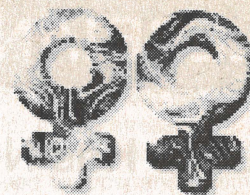
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Abuse in Lesbian Relationships

By Lisa Ram and Holly Hope



Lesbians are always equal in relationships. It is not abuse; it is a relationship struggle.

Wrong. This is only one of the myths regarding abuse in same-sex relationships. There is an assumption that because both partners are women, the likelihood of being in an abusive relationship is slim to none.

Other common myths: women are not abusive - but men are, it is much easier for a lesbian to leave her abusive partner than it is for a heterosexual woman to leave her abusive partner, women do not sexually abuse other women, lesbians in S&M relationships are more susceptible to abuse or being abusive, abusive lesbians are stereotypically "butch" or their social lives revolve around that of the bar/clubbing culture - the list goes on.

Abuse occurs regardless of gender, race, class, religion, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation, lifestyle or physical attributes.

"I never would have thought that she would abuse me. She was so romantic in the beginning and she loved all of my friends. I became more and more sheltered as the months passed. My friends wondered why I didn't hang out anymore. Everyday, I convinced myself (and my friends) that my lover was still the same woman I had fallen in love with."

These are variations of words that ring through in many abusive relationships. Today, we will focus on abuse specifically in the lesbian community.

There are many different forms of abuse. The most commonly recognized are forms of physical abuse like hitting, biting, push-

ing, and scary horseplay. The evidence can be seen on the outside in the form of bruises, anxiousness, excuses and absences from school and the workplace.

Intimidation can be a type of physical abuse: being locked in a room, withholding food, controlling decisions regarding money and extra-curricular activities,

threatening to harm you while you are sleeping, stalking, harassing and controlling phone calls or visitors. These are still abuses that can be seen or felt directly by the people around you making the possibility of recognition more possible.

"She would never hit me," is a common argument in defense of a loved one's emotional battery.

Emotional abuse is probably the most difficult to recognize, and signs or symptoms of abuse will certainly vary from victim to victim. Some

women are 'strong' and seem to carry the abuse easier than others. Victims of abuse often feel or are made to feel (by their partner) that they deserve the insults and threats. Even more often, the victim con-

vinces herself that she is to blame for her abusive partner's behavior or justifies the behavior by making excuses. Example: "She has had a sad, oppressive and abusive past; she needs me," or "I've got it easy compared to what other abused women go through."

Forms of emotional abuse include, but are not limited to: controlling contacts with friends and family making the victim feel guilty about spending time outside of the relationship, criticizing, humiliating, degrading, swearing, name-calling, threatening to tell the victim's family or workplace of her lesbian sexual orientation, threatening custody of children by revealing this information to authorities or family services, threatening to harm children or pets, "joking" about how she might harm you or kill you!

If you think you are being abused, have a safety plan in place. Have an excuse ready to get out and keep an escape kit ready with a small amount of money or a credit card and some extra clothes. You may want to keep this kit outside of the home or with a trusted friend or family member. Try to have one or two places in mind that you could go temporarily for shelter.

Memorize important phone numbers and take your children and pets with you! An abusive partner is not beyond harming or threatening to harm your children and pets to see you returned home and back under her control. Be ready to leave in an emergency situation. It could happen to you!

Lisa Ram and Holly Hope, both reside in Kitchener. A Voice Exclusive

Traits which are common in the abusive personality are:

Uncontrolled temper, Extreme Jealousy, Intense fear of abandonment, A background involving physical, emotional or sexual abuse, abandonment, ACOA issues. Unrealistic expectations of a relationship (To "fix" them or solve their problems), Isolation and antisocial temperament, Recklessness, Inability to accept responsibility for their behavior and actions, Threats of violence, Low self-esteem, shame, Codependent personality disorder, Inability to respect interpersonal boundaries, a compulsion to violate boundaries, Drug or Alcohol Dependence, self medication, Emotional volatility - fear of being "out of control", Need for power and control to compensate for the above, Bipolar disorder and/or Borderline Personality Disorder.

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LESBIAN LIVES

Love Has No Borders

By A.J. Mahari

In The Beginning

Two lesbian women, one single for over a year, one looking to end a relationship she was involved in, turned to the internet to reach out of their isolation and to look for greener pastures. Elaine and Chris, both 38, met on the internet in 1997. The very first time they spoke was Valentine's Day. It was the beginning of their relationship. They've been together 5 years and agree their relationship is stronger now than it has ever been.

Neither Chris nor Elaine really thought they'd meet anyone that they would end up living with. Both of them described much of their on line chat experience as a series of sexual innuendoes and somewhat of a brag-fest of the alcohol consumed by others. Neither was overly impressed. Yet something kept them chatting in the lesbian chat rooms they frequented until that magical day, February 14th, 1997 when Chris would message Elaine and they very quickly found themselves in the kind of meaningful conversation each had been searching for.

Chris said, "Yea, we met on line, we started talking and we just hit it off."

Elaine added, "It was a very very different experience. At first I was into my head saying, oh, I won't get involved with someone outside of Canada. And then that went out the window, obviously. I just found it very exciting and very different. We didn't meet face to face but we had a lot of communication hours. Initially we talked for 10 hours a day on the internet. As we moved to talking on the

telephone we'd do that for about three hours a day on top of several hours chatting on line."

Chris and Elaine may well have talked much more to each other on line, each woman from her own country, than many who live and meet in the same community might.

Chris added, "Spending all that time talking, we really got to know each other.

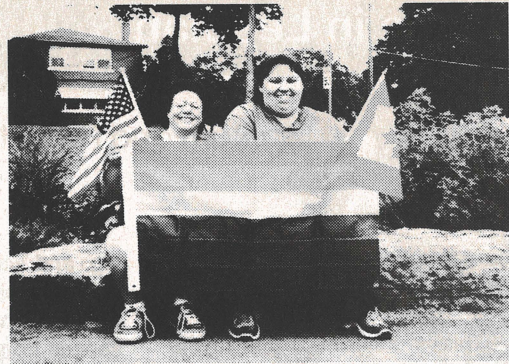
We found out that we had a tremendous amount in common. I was looking for an honest person that I could I spend the rest of my life with."

The Past

When Chris started chatting with Elaine on line, as she hoped to start a new chapter in her life, she was still very much involved with her past. Chris led Elaine to believe that she was single when in fact she was still involved in a relationship.

"I wasn't single, I was living with somebody at the time. I wanted to get out of the relationship and I didn't know how to. I tried every which way to end it." explains Chris, who then added, "I was looking to get out of the relationship and I was looking for somebody."

"I had one prior relationship that lasted 11 years." continued Chris. Elaine interjected that she'd also only had one previous relationship that lasted 13 years. She consciously chose to take some time between the ending of her previous relationship and being open to a new one. So she was single for just over a year.



Elaine said, "I was just looking for people to chat to more than anything else. I found it somewhat confusing that many of the women chatting in the rooms had girlfriends that they lived with. I always had a lot of women message me just for sex. It was discouraging and not the reason I went into the lesbian chat rooms." They both talked a bit about their past relationships and what they wanted from any future relationships. Clearly both were looking for something different than what they'd experienced in their past relationships.

New Found Connection

Elaine enjoyed being able to actually talk to Chris without feeling that she was being "hit on". Elaine continued, "Then Chris messaged me and it was so cool, so refreshing. She was interested in actually chatting with me. Then it wasn't just that, it was starting to mean more, it was cool, great conversation. As we talked and chatted and got to know each other it became more. It grew into other things. I fell in love with her over the net."



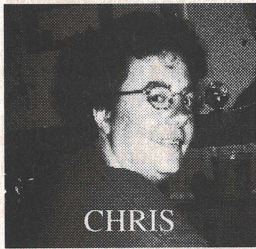
Chris interjected that for her it was a little different than how Elaine experienced their connecting. Chris, who was still in a relationship, also had, as she put it, "other on line hunnies". At some point, for Chris, a sudden point as she described it, she realized that talking and spending time on line with Elaine left her feeling some pretty deep and incredible things.

There was a point during their initial chats where they discussed their interests and the like. Chris shared that she smoked and drank and Elaine shared that she didn't partake in either activity. At this point, they both agreed that they didn't think things would work out. Yet something drove them to continue to get to know each other.

When asked if they started to develop feelings for each other just from talking on line, before they ever heard each other's voices or seen each other's pictures, they both chimed in with a resounding and excitedly-loud, "Yes" simultaneously. When asked to describe what those feelings were they both said they were very hard to describe. They alluded to feeling a "vibe" and to just having a sense that they had the potential for something special and solid to develop. Chris described it as "like wow".

Chris and Elaine talked for almost 3 weeks before they heard each other's voice. It was shortly after their first phone conversation that they exchanged pictures.

Soon thereafter Chris called Elaine on the phone for the first time. They were both excited and nervous to hear how each other sounded. Chris was delighted when she heard Elaine's, "soft, feminine and sexy voice." Elaine also liked Chris' voice. "It was so deep, nice and sexy with a strong New York accent and she sounded really nice."



CHRIS

Finally Meeting

Chris and Elaine talked on the phone just three days after chatting on line. They continued to chat on line and to have frequent phone conversations for the next seven weeks. They met in person just seven weeks after they first met on line. Chris, originally from Long Island, New York, came to Kitchener, Ontario to meet Elaine.

"I wanted to come up and visit Elaine. I wanted to see Canada and I wanted to meet her, see what I was getting myself into and see if the person I was getting to know and beginning to love was the person that I could spend the rest of my life with." explained Chris.

Chris had to admit to Elaine, while visiting, that she wasn't really single. Chris came to visit Elaine alone. She told her partner at the time that the relationship was off. She didn't tell Elaine about this not quite over relationship over the net because she didn't want to scare her off. Elaine said, *"At first I was a little pissed off that she hadn't told me the truth. But then Chris explained why she hadn't told the truth and I sort of understood."* Chris explained that despite all her attempts to end her previous relationship her partner, soon to be ex just wouldn't let go.

Chris came to visit and very quickly the two decided that they could build a relationship together. Chris never returned to the United States, except to pick up belongings and for the scheduled border crossings that were necessary when she was staying here with only visitor status.

Ex's and Relationships

Chris had sat down her (now) ex many times and when they were still together and told her that they had to break it off because it wasn't working out. Her partner wanted to know why. Chris explained why several times. She just didn't want to go. She wanted to try again and again. Chris felt strongly that what had been done was done and that there was no recourse for that relationship. Chris said, *"I tried every which way to end my previous relationship. She just wouldn't let go. She wouldn't get off my back."*

Even after Chris and Elaine had begun their new relationship together and Chris was staying with Elaine, Deb, her ex, still wouldn't let go. There were numerous phone calls. Deb got Chris' mother involved which resulted in a lot of interference in the relationship between Chris and Elaine. Deb and Chris' mother caused a lot of stress. There were calls to Immigration and other official agencies all in an attempt by Chris' mother to have Chris back in the United States. Along with many other issues Chris' mother could not accept her living in Canada. She could see nothing positive about that for her daughter.

It was Chris' ex who helped Chris move her belongings from Long Island, New York, to Kitchener. The troubling aspect of this was that along with settling Chris' belongings into the home that she and Elaine were creating together, so too, it seemed was Chris' ex trying to settle in with them. In an effort to not let go of Chris, her ex, Deb, lived with them for over a year. Finally the breaking point came and Elaine put her foot down and demanded that Deb make plans to leave. She did finally leave. There were more calls to come. The calls got more sporadic but continued right up until they finally changed their phone number.

Elaine's ex lives in Kitchener. They weren't in contact with each other when Chris and Elaine began their relationship. However, through circumstance she did come back into Elaine's life a few times. Each time there was effort to work out the past and to define and maintain a friendship. It was stressful for all three women. Though despite all stress from each of their ex's Chris and Elaine's relationship continued to grow and to strengthen. They both know that they come first and that all others are on the outside of the core of their relationship. Chris has felt quite threatened in many ways by Elaine's ex. But as is the case with so many lesbians, they appear to be working it out and friendship between the couple and Elaine's ex is going reasonably well.

Living in A Foreign Country and Money

Chris and Elaine are both on disability pensions. Chris' mother, like her ex, didn't want to let her go. What resulted from their needing to hang on and to control was a lot of interference in Chris' life with respect to her being in another country.

"My mother called everyone she could and lied about me to try to get me sent home. My family stole money from me. I thought, at first, that it was Elaine's ex making all these calls to Immigration and the Police about me. I didn't want to believe it was my mother. It was very painful. For periods of time I was so hurt and angry there was no communication between myself and my family." recalls Chris.

Neither Chris nor Elaine wanted to do anything wrong. Both had tremendous difficulty trying to figure out, understand and push ahead with the legal aspects of Chris' staying in Canada, however. The main reason Chris continued to stay here on a visitor's pass, which they'd renew every six months had all to do with just the utter terror both felt that Chris would go through the immigration process and not be accepted. They were very much in love and were so fearful of losing this relationship if Chris was refused the right to stay in Canada.

Because Chris' mother made many phone calls, however, they were thrust into having to deal with the system sooner than they may otherwise have chosen to. A system that charges money at every step and turn in its process. Money that it was very stressful for them to find because they are both on disability.

Immigration - Why Canada?

When asked why they made the decision to try to get Chris legal landed status in Canada instead of having Elaine immigrate to the United States the answer was two-fold and fairly straight forward. Canada has a section of its Immigration Law that makes provisions for same-sex couples to be granted landed immigrant status under what is known as "Compassionate and Humanitarian Grounds" (in which same-sex partnership is listed as one of the criteria for application).

The other part of this decision for this couple hinged upon their disability benefits as well. Elaine's are provincial while Chris' are federal. This meant that if Elaine tried to immigrate to the United States she would lose her benefits. Chris is still eligible for hers, paid to her by the United States Government, here in Canada.

Secondly, the United States, not having any provision for same-



Continued on page 22

sex couples in its over-all immigration policies relies heavily upon education (they prefer degrees) and level of income as criteria for successful admittance to that country.

The initial reluctance they both had in terms of beginning the formal immigration process was not about their commitment to one another. As Chris explained, "It was my concern about not having enough money and my fear of not being accepted here, in Canada, that led me to drag my heels. I was scared to death. It felt, in a way, like a prison term. My biggest fear was that I would be sent home and not accepted in Canada. That we would be separated and lose each other. It was extremely stressful."

There were at least three times in the year they were directly involved in the process with Immigration that they thought they might have to break up. These conversations and fears were driven by their experience of the process and its incumbent stress. It never had anything to do with their relationship or how they felt about each other. What kept them going through it all, and in spite of it all was, as Elaine put it, "The thing is that we didn't want to live without each other. So, we realized we had to continue to endure the stress

and depression and turmoil in our lives so that we could stay together, in our relationship, the way we both want it."

There is no doubt that it took a lot of courage and endurance for Chris and Elaine to overcome the financial and emotional barriers that they had to face. They both struggled with depression and anxiety. Initially there was a reluctance to tell the immigration officials that they were a same-sex couple. It felt awkward to have to talk to the male officials about such personal matters. They had to show logs of their on line chats, letters to each other, phone bills and other personal things that would prove to the immigration officials that they



were in fact a couple. All of the money that they did have to spend in this entire process was very much a financial hardship for both of them as well.

It turns out that the "Compassionate and Humanitarian grounds" including same-sex couples is the reason that Chris is now a landed immigrant because Chris did not meet any of the other standard criteria for the points, the education or the work history. Chris also had to be in good health. She pointed out that the immigration officials were very much interested in the outcome of her medical examinations and that she had to prove to them that she would not place any type of burden on Canada's health care system.

Chris and Elaine both were quick to point out that there is a lot to be aware of when love crosses borders. They admit just as freely though that neither of them thought about all of this at all. They met on line, they began to fall in love and they followed their hearts.

Canada is a forerunner in immigration law for same-sex couples and a country that does include its compassion in how its laws are applied. Chris is now a landed immigrant. The total cost was over \$2000.00. In total the process took one year from the time they officially filed. They have been together now for five years and are very happy together. Love endures and has no borders.

Chris on Canada Versus The United States

"I'll never forget where I came from. I'll always be an American. The United States will always be my country. But, Canada is my home now. I think about the States every day even though Canada is home now."

Chris does see her country through different eyes now after having lived in Canada for five years.

"When I lived in the U.S. I was fairly self-absorbed in that culture like most Americans are. But then when I got up here to Canada and I saw how things are different here I realized that the U.S. should be much more respectful to its Canadian neighbours."

Chris' original home is only about a half hour or so from where the attacks on the World Trade Centre took place. When asked what it was like to be in Canada on September 11th, 2001, Chris said, "I cried, I couldn't believe it. I wanted to go help. I broke my heart. I couldn't believe the reaction in Canada. Canadians were giving

blood and wanting to help so much. I saw so many American Flags flying all over the place. It was very touching. It's wonderful to live in such a giving and caring country."

To Other Lesbians Meeting Online

Elaine says, "Take a risk, take a chance, follow your heart." Chris says, "Take a chance if you have an opportunity to find love. Take the plunge. Don't live your life in

a way that leaves you wondering about the what-if's or about what could have happened "if-only". Love is not something we find every day. Many of us live isolated lives. You can't always control where love comes from. You can't always know where you will meet the person that is right for you.

Elaine said, "I am definitely very glad that we persevered and faced our fears."

Chris encourages others to throw caution to the wind and to dare to be lucky in love.

Love has no borders.

Lesbian Lives continues next month with the story of a transgender-lesbian and her partner.

See "Immigration Is For Lovers" on page 25.



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Why We Do: Gay Marriage & The Gay Community

By Melissa MacDonald

This article was spawned by the fact that my partner and I are planning a commitment ceremony for next summer, and ironically we have encountered more criticism from gay people than from our straight friends. "Why would you want to do that?!" seems to be the resounding question from every gay person we tell. So this article is my answer.

A wedding is a formal, public, ritualized confirmation of a deep commitment. Of course it's replete with hetero-patriarchal throwbacks, but the very act of doing it as a lesbian couple subverts much of that. We are educated about the customs involved and we are choosing which to keep and which to disregard.

I believe that much of the hesitancy in gay people's support for us is not only political but deeply emotional as well. Call it the bitterness factor. Of course we understand it all too well. We have cringed through innumerable family weddings ourselves. We've watched while everyone encourages the newlyweds to kiss, clanging their forks on their glasses and cheering them on for a public display of affection that no matter how 'progressive' my family is, I still highly doubt we'll be afforded without discomfort. My partner's parents will not be attending because they are fundamentalist Catholics, although other members of her family will. We've paid our dues. And yet sadly, we are among the most privileged queers in history, so we intend to take advantage of the rights we have, even as we push for more.

Many in the gay community argue that the new 'trend' of gay marriage is supposedly an indication of how our uniquely, radically queer culture is being co-opted. I dislike this argument for several reasons which are too lengthy to get into, but primarily I oppose it because whether you believe in gay marriage for yourself or not, you should support the fight for it, as we are entitled to some choice. Furthermore, the state can only dictate certain aspects of a marriage even if they finally come around to licensing same-sex life partnerships. We arrange our gender roles, finances, sex lives, etc. Radical queer marriages are not inconceivable.

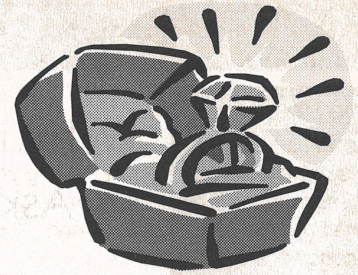
So are we just assimilationists? Are we conservative, hand-holding, bourgeois gay sell-outs? Not at all, and of course! The very aspects of gay culture that the pro-queer contingent promotes as uniquely queer we are well-versed in, i.e. non-mono-gamy, s&m, and other forms of radical

sexual and political deviance, but I have to admit to a penchant for 'old-fashioned' values like integrity and the importance of family (which may explain my bizarre fascination with the Christian Television show "7th Heaven" but that's a whole other article), so however you want to try to reconcile these seemingly contradictory truths is up to you, but they just go to show that it's not just a matter of being either radical or conformist.

Appearances can be deceiving. As a feminine woman, I have the privilege and annoyance of constantly passing. Especially now that I have a 'traditional' engagement ring, everyone from my dentist to my manicurist constantly asks when the 'big day' is and often more about my soon-to-be 'husband'. "So what does your fiancé do?", they'll ask. "She's a social worker," I'll respond. Their shock never fails to amuse me, and sometimes I think it's queerer than queer to undermine heterosexuality in this way. Wouldn't they all be so happy if we just fucked and protested ourselves silly off in some ghetto somewhere?! It's the infiltration of those of us seeping into the mainstream that's really unnerving.

I see it as the old feminist conundrum once again: Do we reject the whole system and rebuild in a radically different manner from scratch, or do we try to recuperate the system by working from within? Personally, I believe both strategies are necessary, but then I've always been a complex girl and I'll have my cake and eat it too if I can manage it. I'll take all the good things from heterosexuality and discard the rest. I want as many rights as they have, including the right to legal marriage, because I believe in the concept of marriage; I believe that the formal union of two people can actually liberate and empower them. I see a difference between the traditional institution of marriage and its spirit, just as many people differentiate religion with its dogma and often patriarchal ideology, and a more general sense of spirituality.

I used to joke that I 'became' a lesbian to avoid becoming a wife, which is kind of ironic now, but only superficially. I did not want to be the kind of woman, wife and mother that I saw around me, but becoming a feminist and falling in love with my partner taught me that I could be any kind of woman I chose to be. And so we have chosen to mark our love with a sacred and festive social ritual that once oppressed women, but which we are redefining. I



hardly think we can be accused of coping to outdated and oppressive heterosexual customs, for we're designing our own vows and investing our celebration with deeply personal history and meaning. There will be a pagan handfasting to represent my beliefs, and belly-dancing and hennaed hands to remind my partner of her homeland. We'll have bare feet on the earth where we once kissed as relative strangers, and oh yeah, a really, really beautiful white dress for me, cause some traditions are just too much fun for a femme to give up!

Melissa MacDonald is a writer and academic. She is putting the finishing touches on her first play, "Stars from the Butterfly Bush", and beginning her doctoral studies on 1950's lesbian pulp fiction at McMaster university in Hamilton.

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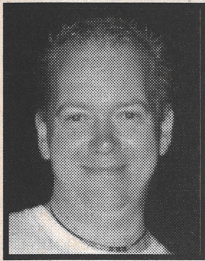
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Why People Do Not Ask For Referrals

by Darren Kregar

Over the last two weeks, I have been looking through bookstores for ideas and topics to write about for the business section of 'the Voice'. I found a book titled 'Drumming up Referrals' written by Dan Bodanis. The book goes through topics such as why clients like to make referrals, skills needed to drum referrals, and how to make referrals.

One way to expand your business is by asking for referrals. Getting referrals starts by providing excellent service and value to your clients. You must treat your clients as if they are the number one client you have if you wish them to provide you with further business opportunities.

Following is a list of Dan's top 10 reasons why people do not ask for a referral. Rookie represents anyone not yet comfortable with the sales process.

Reason #10: It Was the Wrong Time to Ask

Rookie uses this one often, sometimes varying it with: First, I need to prove myself; Maybe I have not earned the right; Maybe they need to see some result.



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What Rookie really means is: "It was the wrong time to ask. I was scared."

Reason #9: I Forgot to Ask

Sometimes Rookie is so happy to make the sale and get the cheque that he forgets to ask for the referral.

Reason #8: I had to Leave for My Next Appointment

Rookie enjoyed chatting with his/her client so much, he couldn't ask for the referral and make it to the next appointment on time.

Reason #7: I Had a Brain Cramp

Poor Rookie worked so hard at this appointment that his brain siezed up. No referrals here.

Reason #6: I Had a Weak Bladder

Rookie made it to the end of a fabulous appointment. The client was giving names to the Rookie. At the end of the appointment, Rookie took the client's cheque. A strange look came over his face. He thanked the client and quickly headed for the door. Rookie got into his car and stopped at the nearest coffee shop. Why? Rookie had to use the washroom and was too embarassed to ask the client to use their washroom.

Reason #5: My Beeper Went Off

Rookie was just about to ask for a referral when his beeper went off. He looked down at the pager, the client started to talk about his pager, and before Rookie knew it he was saying good-bye. Without a referral.

Reason #4: It was Snowing Really Hard

Rookie does not like to drive in the snow. He once ended an appointment without a cheque or referral because he was afraid

either to ask or to socialize with the client a bit longer while it was snowing.

Reason #3: The Client Fell Asleep

Rookie was talking and talking. Suddenly the client's eyelids got heavier and heavier and the client fell asleep. After waking the client Rookie suggested setting up another appointment. Rookie did not get a cheque or a referral. The client did not keep the appointment.

Reason #2: My Client Passed Away

Rookie really talked too long that day. (if your client passes away, I feel that not asking for a referral is acceptable. DK)

Reason #1: I Did not Want to Offend My Client

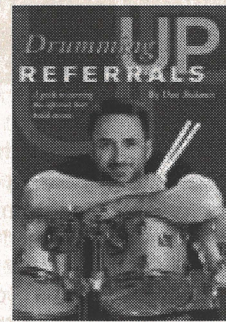
This is the most common reason for not asking for referrals. If you have given your client good service, it is unlikely that you could offend any client.

As a business owner, I find that I simply forget to ask for referrals. A client of mine recently informed me that one of his clients he did training for provided him with some referrals when he asked. Had he not asked, he likely would not have recieved any. As a result he had made in excess of \$2,000.00.

Each year I send letters to each of my clients asking for referrals for tax preparation. Each year over 100 new clients are referred to my business.

So, if you don't ask for referrals, you won't get referrals and also remember, no matter what the dollar figures involved, paying for new business is always more expensive than asking for it.

Darren Kregar is the owner of Economical Tax Services. ETS not only provides tax preparation services, but also, bookkeeping and business consulting. ETS is a proud member of the Rainbow Business Network.



Immigration Is For Lovers!!

By Peter, David, and Bruce
of Ferreira-Wells Immigrations Services

Love happens and is no respecter of borders. This information is important to know even if you are not in a cross-border relationship.

Perhaps you have friends in such a relationship now - or you may fall in love with a foreigner in the future.

Immigration for same sex partners has been possible since the early 90's - but only indirectly accepted on humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) grounds, and it was discretionary on the part of the Immigration Officer. This option was not well known even by immigration officials who often denied it could be done when asked.

After waiting an eternity for acceptance we are now finally included in the immigration laws and regulations of Canada. Here are some of the things in the new regulations as we understand them so far, remembering that this article is being written before the new forms, kits and policy manuals were available. The new regulations took effect June 28, 2002 and we have now been included as common-law partners or conjugal partners and we can still use the H&C considerations as well if necessary.

In Canadian immigration law, common-law partners are living together and have lived together for at least one year. This definition is much narrower and stricter than used in other Canadian laws so it may eventually be softened. If you meet this definition the Canadian or Canadian permanent resident would be able to sponsor their foreign partner whether they were living together inside or outside Canada.

Since it is often difficult to meet the common-law definition when you are from two different countries the government has created an additional category called 'conjugal partner'. This is defined as a couple having been in a conjugal relationship of more than one year where the Canadian or Canadian permanent resident partner is in Canada and the foreign partner is outside of Canada.

If you do not meet these definitions then we may be able to use the humanitarian & compassionate considerations as we have been doing in the past however we would suggest that your relationship should be at least close to, if not more than, a year old.

Although we have mentioned several possibilities for couples where one is Canadian or Canadian permanent resident there are also changes for couples where neither is Canadian or Canadian permanent resident. There are many couples who cannot be together in either of their own countries or face persecution (legal or social) in their own country who wish to come to Canada to be able to live together openly and freely. As long as one of them qualifies as an independent applicant their partner should be accepted as well.

There are many other concerns with the immigration process for same sex couples such as: getting the foreign partner into Canada to be together while the application is being processed, visitor/student/work permits, or extensions of current status. All of these things depend on your personal circumstances.

Although the government says that the applications & forms can be done without professional assistance, we all know how ambiguous government forms can be. And here you are playing with your future lives together. Another factor is the uncertainty of new regulations. There are always differences on exactly how they are to be interpreted. So it is more important than ever to have professional help. For Canadian immigration this help can be from an immigration consultant. You should be sure the person you are considering is experienced with immigration and in particular, same sex immigration. You can be sure that they meet immigration knowledge and ethical standards if they are a member of the Organization of Professional Immigration Consultants (OPIC). As for same-sex immigration experience, there are few people with this.

At Ferreira-Wells Immigration Services we are both experi-

enced with immigration and citizenship, but are also experts in same sex immigration. Bruce (on the left) is a member of OPIC and a former immigration officer. He was trained by the government in all the ins and outs of the immigration process. He was also a citizenship officer. Peter - (centre) has had eight years experience with same sex immigration and has helped hundreds of couples live happily ever after in Canada. The handsome dude on the right is David who has lived with

immigration for years and is our resident storyteller. They should make a movie from your story



once he is through telling the government about you in the submission letters he writes for our clients.

We can help you from beginning to end with your immigration and citizenship issues and we try to be friendly and fabulous at the same time. Call us for a free assessment of your possibilities for immigration to Canada.

Submitted to The Voice by Ferreira-Wells Immigration Services. A Voice Exclusive.

Immigration is for lovers!

We are proud of our ever-growing family of delighted gay and lesbian couples united at home in Canada, and our 100% success rate with same sex couples. Canada's new immigration regulations make expert guidance even more important than ever. Avoid time delaying and costly mistakes by working closely with a former Canadian Immigration and Citizenship Officer and friendly staff. We offer a full range of Immigration and Citizenship services: visa extensions, employment authorizations, family sponsorship, and independent applications. Let us be your personal guide, providing professional care from start to finish.

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WATERLOO-WELLINGTON REGIONAL PRIDE (June 7-9)

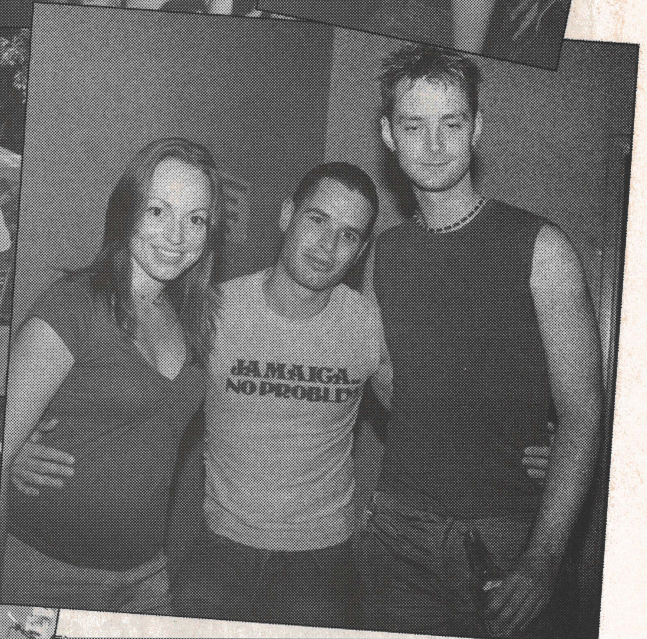
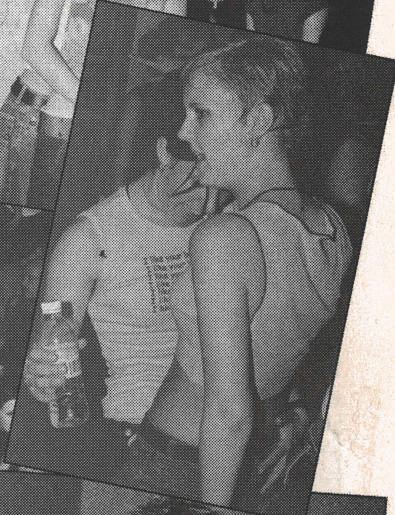
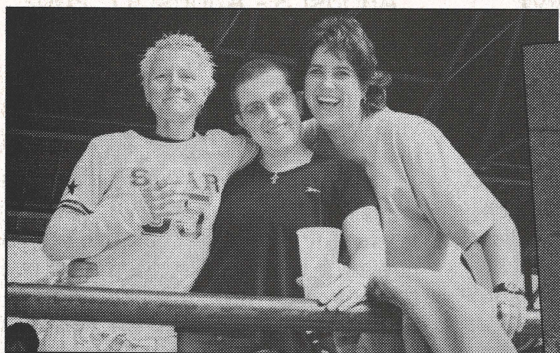


Waterloo-Wellington Regional Pride! June 6-9, 2002



Waterloo-Wellington Pride
photos by A. J. Mahari,
editor of The Voice Magazine

HAMILTON PRIDE (June 14-16)



Hamilton Pride photos by
Melissa Wallace of
Imagine That Photography

UP-COMING PRIDE EVENTS

LONDON - July 13, 2002



With the financial strain on HALO, (Homophile Association of London Ontario) reorganization came to be in order and this year Pride Event's are a bit more downscaled. All the Pride partying has been centered around one day; Saturday July 13. That is the big day. All the events kick off at 11:00 am at Centennial Hall and the day does not stop until the wee hours of the morning.

The Museum London is hosting the exhibit Boys with Needles and as part of their ongoing alternative art cinema series Rainbow Cinemas is hosting the Argentinean film Burnt Money. Therefore, even though HALO's sponsored event had to be downscaled; there are an ever-growing number of grassroots organizations that are filling the social void.

Submitted by Brad Lister for London Pride

WINDSOR
July 21 - July 28, 2002



July 21- 11 am - Pride Picnic - MCC Windsor- Communion Spiritual Gathering -- Honouring Man & Woman of the year, BBQ, Games, DJ, Karokee & more

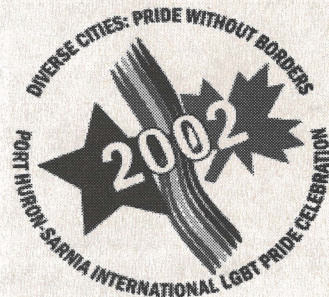
July 25 - Boat Cruise

July 26 - Bowling

July 27 - Hawaiian Party - Pig Roast

www.gaywindsor.com

PORT HURON - SARNIA
August 3 - August 11, 2002



Saturday August 3

Ms.ter & Miss International Pride Pageant

Friday August 9

Port Huron Pride & Unity Walk

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Saturday August 10

Sarnia Pride Parade

International Pride Festival

International Pride Dance

Sunday August 11

Pride Brunch

Religious Service

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(See ad inside back cover)

The Windsor Pride Committee would like to extend a special invitation to all involved in the Equal Marriage fight. The Windsor Community is a big supporter of your fight and it would be an honour to have your presence at our event.

(see ad on outside back page for more details)

July 13, 2002 London HALO Pride: "Back To Our Roots"

The day will commence at 11:00 a.m. in Centennial Hall and will run until 2:00 a.m. Evening shows will include the Fresh Fashion Show, the crowning of Mr. & Mrs. Gay London and Kathy Thompson as the Divine Miss "M"

Please come and share with us what our community has to offer.

The London Halo Pride Committee
www.proudlife.com

Chatham-Kent's 2nd annual Pride Celebrations

August 11th - 17th

By Mike Ondrovcik

Chatham-Kent's second annual Gay Pride Celebrations are scheduled to take place the week of August 11th to the 17th. They begin with the Gay Pride Family picnic on Sunday August 11th. It starts at noon and runs until 5pm and is held in beautiful historic and tree shaded Tecumseh Park located in the heart of downtown Chatham along the Thames river waterfront. The picnic includes a barbecue, information and craft / artisan's booths and is an excellent day for family fun for people of all ages. I encourage everyone to invite his or her friends, families, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters to come and enjoy the picnic and relax in the park.

Added interests are right across the street with the Chatham-Kent museum, the Thames Art Gallery and the Milner Historical Period home.

On Wednesday, August 14 there will be another opportunity to celebrate Gay Pride with friends at a supper at the local West Garden Chinese Buffet restaurant on King St. in downtown Chatham. It starts at 6 PM.

Local Pride celebrations climax on Saturday night with the Pride Gala. It starts at 7pm and is being held at the local CAW

Hall on Merritt Ave. The night includes great music, dancing, good food and entertainment. A highlight of the evening is having a chance to bid on some terrific donated articles in our silent auction.

The local Gay Pride Celebrations are organised and hosted by the Chatham-Kent Gay Pride Association (C-K.G.P.) and sponsored in part by AIDS Support Chatham-Kent.

Everyone is welcome to attend all the planned Gay Pride Events!

The Association also facilitates four groups, Gay Fathers of Chatham-Kent, Diversity Gay & Bi Men's Social group,

Gay & Bi Men's Coming-out Peer Support Group as well as a Lesbian Social group. Currently in summer hiatus, these groups will resume meeting on a regular basis again in the fall.

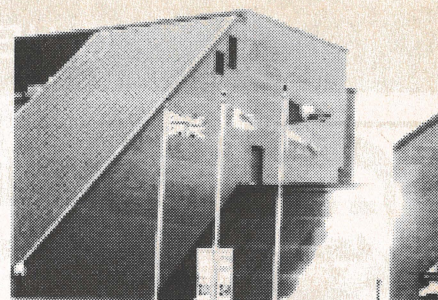
Two new groups a PFLAG group and a Youth Group are in the organisational stage and hopefully will be active by September. The youth group is being organised by a newly hired youth worker through AIDS Support Chatham-Kent which is part of the Tri County AIDS Coalition made up of AIDS Committee of Windsor, AIDS Support Chatham-Kent and AIDS Support Committee of Sarnia. As well we are in the ongoing process of compiling a list of local Gay Positive social counsellors, health workers, ministers, lawyers, business owners etc. that are willing and able to openly service and assist those in the gay community.

Officially just a year old The C-K.G.P. Association is an incorporated non-profit group that is gaining respect within the straight and gay community for the work that its doing for Gay Rights and acceptance. A member of Chatham's Chamber of Commerce, we are currently working with a number of other

non-profit agencies on joint projects and fund-raisers.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Chatham-Kent, we are situated in the heart of South Western Ontario with the amalgamated municipality having a population of 110,000. The largest urban area of Chatham is surrounded by smaller towns and villages the dot the mostly rural landscape.

Gay Community is a new concept for this area. It was only a few short years ago that our then MP in Canada's Parliament proclaimed that he didn't have to vote on a bill for gay rights because he knew of



Pride Flag Flies At Chatham-Kent City Hall During Last Year's Pride and will fly again this year.

no gay people in his constituency.

Gay Community is still a very tough concept even for many of our gay citizens, as they prefer, out of fear to remain completely hidden or lurking in the shadows. Many still choose to lead double lives, straight in public, gay at home or within a small circle of intimates.

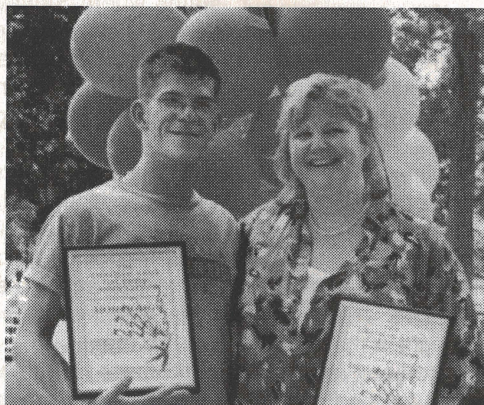
With no exclusive gay bar or even a gay friendly bar, Chatham-Kent's only gay friendly/gay positive meeting place is the popular William St. Café located in a restored turn of the century building in downtown Chatham. It's a nice comfortable place to meet with good coffee, good food and great desserts and they have welcomed us with open arms, with C-K.G. P. hosting special events and open meetings there.

With the larger cities of Windsor and London only an hour away most of the gay community go out of town for evenings and weekends to socialise.

As we set out in the Chatham-Kent Gay Pride Association Mission Statement, we are moving slowly but steadfastly towards providing a healthy supportive community. Through ongoing activities, programs, advocacy and education, we are working towards providing an environment where our gay citizens can live with dignity, respect and where they can grow intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and socially, free from fear of prejudice and their personal safety.

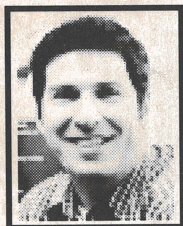
So mark your calendars, I invite you and your friends to plan to take part in our Pride Celebrations. Everyone is Welcome!

For More Information regarding anything in this article email us at chathamkentgaypride@hotmail.com



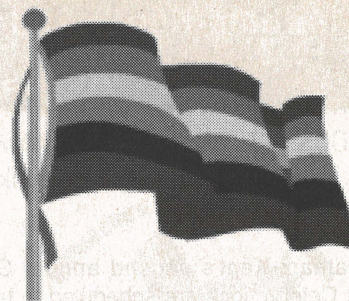
Award recipients at Chatham-Kent's first-ever Pride Celebrations last year.

Mike Ondrovcik, a life-long resident of Chatham-Kent is the President of the Chatham-Kent Gay Pride Association.



Stonewall! What Stonewall?

by Dr. Jeffrey Chernin



In late May, "Nightline" had a week-long series on various aspects of LGBT people's lives. In one segment, Ted Koppel interviewed four young lesbian and gay youth growing up in the South. These courageous young people openly shared their stories and their struggles with coming out.

While I watched the show, I thought that it's still so hard to come to terms with being LGBT, despite the fact that, in contrast to ten years ago, society's acceptance of us has increased. It's still hard to grow up LGBT despite the millions of viewers tuned into "Will & Grace," and the countless other television shows with LGBT characters. It's still hard to grow up LGBT despite that fact that every LGBT person knows that Rosie and Ellen and Melissa and Rupert and Elton are gay.

And while most LGBT people living in large cities take for granted that they can be open at work, school, places of worship, and with family and friends, there are still thousands and thousands of LGBT people who face discrimination from every meaningful area of their lives. For them, it's as if Stonewall never happened.

Of course, things for us are a lot better. The strides we have made, in part due to Stonewall, are impressive, and there are many places where civil rights have been granted to us.

And there are many heroes, many of them unsung. Some heroes got fed up with the Bryants and Helmses and started LGBT organizations. Some held their lovers' hands in public despite the risks. And

some came out at work in spite of the risk of being fired, and others took on the legal system to knock down sodomy laws.

In this column, I would like to talk about one unsung hero. His name is Leon Rouse. When I knew Leon in college, he was the human equivalent of a bit bull, not in a vicious way, but when he sunk his teeth into something, he never let go. Friends and acquaintances saw Leon as somewhere between pesky and tenacious. "Sign this petition," "join this protest," "boycott this product." Over time, he wore us down until we said, "Enough! I'll do it!"

I have no doubt that this quality of Leon's led to the passage of the nation's first statewide "gay rights" bill that prohibited discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation.

To give you some background, progress toward passage of this bill was slow-going, and the measure seemed likely to fail. That is, until a Catholic Archbishop of a major city in the state publicly supported the bill. Who did the Archbishop credit with influencing him to support the measure? None other than Leon Rouse.

And the state where this monumental event took place? It wasn't New York, California, or even Vermont. The place was Wisconsin, located right in the heartland of the U.S. Thanks to Leon and the creation of his Committee for the Fundamental Judeo-Christian Human Rights, the Archbishop and other clerics lent their support to the bill, which tipped the scales

in favor of its passage. Wisconsin was the first state to pass an anti-discrimination bill in 1982, opening the door for the many other states that followed Wisconsin's lead.

So, what does the story about Leon Rouse have to do with those kids on "Nightline?" Like them, Leon had to endure harassment in a small-minded town. But Leon had to endure much more. When he was 16, his parents committed him to a mental institution to change him from gay to straight. He was confined there until he turned 18.

He got out, later to become a stubborn, relentless -- powerful -- human being who has changed the United States as we know it.

For all of the other cities, towns, and states where Stonewall hasn't yet happened, there are Leons and Leonas out there. Kids who've been harassed, kicked out of their homes, and have been denied the basic civil rights given to all other citizens.

Like Leon, these kids are bugging friends to sign petitions and go to protests. And they are using adversity to gain a quiet, inner strength. Four of them had the bravery to talk about their hardships on national television, in hopes of helping others like them.

Until these kids grow up to be tomorrow's leaders, it is up to us to confront homophobia where we find it. It is up to us to remind these kids that, no matter what, no one can harm their spirit. And it is up to us to remind them that, not in spite of but because of their experiences, they are strong and powerful.

In the meantime, we can all feel proud, not just for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transsexual, but to know that surviving to this day is triumphant, especially for today's pre-Stonewall queers.

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

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In Praise of Older Men

By Brad Lister

We live in a youth culture. It is a simple statement, something that is true all over North America. Everybody wants to stay young, be young, act young. Aging is thought of as something to fight. No more prevalent is this idea of the youth culture than it is in the gay community. Go to any gay club on any night of the week and who is filling them but young gay boys shirtless dancing to some pounding beat. Any men who are older are left off to the sidelines staring at the crowded dance floor longing to be one of them.

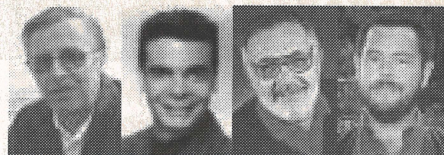
Those gay boys on the dance floor wouldn't think for a second of approaching one of those older guys off to the side. They don't interact they just watch each other warily. I did though, I moved off that dance floor and I hooked up with one of those older guys. I wouldn't trade my older boyfriend for anything in the world. I'm 27 and my man is 42, going to be 43 this year. When I usually tell that to people they are usually very floored cause my man does not look it and if they aren't meeting him at the time I'm describing him then they usually turn up their noses or some such other statement that indicates they think I'm dating some old troll.

Everyone knows what I'm talking about. Everyone has heard people call those older guys trolls and whatever sort of stereotypical response that goes along with old gay men. The youth of the gay culture think that every old gay guy is lecherous and disgusting and, oh god heaven forbid if I get to be old like him I'd rather die. Before people meet my guy they might think he falls into that stereotype but he's not. He's young, fun and he's so very exciting. He's so much more together than any guy closer to my age has ever been.

So what makes my guy so special? The next thing lots of you out there are thinking oh well then he must be some sort of sugar daddy. He's got to be shelling out big time dough. We all know that arrangement. We've seen it the older boyfriend with all of the cash whose has the young boyfriend and we completely understand why they are together. Cause the old guy is paying all the way baby. It's not like that at all with my guy.

We've been together for five years now and it's been a fifty-fifty split right down the middle. Neither one of us has ever really made much more than the other. So money was not what attracted me to him. What has kept us together in a large part is that we were meant for each other. This older guy has always been able to give me just what I need. Plus, in true confession fashion, this man is skilled, and I'll leave it at that, you catch my drift.

There's a lot to be said about experience in life, and well, in the bedroom too.



I always find it takes a while to hone those skills. Nobody is good right from the start. My guy has been honing his skills for a long time. The young guys may look good but they really don't know what they are doing a lot of times. It's not true for every young guy that they are lousy lays but there are many out there who have a heck of time working it all out.

The older man can also teach us young folk a thing or two about letting all the silly cat-fighting we do in the bars go. They are not interested in any of that drama. They have been there dorfe that. They have realized how ridiculous it all was. They have grown into an assured personhood that enables them to be comfortable and secure with who they are.

So all I can say is before you condemn that old guy in the corner as being too old for you, think again. He's probably just what you've been looking for. He's probably got way more to offer than you may have ever stopped to think about.

Gay culture, our half of it anyway, puts way too much focus on all the things that don't really matter when it comes to all the things that are necessary to make a long-term relationship work. Then so many wonder why there aren't more gay couples making things last. Think about that.

Brad Lister is a St Thomas/London based writer who can be reached at [redacted]@sympatico.ca. He truly loves his sexy older man and says hurray to all the young guys who have discovered the benefits of the sexy older man.

The Voice

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BOOKS

Finding True Love in a Man-Eat-Man World: The Intelligent Guide to Gay Dating, Sex, Romance, and Eternal Love

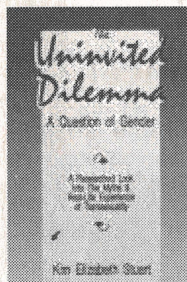
by Craig Nelson



Nelson draws both on his interviews with other men and on his own experiences in the gay dating scene to present this revealing and often humorous guide. From breaking down psychological blocks to surviving a breakup, Nelson explores the key issues in gay male relationships and the baggage left over from adolescence.

The Uninvited Dilemma: A Question of Gender

by Kim Elizabeth Stuart



"The Uninvited Dilemma" is different from the autobiographies and clinical studies on transsexuality. It represents two years of research involving carefully structured, in-depth personal interviews with seventy-five transsexuals, consultations with members of the medical and mental health communities, and conversations with loved ones of trans-

sexuals. This book will give you an understanding of the true nature of transsexuality. It is a remarkable reading experience for all who are interested in the human condition and an exploration of the most fundamental aspect of our humanity.

Innocent Hearts

by Radclyffe



A winning lesbian historical romance Set in the American West ' in the rugged Montana Territory, deep in the Rockies ' in the mid-nineteenth century, INNOCENT HEARTS is a tale of two young women who fall passionately in love. We follow the story of Kate Beecher ' an educated Bostonian who has come West with her parents ' and Jessie Forbes ' wrangler, rancher, businesswoman - as they come to recognize and explore the depth of their feelings for one another as friendship turns to passion. But when their love is tested by both natural disasters and societal expectations, will they have the strength to buck all convention and build a life together? And at what cost?

This story has all the hallmarks of a classic Radclyffe tale: strong women who live and love passionately and independently; moments of soul-twisting loneliness and despair; vividly sensual, erotic lovemaking scenes. In INNOCENT HEARTS, Radclyffe adds the historical element to the mix, making this a quite unconventional coming-out story as well. And unlike many

storytellers who tell stories of this sort, Radclyffe never preaches to her readers and never trivializes the very real conflicts faced by characters.

If you've never read her work and you love stories about sexy, romantic, strong women, hurry up and see what you've been missing: simply the best books in this class. Radclyffe's stories will warm your heart and set your soul on fire.

True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism-For Families, Friends, Coworkers, and Helping Professionals

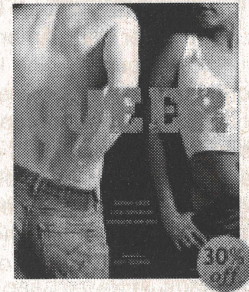
by Mildred L. Brown, Chloe Ann Rounsley



Brown and Rounsley's solidly based introduction to many aspects of living as a transsexual provides general information about the dilemma of feeling trapped in the wrong physical gender, about such a person's development, and about locating a gender therapist. Brown and Rounsley also detail the process of transition between genders, starting with legal and identity changes and proceeding to changing outward modes of self-presentation (they include sample "coming-out" letters to employers, coworkers, friends, and family members) and dealing with bathroom issues, hormone treatments, surgical options, and guidelines for finding social support. First-person accounts from transsexuals augment general readability and put human faces on the issues discussed.

Queer

by Simon Gage (Editor), Lisa Richards (Editor), Howard Wilmot (Editor)

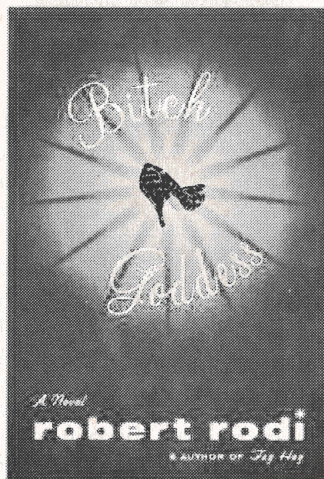


Gays and lesbians have traveled a long road from persecution to toleration and from fashionable to establishment. Terms of abuse that have long been weapons used to oppress the gay community have now been reclaimed as expressions of liberation and freedom. With wit and panache, Queer explores all avenues of gay life from avant-garde fashion to popular cartoon strips, from radical politics to global persecution. Included is a wide range of topics, magnificent spreads of personalities and icons, entertainment value, and many profoundly touching issues of our time. Queer not only presents the history and contribution of gay men and lesbians, but also takes a look across the spectrum at the advances made by the bisexual, transsexual and transgender communities and all points in between. Contributions from leading writers and commentators and a superb photo archive all add up to as definitive a statement as one can get, and, simultaneously, a great book. Featured revolutionaries include, among others, Derek Jarman, Sappho, Harvey Milk, Pat Califia, Audre Lorde, Oscar Wilde, Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, Edward II, King of England, Marlene Dietrich, James Baldwin, Djuna Barnes and Brandon Teena.

BOOK REVIEW

By Alex Rowison (of Glad Day Books)
Bitch Goddess : A Novel

By Robert Rodi



"Joan Crawford, Hollywood's first case of syphilis," said Bette Davis of her long time rival, and of Marilyn Monroe, "She's the original good time had by all." Ethel Merman, singer/actress extraordinaire had this to say of one of her contemporaries; "Ertha Kitt sounds like a cat in heat." Zsa Zsa, in a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black has these lovely words of wisdom about fellow gold digger Ivana Trump, "I think she dresses much too flashy.

I also think her hair is ridiculous, and I think her behaviour with Donald was very stupid. All she cares about is money, money, money. I hate that." And don't get the classy Katharine Hepburn started on Sharon Stone, "It's a new low for actresses when you have to wonder what's between her ears instead of her legs."

So what's the point of all these catty quotes, you ask? Well, it just goes to show how much us queers love a good bitch. From the classic screen sirens like Joan Crawford, Bette Davis and Marlene Dietrich to their modern day contemporise such as Madonna, Mariah and Whitney, watching divas is the national sport of gay men everywhere.

In his latest offering, Bitch Goddess, Robert Rodi serves up his usual dish of camp and wit that skewers yet another institution of the queer community. Meet Viola Chute, a fading star of campy B-movie classics. Picture an amalgamation of Madonna, Liza, Miss Ross, Bette, and any other famous harlot that can go by only one name. Viola has had quite the lacklustre career as of late. She seems to get roles based on the novelty of her infamy. The movies she stars in are like car crashes; so horrible, disgust-


ing and ghastly that one cannot help but stare.

Through interviews conducted by her biographer, news stories, rants, e-mails, court paper and whatnot we are told the story of her latest rise and fall. Now playing a character on a Dynasty-esque prime time soap, Viola is finally lifted from a career slump that saw her spitting thinly veiled innuendos on game shows. But her volatile demeanour insures that she won't stay at the top for long.

First of all, the other star of the soap is Viola's long time rival, Georgia Kirkby. Add into the mix a photographer suing for assault, a highly suspect connection to the death of a high powered Hollywood producer, nude pictures and a mysterious blackmailer and you have what looks like a PR nightmare.

Will Viola's star rise again? Will she ever live to see her role reprised in the musical of "The Bell Jar"? Will her daughter ever speak to her again? Who will she have to sleep with for her next role? And what exactly is she getting blackmailed for? To find out the answers to these questions and learn more about this truly outrageous character, pick up a copy of "Bitch Goddess" for \$19.00.


Alex Rowison is a writer, student and ad manager/designer at Glad Day Bookshop in Toronto. A Voice Exclusive.



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TRADE

QUEER THINGS

TRADE QUEER THINGS, a sister offering out of Toronto and Hamilton, launched its summer issue recently. Now in its third year of publication, this esoteric quarterly is both entertaining and provocative. You can purchase it now at your favourite Queer friendly bookstore or check it out online at www.tradequeerthings.com. THE VOICE thanks Trade for a recent entry into an advertising prototype of The Voice Magazine and is pleased to congratulate Jon Pressick and his associates on their perseverance and imaginative effort.

SITE OF STONEWALL RIOTS THREATENED

The site of the Stonewall riots in Greenwich Village is being threatened by a plan

to dig up and construct new stairways and entrances to the New Jersey PATH line.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey runs the PATH, which is a commuter rail link between Manhattan and New Jersey. The plan is universally opposed by the local community, local elected officials, and prominent leaders of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. They fear that it will adversely impact on the historic neighborhood where the modern gay rights movement began in June 1969. A group of 24 prominent leaders of the LGBT community have

sounded an alarm by signing a letter to Governor George Pataki (R-New York) urging him to order the Port Authority (PA) to halt all work and plans for the project. The Port Authority is controlled by the governors of New York and New Jersey. The plan would permanently narrow Christopher Street to make way for the two new PATH entrances. Christopher Street is the heart of Greenwich Village and part

of the route of the enormous Gay Pride march that takes place every year in late June. The march attracts more than 100,000 people to this part of the city and

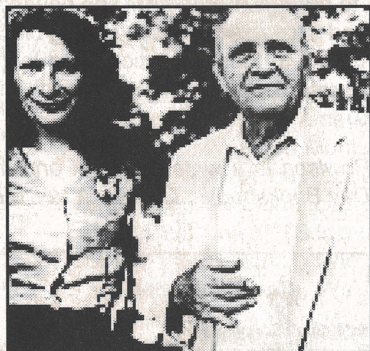
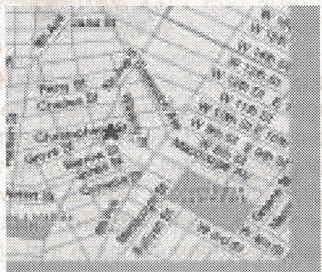
is one of the largest parades in the world. The Stonewall Inn is located on

Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. Early on the morning of June 28, 1969, a six-day-long intermittent series of confrontations with the police began when the police raided the gay bar. For the first time the patrons, who were fed up with being harassed by the police, decided to fight back. These events

are universally recognized as the birth of the gay liberation movement. The Stonewall Historic District was created on the 30th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. The District includes the streets and sidewalks around the Stonewall Inn, at the

suggestion of the United States Department of the Interior, because that was where most of the fighting took place. David Carter, author of the forthcoming book, "Stonewall", said, "I recruited these prominent members of the LGBT community to attract the support and attention of the LGBT community. Our 'Call to Action' urges everyone to call and write Governor Pataki and let him know how we feel about this attempt to

destroy our most important historic site." A web site (www.SaveStonewall.org) is also being launched later this week to encourage the LGBT community to contact



The late Sylvia Rivera, (l.) drag queen and TG activist, fought the police lead by Dep. Insp. Seymour Pine (r.) at the Stonewall Riot



The Stonewall Inn (prior to the 1969 police raid) 53 Christopher Street, New York City

Governor Pataki to ask him to prevent the PA from going ahead with its plans. Governor Pataki can be reached at: Governor George E. Pataki, Executive Chamber, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y. 12224, (518) 474-1041. Another web site that has information about this project is: <http://www.christopherstreetpreservation.org> Martin Duberman, a gay historian who has also written a book on Stonewall, said, "Many of the signers voiced a sense of alarm at how quickly the Port Authority has been moving to get this project on the fast track. They have completely ignored the community's concerns and the historic importance of this neighborhood. **Test holes have already been drilled and plans are underway to begin construction as soon as the Gay Pride march is over on June 30.**" Some of the signers of the "Call to Action" are playwright Edward Albee, the winner of this year's Tony Award winning best play, "The Goat or Who is Sylvia?", Tony Award winning actor/playwright and author of "Torch Song Trilogy" Harvey Fierstein, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, the founders of America's first national lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, Tony Award winning playwright for "Angels in America" Tony Kushner, and the writers Rita Mae Brown and Edmund White.

Courtesy to Save Stonewall Historic District by StoneWall Society Community Services at www.stonewallsociety.com sysop@stonewallsociety.com

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Father's Day When You Have a Gay Son A Day of Mourning or Celebration?



Coming To Acceptance

By Jeff Ellis

For a few years after my son Adam came out to me, Father's Day became a day of mourning, the day when I was reminded of what I lost.

What I lost was every dream I ever had for my 21 year-old first-born child. He was going to be the captain of the football team that I cheered on. He was going to be the stud that I bragged about to all my co-workers. He was going to be the husband I'd be proud of, the father of the children I would cherish.

I grieved the fact that he would become none of these people. As I looked back at the person he did become, I thought about my own role in developing his character and I'm not so sure I liked what I saw.

Even when we're doing things for our children we fathers have an underlying selfishness. We unconsciously place expectations on them. For instance, I spent hours showing Adam how to throw a baseball. I told myself it was because I wanted him to enjoy the camaraderie of team sports, but really it was because I was so embarrassed by his lack of athleticism.

I work in construction. The type of people I hang out with, well, when they saw Adam out in the field, I knew what they were thinking: He throws like a girl.

That stung me like a mad bee. And it kept stinging me for years. I was profoundly embarrassed by him, the depth of which, now, ironically, embarrasses me.

I'm still working on forgiving myself. For Adam, as a young boy, to witness my disappointment in him was possibly my greatest failure as a father.

Unfortunately, my failure continued throughout his growing up years. Especially when I discovered every dad's worst nightmare—that he fathered a gay son. I tried to be stoic but I'm sure my face betrayed the emotions I was trying to hide.

I had the ultimate paternal disappoint-

ment placed on my shoulders and I buckled under it. I didn't want anyone to know and I made sure they didn't. Peer pressure is just as strong at my age as it is at Adam's. For four years I chose my public image over my love for my son. Homosexuality makes cowards out of most of us.

The conflict between the genuine love for my son and the endless disappointments he seemingly foisted on me eventually came to a head. Was I going to be a stooped old man, burdened by the disappointments of his first-born or was I going to be something bigger than that?

After a lot of prayer and counseling, I realized that contrary to my perception of being a self-sacrificing father, I was actually a selfish one. On the field or off, I

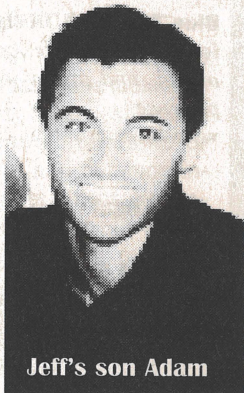
wanted him to want what I wanted for him.

As a child he disappointed me because he wasn't interested in rough-and-tumble play, as a teen he disappointed me because he wasn't interested in sports and now, as a young man, he disappointed me because he wasn't interested in women.

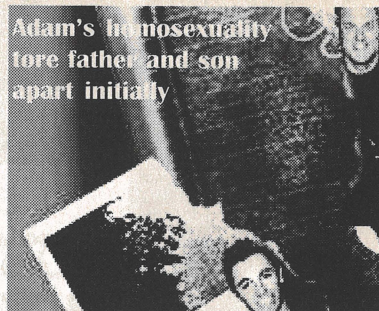
I had a right to be disappointed by his homosexuality, I knew that. But how long was I willing to be right at the cost of my happiness? How long was I going to sacrifice love for self-righteous discontent?

One day, as a Little League coach, I realized I had become what I hated in other fathers. They too had a long list of disappointments that their sons had *burdened* them with and they did nothing to hide their displeasure. It dawned on me that I was doing the same thing to my son that they were doing to theirs: Convincing him that he would always be a failure in my eyes.

Today, my son and I are closer than we've ever been. I even give him advice on his boyfriends. He still annoys me now and then (really, he could party less and study harder in college) but the one thing he never does anymore is disappoint me.



Jeff's son Adam



That's because today I realize that all those dreams I had weren't really for Adam. They were for me. Adam can't disappoint me anymore because I've committed myself to supporting his dreams, not mine.

Father's Day has changed for me. It isn't any longer about what I lost, but what I gained: The ability to love my son unconditionally.

*Jeff Ellis is the father of two sons. Along with his wife Patti, he is co-creator of www.familyacceptance.com, a non-profit resource for parents struggling to accept their gay children. He can be reached at Jeff@familyacceptance.com. Submitted to *The Voice* by Jeff Ellis.*

The Voice Magazine

South Western Ontario's
ONLY LGBT Magazine
speaking equally to all
members of our
community.

If you wish to reach our
growing audience, living
between Toronto and
Windsor, contact us:

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ads@thevoice.on.ca
www.thevoice.on.ca

Accommodations

Nun's Hollow - Guest Suites, Woodstock - 519-539-9780

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Waterloo North Mazda -115 Northfield Dr. Waterloo, 519-746-1666

Books

Glad Day Books, 598A Yonge St. Toronto, 416-961-4161

Words Worth Books, 100 Kings St. S., Uptown Waterloo, 884-2665. *"Independent minds support independent book stores"*

Business Networking

Rainbow Business Network. LGBT communities of Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge. Gordon Husk 747-██████████

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Generation X Alternative Video and Media, 10 Regina St. N., Waterloo, 888-GENX

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If you would like to include your business in this Directory please call us at: 743-██████████ for rates or email bdirectory@thevoice.on.ca

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Small office, suitable for one or two people, with separate entrance, washroom and security system. Centrally located in downtown Kitchener. Reasonable rent and terms. Please call Jean-Paul Pilon at 885-██████ for more information.

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Advertising Sales Representatives part-time, to work on a commission basis. Send your resume to The Voice, P.O. Box 24015, RPO Evergreen, Kitchener, Ont., N2M 5P1

VOLUNTEER

The Voice is looking for volunteers to join our growing crew. Do you like socializing, partying, organizing parties? Do you take pictures? Get in touch with us? Want to find out more? Email us at: volunteers@thevoice.on.ca

PERSONALS

48 year old single white lesbian looking for a soul-mate 38-55 years of age, likes movies, dining, dancing, travel, animals and fun. Hoping to find that someone special to have a long-term relationship with.

Reply to The Voice (address on page 3) to the attention of Ad L-1

40'sh lesbian not into the bar scene looking to meet other lesbians to pursue friendship or more and common interests. Interests include quiet conversation, music, movies, reading, walks.

Reply to The Voice (address on page 3) to the attention of ad L-2

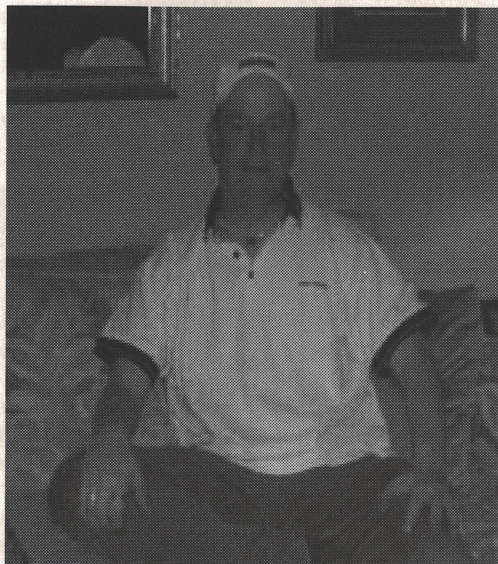
Voice Boys/Voice Girls

Send us your pic and a bit about yourself to be featured here.

vboy@thevoice.on.ca
vgirl@thevoice.on.ca



A.J.'s VOICE BOY



Ian Hardiment

Hobbies: Computers, Camping, Outdoors, Biking and Swimming. Hanging out with friends and well you know boys HA HA HA.
Occupation: Telecommunication Sales and Service. **Goals:** To own my own company.
Words to live by: Just be yourself don't worry about what other people think. **Future Plans:** Looking to settle down with a nice man in a long term relationship. **Residence:** London, Ontario.

The Voice is On-Line at:

News

Links

www.thevoice.on.ca

editor@thevoice.on.ca

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CLASSIFIED

JULY EVENTS

2nd & 4th Wed's
in July

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

Is your city or area having an event that you'd like to publicize? Get the word out by letting us know about it. Call us at (519) 743- or email us at:

events@thevoice.on.ca

As we continue to grow and expand we look forward to hearing from more of you in various cities as to what is going on in your community. Want to see your events in The Voice? Contact us today!

Look for a much more detailed and complete events listings for events in many different cities coming here and on our web site in September.

Social events listings in The Voice are a community service and are listed free of charge.

London Pride - July 13 - see page 28 for details

Windsor Pride July 21-28 - see page 28 for details

Port-Huron - Sarnia Pride see page 28 for details

Chatham - Kent Pride - see page 29 for details

ONTARIO COMMUNITY LISTINGS

BRANTFORD(519)

A Rainbow of Hope. Brant County HIV/AIDS 753-4937 ext.261

GBLT adult social/support group of Brantford and area. Call 752-5132 ext.34

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

Narcotics Anonymous - 759-2558

Pine tree Native Centre Of Brant - PFLAG 752-5132 ext.34.

The Coalition for GLBT youth of Brantford 753-4937 ext.261 and leave message.

CAMBRIDGE(519)

PFlag - Sue 650- or

Sexual Assault Center: Cambridge..... 658-0551

GUELPH(519)

ACGWC (Aids Committee of Guelph and Wellington County) 2 Quebec St, Suite 206, Guelph Ont., 763-2255

GUELPH QUEER EQ-UALITY University of Guelph - gqe@uoguelph.ca

HOWL: Hanging Out With Lesbians - social group for women (lesbian, bisexual, transgender ages 25+ Women may contact HOWL through Outline (519)836-4550

OUTline: the University of Guelph. Call 836-4550.outline@uoguelph.ca

Rainbow Chorus: Choir and hosts LGBT dances. Bob at 584- or Colleen at 836-

Women For Sobriety - drug & alcohol addiction support group Marilyn at 823-

HAMILTON(905)

Alcoholics Anonymous-- (905) 522-8399.

Alice's Dinner Club - Joan/ Barb at 905-318- or Michael at 905-528-

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

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

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

GLBT Centre at McMaster -(905) 525-9140, Ext. 27397 or e-mail: gblt@msu.mcmaster.ca

Hamilton Aids Network -

135 Rebecca Street 528-0854

Hamilton Coming Out Proud Discussion Group 905-526-1074, toll-free 1-888-338-8278

info@gomorrah.com

Hamilton Transsexual Peer Support Group (FTM - MTF) - 528-0207 ext.43, or e-mail: htpspg@gto.net

Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police--General Assistance: 546-4925 Jane Mulkewich, GLBT Task Force 546-4910

Kindred Spirits - lesbians and bi-sexual women 541-

LGBT Youth Social Group 905-528-0207 ext. 66

Narcotics Anonymous (905) 522-0332

PFLAG -- 662-

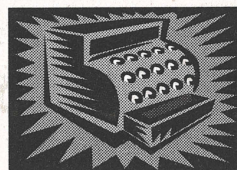
Sexual Assault Center: Hamilton.....525-4162
Sexual Health Information Line -905-528-5894-

Street Health Centre-- Wesley Centre 777-7852

The Golden Horseshoe Leather Association - Men interested in the Leather/ Denim lifestyle. 549-

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

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ONTARIO COMMUNITY LISTINGS

KITCHENER(519)

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

Anselma House: A crisis shelter for 24 hour crisis line: 742-5894

AWARE K-W : gay Christians, their parents and friends. Gary at 747- or Ada at 886- . @ionline.net

BMC (Brethren Menno-nite Council for Lesbian & Gay Concerns): Colleen at 836-

Gay Men's Group: social group for men of all ages and orientations. Gordon 747-

K-W Distress Line: 745-1166

KW-Friends of Dorothy, 10 Pin Cosmic Bowling - Jason Boyko at 578-

PFlag - Evie at 742-

Sexual Assault Center: KW.....741-8633

The Rainbow Parenting Network - A forum for GLBT parents, parents-to-be, 743-

Tri-Youth Pride - Gail - 743-

YouthDiscussion Group: ages 16-25, 570-3687

LONDON(519)

AIDS Committee of London - 379 Dundas St. Suite 120 434-1601

Gay and Lesbian Alumni of The University of Western Ont - 432-

GLB Student Affairs - U of Western Ontario - 661-

HIV Care Program - 646-6207

Homophile Association of London(HALO) 379 Dundas St. 433-

London Pride Committee - 379 Dundas St. Suite 210 433-3551 ext 3.

MCC-645- PFlag-451-

NIAGARA(905)

LGB Youth Line - 1-888-679-6884

ST. CATHARINES(905)

AIDS Niagara - 111 Church St. 984-8684

Friends of Dorothy Dance Committee - 988-

Gay & Lesbian Alliance - 984-

Narcotics Anonymous - (905) 685-0075

STRATFORD(519)

AIDS Action Committee of Perth County - 86 John St. S. 272-2437

Down The Street - 30 Ontario St. 273-

TORONTO(416)

Affirm United - 466-

Aids Committee of Toronto - Hotline - 340-8844

Amnesty International Members for LGBT Concerns - 469-2100 ext. 264

Equality For Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE) - Laurie Aaron, 532-

Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives - 777-2755

Central Toronto Youth Services - 924-2100

Coalition of the Support of Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario - Box 822, Stn. A Toronto, Ont., M5W 1G3, 405-8253

CounterPoint Community Orchestra - 658-

Gay Fathers of Toronto - 410-

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

Gay Partner Abuse Project - 876-

Hassle Free Health Clinic - 922-0603

Metropolitan Community Church - 406-6228

Ontario Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce - 410-1174

Out! Spoken Advocacy - 927-

Pride Information - 927-7433

Rainbow Ballroom Dance Club - 363- or 534-

Rainbow Voices of Toronto - 944-

The 519 Church St. Community Centre - 392-6874. Community information, support groups, anti-violence programme, the AIDS Memorial. www.the519.org

WATERLOO(519)

First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo - 96 Dunbar Road South, Waterloo

Gays & Lesbians of Waterloo - University of Waterloo - Peer support & info line & Coming Out Discussion groups 884-4569

Global: Wilfrid Laurier University LGBT support. Laurier Peer Help Line 884-PEER. 00global@mach1.wlu.ca

Westminster United Church(an affirming congregation): 543 Beachwood Dr.

WINDSOR(519)

ACW Youthline - 973-7671

Aids Committee of Windsor - 973-0222

GLBT Book Club - 973-

Lesbian and Gay Council - 973-

MCC - 977-

Organization of LG Students University of Windsor - 253-

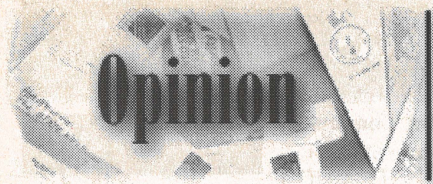
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The Voice

South Western Ontario's ^{ONLY} LGBT Magazine

THE VOICE MAGAZINE IS A
PROUD MEMBER OF THE
RAINBOW BUSINESS NETWORK





"The oppression of any people for opinion's sake has rarely had any other effect than to fix those opinions deeper, and render them more important." --Hosea Ballou

Evil Is In The Eye Of The Beholder

The question of nudity and nakedness has been plaguing humanity since Adam and Eve first donned fig leaves to cover their own bare essentials.

When I got my May/June issue, I was busy polishing the communion plates in the sacristy and just about dropped the lot of them onto the floor. I rushed into the Parsonage and immediately phoned A.J. I call A.J., "A.J." and not "Ms A.J." or "Ms Mahari". That just goes to show you that we're friends.

That being said, my dolls, I was shocked that a Lesbian would risk offering gay men eye candy, however modest and appealing. However modest the model's pose and however enlightening the attached bio, it made me wonder about the quantity of skin contained in a measure of good taste. Moreover, as a member of a clearly defined established religious tradition, I am well aware of the importance of knowing one's place and keeping to it.

So, I phoned Ms Mahari - I'm using the formal expression out of respect, and

asked her what was going on. She told me that THE VOICE wasn't going to enter into the skin trade and that the VOICE BOY/GIRL feature was just an attempt to lighten the image a bit.

So far so good. Nudity is not new either in performance, portraiture, sculpture or publication. If it's art, it's called nudity, if it's candid, it's called nakedness. If it is graphically erotic, it's called pornography. All three of these dimensions have been around for a long time. So have the people who object to any or all of them at one time or another. It's hard to believe the number of "X-rated" Cathedrals, Museums, Palaces and Government Buildings around. If baring it all were that objectionable, half the world would have to shut down or be placed off limits. Somehow, I doubt that will happen.

This being a Royal Jubilee year, I've been doing some homework about the Royal Order of the Garter. We Canons have our obligations, you know. Well, the motto of that Order is "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

THROW A TARP OVER IT A.J.

Let me say at the outset that I'm not a prude. On the other hand I don't like random nudity thrust upon me.

If God had wanted us prancing around nude, God wouldn't have given us clothes. The scriptures remind us very clearly not to cast our pearls before the swine. Well, it seems to me that personal and private attributes are very much akin to pearls. Keep the privates private, I say. My goodness, it's getting so that you can hardly turn on a TV ad any more without being bombarded by acres of naked flesh, or implied nudity as in that French Fry commercial that urges us to try some with nothing on.

And contemporary music concerts. Well, coverage of them on the TV News should be X-rated. Parts of the body that are kind of covered are barely covered at all and even then everything is bulging out all over. I can hardly bear to look at those preening perverts. And those Drag Queens aren't much better.

I'm sure you've seen that horrible ad for

the casino with three huge hulks with grossly large tattoos all over their torsos. If that doesn't rank as one of the rankest images available, I don't know what does.

So, A.J., when I saw all the skin bared in the last issue of your usually fine magazine, I was shocked. I said to myself, "A.J. is selling out to the multitudes. She has lost it. THE VOICE is going into the skin trade."

If I want nudity or near nudity, I can go to the beach or to a strip club. I can pay \$19.95 for a Video or \$29.95 for a glossy portfolio I don't have to find it lurking on the pages of a favourite, and freely open to the public, magazine.

I don't like to appear a carping critic but from my more mature perspective I have one bit of advice for the next time THE VOICE is tempted to publish nudity: "Throw a tarp over it, A.J."

--Ms Muriel Mosely, Paris, Ontario

Roughly translated, for the sake of any rough trade who might read this, that means, "Shamed be the person who thinks evil of it." The quote refers, according to one apocryphal story, to an incident where Lord Salisbury was returning a garter to a woman who had dropped it at a party and he was making sure that no one got the wrong idea. His intentions were honourable.

Well, THE VOICE'S intentions, it seems to me, were honourable in providing a bit of living body art in its last issue. To those who don't like it, I say "Honi soit qui mal y pense." And to those who are still not convinced, let me say simply that after Watergate, what the world needs is not another cover-up.

I still keep some copies of THE VOICE at the entrance to the church and have noticed that more copies of the May/June issue have been picked up than ever before. Mind you, I haven't seen who picked them up but none of them have ended up in the waste container outside the door. The place where my weekly bulletin usually ends up.

I just want to assure sensitive souls and the pure of heart, that the undeniable vulnerability of the naked human form is a beautiful and gentle reminder for all of two things. Our own frailty and essential beauty.

Those truths can, of course, be prostituted and abused in many ways. I don't think that the VOICE BOY/GIRL will ever come close to any of those. If anyone sees it differently, it is undoubtedly a comment on their own perceptions, not the editorial policies of a fine magazine. Evil is, after all, in the eye of the beholder. Honi soit qui mal y pense.

--Blade Huxtable, Hamilton

*Do you have an opinion about this topic or any other? If so, please write to us and **Raise Your Voice!** Our contact information is on page three. We want to hear from you!*

PORT HURON-SARNIA PRIDE

Where Pride Knows No Border!

SAT. AUG. 3

Ms.ter & Miss
International
Pride Pageant

FRI. AUG. 9

Port Huron Pride
& Unity Walk

Barbara Payton's
Homecoming Rock
& Dance Party

SAT. AUG. 10

Sarnia Pride Parade

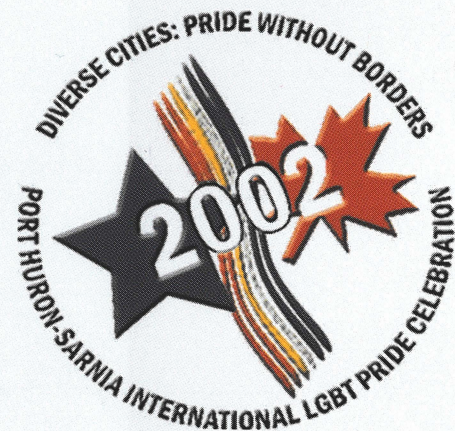
International Pride
Festival

International Pride
Dance

SUN. AUG. 11

Pride Brunch

Religious Service



Host hotel:

Holiday Inn

Sarnia

(519) 336-4130

www.gaybluewater.com

(810) 364-1080

(519) 383-7090

www.windsorpride.com



Schedule of Events

July 21st - Pride Picnic

sponsored by Womyn Out
Held at Memorial Park. Starts at 11:00 am.
MCC Windsor - Communion
Spiritual Gathering
Honouring Man and Woman of the Year.
BBQ, Games, DJ, Karokee, and more....

July 23rd - Youth Group

Young and Proud hosting Jeopardy Game.
Womyn Out hosting
PFLAG Discussion (Guest Speaker)
Starts at 7:00 pm held at the AIDS Committee
of Windsor.

July 24th - Planned Parenthood

Discussion on Assisted Reproduction
and Adoption
Starts at 7:00 pm at 3735 King Street.

July 25th - Pride of Windsor Boat Cruise

only advance tickets call
519-254-3807 or email chris@gaywindsor.com

July 26th - Bowling

Held at Bowlero. \$1.25 a game, free Shoes.
Dinner tickets will be available call 519-974-3709
or email paulette@wincom.net

July 27th - CAW LGBT Caucus

Hawaiian Party - Pig Roast
\$15.00 or \$25.00 a couple.
At the Sportsman Club on Dougall Ave.
Starts at 2:00 pm till 11:00 pm.
For advance tickets call 519-254-3807.

July 28th Pride Day

11:00 am
**Metropolitan Community Church of Windsor
Service.**

1:00 pm
Ceremonies
(Speeches, Man and Woman of the Year)

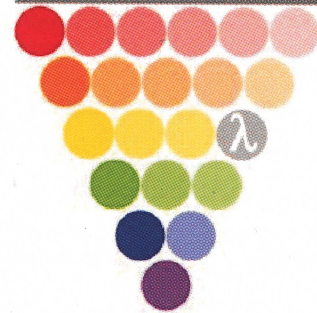
2:00 pm
Parade begins.
Marc Hall - Grand Marshal

3:30 pm
Entertainment
Sista Otis and Random Order perform.



(Beer tent, vendors, food, and tons of fun)

WINDSOR Pride
10th ANNIVERSARY



**"Building on a Decade
of Pride"**

July 21st - July 28th

Windsor Pride P.O. Box 7002 Windsor, ON N9C 3Y6
www.windsorpride.com 519-254-3807

